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Crossing the Bridge

– The Story of the Class of '78 and the Emergence of New Music in China

By Stephen M. Jones



The Central Conservatory's 1978 class of composition students (photographed in 1981)¹

Ed Note: The 2018 ISCM World New Music Days in Beijing coincided with the 40th anniversary of the reopening of the Central Conservatory of Music in 1978, shortly after the end of the Cultural Revolution. World New Music Magazine invited Stephen Jones to provide context for the significant changes that occurred in Chinese music at that time.

It was 6:30 am on a cold, windy morning in the fall of '77. Zhang Lida was

walking across the Yimin River Bridge in Hulunbuir on her way to practice. An accomplished young violinist and composer, she had played with the Hulunbuir Song and Dance Troupe since 1969. Like every such troupe in the country, they played *yangbanxi*—model operas—the sole sanctioned musico-theatrical productions of

the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, whose stories represented to the Chinese people victory over class enemies and the supremacy of Mao Zedong Thought.

As she crossed the bridge, Zhang heard an announcement from a loudspeaker that reawakened a long suppressed desire: the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing was recruiting students following its more than 10-year hiatus during the Revolution. A door she thought might be forever closed to her was opening, and there was no question about whether or not she would apply.

The announcement of the conservatory's reopening sparked immediate interest across the country. Far away from Hulunbuir, three young musicians in Guizhou had been playing in ensembles similar to those in which Zhang Lida played. Chen Yuanlin, a violinist, recalls he and two friends "saw this newspaper and the three of us were very excited, so we decided we needed to take this chance. We didn't know if we could be accepted or not, but we knew we had to audition; we had to try."²



Zhang Lida teaching violin in 1973 in Hulunbuir
(Photo courtesy Zhang Lida.)

The trio had recently begun studying under the guidance of local musicians and had hand copied theory texts, including those by Prout, Schoenberg, and Sposobin, as well as the score to Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto. The latter took the three of them one week. "We copied every note," Chen said.

Having prepared as best they could, Chen and his two colleagues, Ma Jianping and Qu Xiaosong, traveled to the audition a few days early in order to show the pieces each of them had written to Gao Weijie, a composition professor at the Sichuan Conservatory. Chen was submitting an "orchestra score and one string quartet and some songs. Qu Xiaosong had one string quartet, and Ma Jianping a full score." Gao offered them "a lot of suggestions," and they hurriedly made corrections before submitting their pieces to the examiners.

Turnout was extraordinary. More than 17,000 people showed up to audition in four cities across China, all hopeful to study music in the country's capital.

Given such numbers, if anything, the auditions were crowded. Long lines extended out into the early winter cold at the Shanghai audition site, where Tan Dun had arrived after a 26-hour train ride. He had been working for two months in a Peking Opera Troupe, receiving a salary of 19 yuan per month, and didn't have enough money to purchase the 46-yuan ticket to Shanghai. So, he pre-prepared a sign that read, "This restroom is broken," then snuck on a train, taped the sign to the restroom door, and locked himself in the restroom until he arrived.

The multi-day examination process covered theory, aural skills, and composition. It also included a health evaluation. Near the end of the process came a performance audition. Those applying had vastly different levels of preparation. Zhang Lida had received training in classical music from her youngest years, evident in her choice to play the third movement of Brahms's Violin Concerto. In contrast, Tan Dun, also a violinist, had never even *heard* of Brahms. As he entered,

Professor Li Xi'an, the auditioner, asked Tan what he would play. "I want to show my improvisation skills," he said. As he took his violin out of his case Professor Li observed, "Your violin only has three strings," to which Tan replied, "I never use the fourth one anyway because I used to play erhu. Three strings are already one more than erhu. Having four would be too many."

Genuinely impressed by Tan's colorful interpretation of a Chinese song, Li asked him, "What else can you play? Can you play Mozart?" Tan replied, "Who is Mozart?"

The conservatory's target enrollment for the entering class was 135, with only 10 of those designated to study composition. Given the huge demand, seven faculty petitioned the government to allow the conservatory to accept more students. It worked. On April 25, 1978 a class of 32 composers was admitted as part of the larger cohort of 322 students.

Spirits were high, despite the somewhat difficult physical conditions at the conservatory. Chen Yi, a talented violinist from Guangzhou, said that when she came

there was not enough space for us to sleep. A recital hall became the dorm for all the women students. ... The dorm didn't have beds, so they used all the chairs and put them together to make a bed. We slept on chairs. Maybe more than ten chairs could be collected to make a bed.

The men lived in temporary quarters with bunk beds that housed eight per room. Despite these challenges, Chen Yi noted that the “students didn't complain at all, they only looked for a place to stay. If they could start studying, they were extremely happy.”

Su Cong, whose father Su Xia was a composition faculty member, recalls the schedule was regimented.

We had to get up early at six in the morning. Everyone had to do gymnastics on the square, and breakfast was from seven to seven thirty. Students had to be in the classroom at five to eight. The lessons started promptly at eight o'clock. Sometimes lessons lasted until four or five in the afternoon.

On the whole, the group met that strict schedule with an equally rigorous attitude toward their studies. “Whatever achievements each of us obtained later,” said Zhang Xiaofu, “owe much to our untiring study during these five years.” Chen Yi recalled that if a “teacher asked for four pages, everybody wrote six pages. When you reached only four pages, you got a B. Almost every class was like that.” That level of commitment was evidence of the fact that “we cherished this rare opportunity,” said Ma Jianping.

Working hard often meant needing to stay up late, but power to classrooms was cut off at ten o'clock at night. As class president, Zhang Xiaofu petitioned the administration not to cut off power for the composition department “so we could compose at night.” Eventually the request was granted.

Common tasks were shared among class members. Chen Yi said that in her position as one of the class leaders, she “was in charge of entertainment, film tickets, and assignments for cleaning. I was the one to assign which window is your responsibility to clean, with the deadline.”

The curriculum was solidly classical with a strong Russian influence. Guo Wenjing said when he entered the conservatory

it was carrying on the pedagogical system established by the Soviet tradition. You could only learn 18th and 19th century western classical music. For example, Tchaikovsky and Bach. . . . The furthest you could go was Wagner.³

Russian textbooks and scores, including some materials from the broader Soviet Union, were for decades the only window the conservatory had on the outside world. Russian teachers had come to China as part of a wave of thousands of experts across all disciplines at the height of the Sino-Russian era of collaboration in the mid-1950s, further cementing the Russian-dominated pedagogical influence.

Some students heard and played a broad cross-section of classical works prior to coming to the conservatory. Chen Yi played all of the Classical and Romantic literature for violin, including early twentieth-century works like the Sibelius and Prokofiev concertos.⁴ Guo Wenjing secretly listened to recordings of pieces like Shostakovich's

Symphony No. 11 and Rimsky Korsakov's *Scheherazade* during the Cultural Revolution, all of which left deep and lasting impressions on him. At the conservatory, however, you couldn't "even learn Debussy, Shostakovich, Schoenberg, or Stravinsky," said Guo, "to say nothing of Boulez and other avant-garde music."⁵

Study of some of Bartók's work was permitted because much of his music was rooted in folk traditions, thus fulfilling the long-standing political requirement that music serve the people. But beyond the severe criticism of Schoenberg that appeared in print in the 1950s, which inadvertently taught them something of his twelve-tone method, the faculty on the whole had really no idea about the tremendous changes that had occurred in contemporary music in the preceding decades.

That began to change, however, a few months before the students arrived through a series of events, the first of which was the November 1977 visit of the visionary Chinese-American composer and Columbia University Professor Chou Wen-chung. On a mission to forge long-term collaborative relationships with Chinese arts entities, Chou gifted the conservatory many scores

and recordings of contemporary American music as part of his groundbreaking visit. Professor Zhong Zilin of the musicology faculty was invited to begin to study them in a special room in the library vacated for that purpose.

With a curious mind I opened the records one at a time, listening to them as I read the explanations. At that time, other than having heard that it was “decadent and fallen,” I was absolutely ignorant in regard to western contemporary music. But I thought that I, as well as everyone else, should first understand it before discussing it. And so, I chose several works from these records and introduced them to the entire school.⁶

On January 17, 1978, Zhong held his first “Record Appreciation Assembly.” The first public opportunity to hear western contemporary music in nearly 30 years, the 200 square meter room was packed with important musicians from within and outside the conservatory. Among others, Zhong played Chou Wen-chung’s *Yuko*, Varèse’s *Déserts*, and Crumb’s *Ancient Voices of Children*. On hearing the first line of *Ancient Voices*, Yu Yixuan, head of the vocal

department, quietly let out a gasp from her front row seat, saying, “Oh, this is what vocal music has now become!”⁷

A second means of learning about contemporary music was the conservatory’s journal *Foreign Music Reference Materials*, which published translated articles on many subjects including new music. Beginning in 1980 the journal serialized publication of a translation of sections of Czech composer and theorist Ctirad Kohoutek’s 1962 book *Composition Techniques in 20th Century Music*, providing the first in-depth print revelation of techniques such as total serialism, musique concrète, electronic music, etc. Many of the students were subscribers to the journal and eagerly awaited receiving each new issue. “We feverishly used every means possible to learn about western contemporary music and went and imitated them in our own works,” said Guo Wenjing.⁸

The trickle of knowledge about new music became a flowing stream with the arrival of Professor Alexander Goehr from Cambridge in May 1980. Invited by Wu Zuqiang, then vice president of the conservatory, his lecture series marked an indisputable turning point in the students’ education vis-à-vis

new music. Goehr, who had himself been a student of Messiaen and his father a student of Schoenberg, systematically introduced and analyzed contemporary scores to large audiences of students and faculty from the Central Conservatory as well as those who had traveled from other conservatories across China. From late May through mid-June Goehr gave ten lectures in which he traversed a broad spectrum of harmonic and contrapuntal topics, taught composition, and introduced and analyzed works of Debussy, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Messiaen,

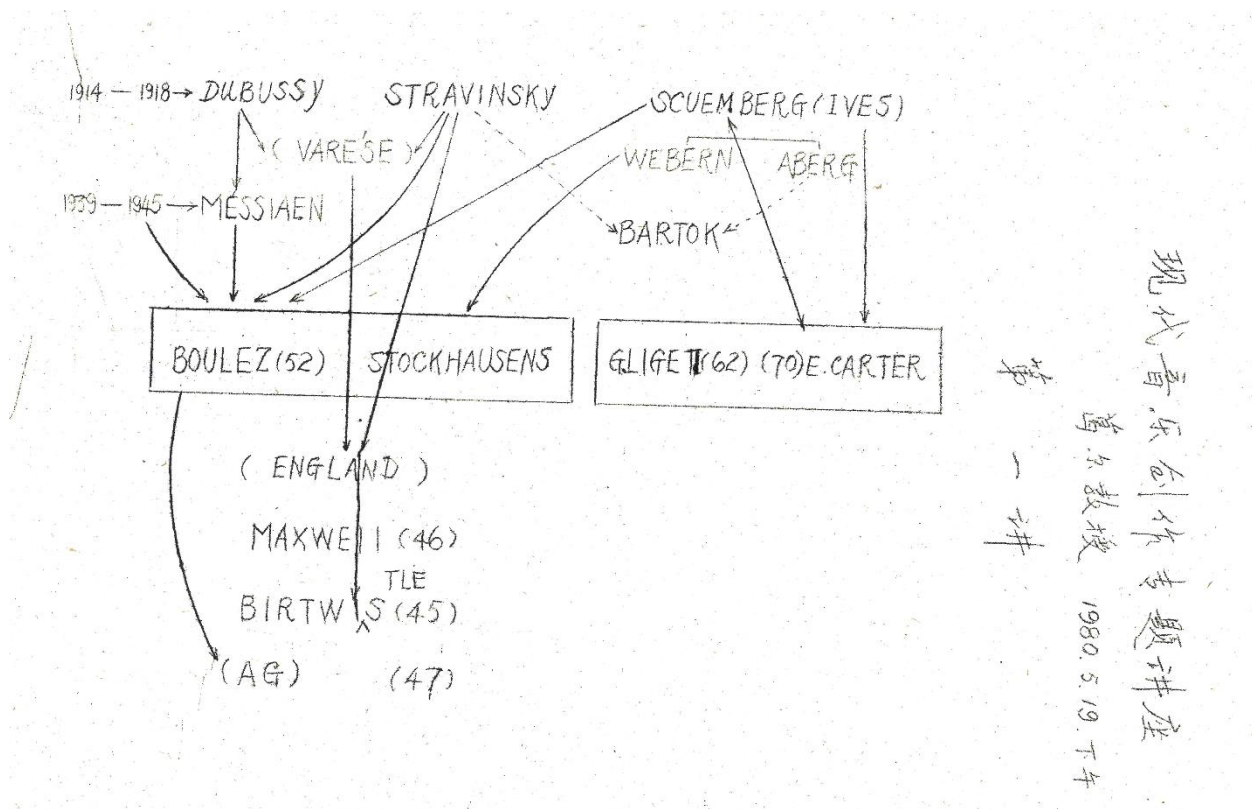
Stockhausen, Boulez, Ligeti, Carter, and others, including Goehr's own music and that of his contemporary, Birtwistle.

A select group of six students, four from the Central Conservatory (Ye Xiaogang, Chen Yi, Zhou Qinru, and Lin Dehong) and two from the Shanghai Conservatory (Ge Ganru and Wang Chengyong) were also chosen to study composition with Goehr.

*



Visiting Professor Alexander Goehr with the six students who studied composition with him (pictured from left to right): Wang Chengyong, Ge Ganru, Chen Yi, Ye Xiaogang, Zhou Qinru, and Lin Dehong. June 1980. (Photo courtesy Chen Yi.)



The record of Goehr's lectures includes this overview of connections between contemporary composers, most of whom the faculty and students had never heard of. The Chinese annotation reads, "Lectures on composition of contemporary music. Professor Goehr 1980.5.19 afternoon. The 1st lecture."

Goehr cautioned the students that the music he taught them "is not for you to imitate," stating it would be "ridiculous to imitate these things. Learn other people's works in order to know what problems they have encountered and how to solve them, to gain experience from them." Style "is not important" because it will change. "I think that the most important thing for art is to understand the world around you."⁹

Goehr's lectures were recorded, transcribed, and printed, then distributed for use in conservatories across the country. He was

the first of many other composers who came from across the world, not to mention important visitors in other musical fields. Now the stream became a flood, and access to scores and recordings combined with the instruction of these visitors inspired many of the students to begin pursuing a compositional path their teachers had never imagined. "We just followed the general changes that took place in society," said Guo Wenjing. "We heard about so many things that we didn't know before. So many things were unmasked."¹⁰

Faculty, too, began to explore new sound worlds. Luo Zhongrong composed China's first twelve-tone piece in 1979, an art song based on the Han Dynasty poem *Picking Lotus Flowers along the Riverside* (涉江采芙蓉). Published in 1980, it "immediately aroused widespread attention in the professional music composition community," in part because it was based on a row that divided the twelve-note aggregate into a pentatonic and a diatonic collection, making it "full of the sense of tonality that seem to be incompatible" with twelve-tone music.¹¹

While Luo Zhongrong's song aroused attention, Tan Dun's String Quartet *Feng Ya Song* (1982) became a lightning rod that attracted both sharp criticism and strong support. Recipient of the second-place award in the 1983 Dresden International Weber Chamber Music Composition Competition, it was the first piece from China to win an international prize in decades. But back at home Tan's success was caught in the crossfire of a newly-emerged campaign to wipe out "spiritual pollution" from Chinese society. While his music certainly had its supporters, it, and new music in general, met strong opposition. In a 1984 article, Zhao Feng, then president

emeritus of the Central Conservatory, called avant-garde music "the product of the spiritual crisis of modern capitalist society." He claimed it was "mostly against tradition" and that "as a philosophical system or artistic conception or worldview, it is unacceptable to us."¹²

While on an official level the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign receded quickly, Tan's recognition marked the inception of several years of debate about what would soon be labeled "new wave" music. Clearly, it was not only the music's sonic properties that were questioned, although that was certainly part of the issue. It was that those sonic properties challenged political philosophies. The rise of this music confronted the very purposes of artistic creation outlined by Mao in his foundational speech at Yan'an in 1942, in which he firmly established his doctrine that the arts were to serve the workers, peasants, and soldiers, not the bourgeoisie. Mao's declarations, rooted in Soviet artistic philosophy and policy that pre-dated his specific formulation of them by decades, had been the basis on which all music creation had occurred since the founding of the country in 1949. Now the developing sound of music was raising questions about its purpose in society. The

avant-garde was challenged by the old guard, and support for and against new music surfaced from many quarters.

Despite any internal or external resistance these students felt to the music they were creating, their exploration continued, as did recognition of their work in and out of China.

This legendary first class of composers graduated in the summer of 1983 and began their transition from undergraduate students to composers, some by way of further study.

Zhou Long received a two-year position with the China Broadcasting Corporation, where he had an orchestra at his disposal to record his compositions. That served him well when he applied to Columbia University with the support and encouragement of Chou Wen-chung.

Chen Yi continued her studies at the conservatory, graduating in 1986 as the first woman in China to receive a master's degree in composition. She also then went to Columbia, as did Tan Dun, but his musical worldview clashed with Columbia's culture. He rejected the "depressing, bitter, atonal, selfish and superintellectual post-post-whatever music I was being forced to write

there." Instead, Greenwich Village became his classroom and John Cage his inspiration.¹³

Ye Xiaogang studied at the Eastman School of Music, then returned to China. A year after graduation Chen Qigang went to France, where he studied with Messiaen and where he has remained since.

Whether it meant their spread across the world or the spread of their influence or both, the diaspora of Chinese composers had begun. The rest of the story is, as they say, history. The violinist who played with only three strings and did not know of Mozart is now one of the most recognized composers in the world. Zhou Long won the 2011 Pulitzer Prize, and Chen Yi has received awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Guggenheim, Fromm, and Koussevitzky Foundations. Ye Xiaogang is the President of the Chinese Musicians Association and former Vice President of the Central Conservatory, and Guo Wenjing, proud to have remained in China, is one of the senior-most composers on the faculty at the conservatory.

While each of these composers enjoys performances internationally, Ye Xiaogang

feels “Chinese contemporary music isn’t doing very well. Even Chinese works aren’t being performed [in China], let alone overseas works.” That condition has been the driving factor for his championship of the Beijing Modern Music Festival. “China simply has to learn more about what’s going on elsewhere,” he said, and, for him, the Festival’s annual presentation of Chinese and western contemporary music is an essential means of solving that problem. “Only in this way can we synchronize Chinese music circles with overseas music circles.”¹⁴

Any challenges aside, the changes that have occurred in Chinese music over the last 40 years are undeniably remarkable. As Frank Kouwenhoven has written,

In 1978, it was still impossible to foresee that, within a few years, a few composers in this small class in Peking would totally surpass their teachers and bring about a landslide in China's musical culture. From the beginning it was clear, however, that social and artistic life in China was at a watershed.¹⁵

“I would say the Central Conservatory is a turning of my life,” said Zhou Long. It was the same for Zhang Lida.

Everything changed that morning she crossed the bridge in Hulunbuir.

NOTES

¹. This class of composers auditioned in late 1977 and was admitted in April of 1978. While the class is referred to most often in English as the “class of ’78,” the first class of students to enter universities and conservatories after the Cultural Revolution is more commonly referred to in China as the “class of ’77.” However, as Chinese references to the class call it both ’77 and ’78, and given the strong preponderance of the use of “class of ’78” in English, I have chosen to refer to the class by that title.

². Unless otherwise indicated, all uncited quotations come from interviews I have had with the composers being quoted. S.M.J.

³. Liu, Jinfeng. “Yinyuejia Guo Wenjing: wo shi yige tiancai” [Musician Guo Wenjing: I Am a Genius]. *Xin jing bao*, 29 Dec. 2005.

⁴. Koay, Kheng K. *The Kaleidoscope of Women’s Sounds in Music of the Late 20th and Early 21st Centuries*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015, pp. 70-71.

⁵. Liu, *op. cit.*

⁶. Zhong, Zilin. “Yici nanwang de changpian yinyue xinshang hui” [An Unforgettable Record Appreciation Assembly]. Unpublished manuscript, 2006.

7. Zhong, *op. cit.*

8. Liu, *op. cit.*

9. Xu, Yuan. "Yalishanda Geer jiaoshou zai zhongyang yinyue xueyuan" [Professor Alexander Goehr at the Central Conservatory of Music]. *Renmin yinyue*, no. 10, 1980, p. 41.

10. Kouwenhoven, Frank, and Antoinet Schimmelpenninck. "Guo Wenjing: A Composer's Portrait—"The strings going 'hong hong hong' and the percussion 'bong kèh', that's my voice!" *Chime*, vol. 10–11, 1997, p. 19.

11. Zhang, Wei. "Xulie yinyue jishu de zhongguohua yanjiu—Shi'er yin chuanguo jishu yu lilun de fazhan 1980-1990" [Research on the Chineseization of Serial Music Techniques—Development of Twelve-Tone Creation Techniques and Theories, 1980-1990]. *Yinyue yanjiu*, no. 4, 2017, p. 29.

12. Zhao, Feng. "Kaizhan piping yu ziwo piping, qingchu jingshen wuran" [Carry out criticism and self-criticism, wipe out spiritual pollution]. *Yinyue yanjiu*, no. 1, 1984, p. 3.

13. O'Mahony, John. "Crossing Continents." *The Guardian*, 8 Sept. 2000.

14. Tatlow, Didi Kirsten. "A Chinese Composer Sounds Off About Music and Politics." *The New York Times*, 16 May 2012.

15. Kouwenhoven, Frank. "Mainland China's New Music. I: Out of the Desert." *Chime*, vol. 2, 1990, p. 60.

Stephen Jones is professor of music composition and former dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communications at Brigham Young University. His music has been played by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Shenzhen

Symphony, the Utah Symphony, and many other professional and university-based ensembles. Jones has conducted over 130 interviews with Chinese composers and musicians as part of his study of the history of contemporary music in China, and is now writing a book using these and other research materials.

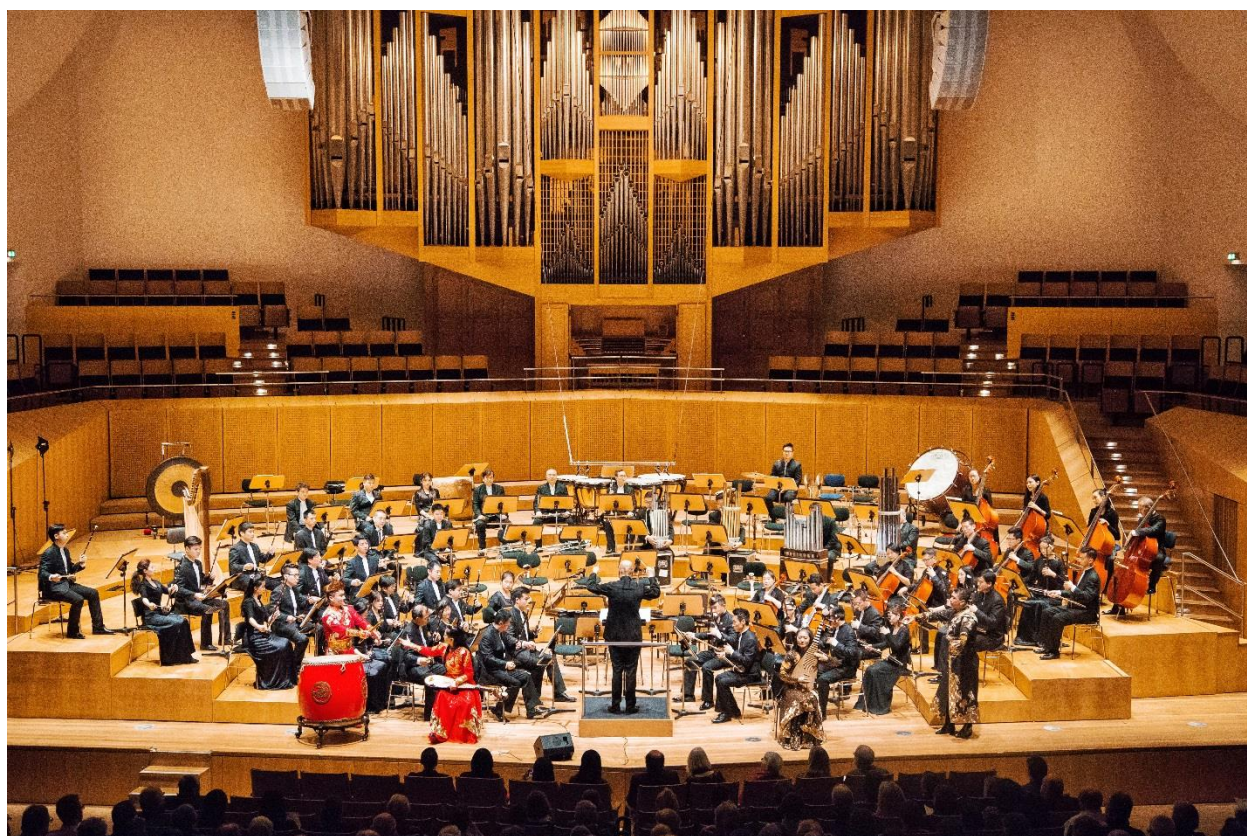


中国传统乐器乐团简介

A Brief Introduction to the Chinese Traditional Instrumental Orchestra

李博 (英文翻译: 陈棠棣)

By Li Bo (English translation by Trudy Chan)



中央民族乐团在德国班贝格交响音乐厅演奏《楚汉之战》

The China National Traditional Orchestra perform *The Battle of Chu and Han* (Symphony Hall Bamberg, Germany)

当代中国民乐队的乐器编制是以“江南丝竹”室内乐形式为基础衍变而来。在 1920 年代，由郑觐文等中国音乐家组成的民族音乐团体“大同乐会”首次确立了 30 人左右的民乐队编制，其中包括吹管乐，弹拨乐，拉弦乐，和打击乐四个乐器组；并且改编了一些作品，如改编琵琶作

The establishment of the instrumentation for the contemporary Chinese orchestra evolves from the fundamentals of the chamber music configuration of *Jiangnan Si Zhu* (“Silk and Bamboo South of the River”). In the 1920s, a group of Chinese musicians including Zheng Yuwen formed the Chinese orchestra organization Datong Music Society and

品《夕阳箫鼓》为民乐合奏曲《春江花月夜》。



彭修文 Peng Xiuwen

到了 1960 年代，中国广播民族乐团团长彭修文（作曲家）等一代中国音乐家开始扩大民乐队编制，在参照西洋管弦乐队编制的同时，加入了低音乐器（如大提琴，贝斯等）使得乐队的整体音区得到了很大的扩展，也为创作提供了更大空间。乐队的人数也增加到 60-80 人，形成了当代民乐队的标准编制，沿用至今。

直到 1980 年代，中央民族乐团团长刘文金（作曲家）将学术创作理念带入了民乐团中，并且在这期间，由于作品的演奏难度的增加，民乐队的演奏水平也得到了很大提升。刘文金为民乐队创作了大量协奏曲作品，其中的二胡协奏曲《长城随想》是经典作品之一。

launched the first-ever Chinese orchestra setup of around thirty players, which included the four instrumental families: winds, plucked strings, bowed strings, and percussion. The Society arranged some traditional pieces including the pipa tune *Winds and Drums in the Twilight* into *Spring River in the Flower Moon Night* for Chinese orchestra.

During the 1960s, a new generation of Chinese musicians, including composer Peng Xiuwen, music director of the China Broadcasting Chinese Orchestra, began to expand the Chinese orchestra instrumentation, referencing its western counterpart and including lower tessitura instruments such as cellos and double basses, not only increasing the overall volume of the orchestra, but also broadening the scope for music compositions. The number of players also increased to between sixty to eighty, and this has become the standard instrumentation of the contemporary Chinese orchestra.

By the 1980s, the music director of the China National Traditional Orchestra, composer Liu Wenjin, brought the aesthetics of academic music writing to the Chinese orchestra. During this time, the performance

到了 1990 年代，一批具有国际视野和现代音乐创作能力的中国作曲家开始为民乐队创作作品，其中包括 周龙的打击乐协奏曲《大曲》，唐建平的民族管弦乐《后土》，郭文景的竹笛协奏曲《愁空山》，以及秦文琛的唢呐协奏曲《唤凤》等等。



刘文金
Liu Wenjin

这些作曲家不但在音乐学院里学习到坚实的作曲技术，更重要的是他们非常

standard of the Chinese orchestra was greatly elevated, thanks to the enlarged repertoire as well as the increased complexity of compositional techniques. Liu Wenjin has written many concertos for the Chinese orchestras; the erhu concerto, *Thoughts of the Great Wall*, has become one of his perennial classics.

In the 1990s, a group of contemporary music composers who have set their visions internationally began to write works for the Chinese orchestra, including such pieces as: *Empress Earth* by Tang Jianping; the percussion concerto, *Da Qu* by Zhou Long; *Desolate Mountain*, a concerto for bamboo flute and orchestra by Guo Wenjing; and *Calling for Phoenix*, a concerto for suona and orchestra by Qin Wenchen.

These composers not only acquired solid composition techniques at the conservatories, they have also blended together seamlessly the respective techniques of Chinese music and Western contemporary music, creating a new catalog of uniquely characteristic Chinese orchestra works. The works from this era have completely raised the bar of the level of compositions as well as performances to new heights.

好地将现代音乐技术与中国音乐文化结合，造就了非常个性化的民乐作品。这个年代的民乐队作品彻底将中国民乐队的创作水平和演奏水平提升到了前所未有的高度。

随着中国年轻一代作曲家的成长，在 2000 年以后涌现了一批更加年轻，热衷创作民乐的中国青年作曲家。这些青年作曲家不但继承了唐建平，郭文景等人作品的技术高度，而且在音乐美学上更加贴近生活，创作了许多非常具有可听性的作品。其中的代表作有王丹红的民族管弦乐《弦上秧歌》，姜莹的民族管弦乐《丝绸之路》，张朝的二胡协奏曲《太阳祭》，以及李博的管子协奏曲《余晖下的背影》等。

关于民族乐团，在中国大陆地区有一些职业民族乐团（比如中央民族乐团，上海民族乐团，和苏州民族乐团等），以及隶属于音乐学院的小型民族乐团（比如中央音乐学院民族室内乐团，中央音乐学院圣风组合，中国音乐学院的中国竹笛乐团，中国音乐学院的紫禁城室内乐团等）。

As the next generation of young Chinese composers came of age, after 2000, there was a group of contemporary young composers who has achieved international composition standards and also possessed a passion for composing works for the Chinese orchestra. These composers not only inherited the high technical levels of composers such as Tang Jianping and Qin Wenchen, their music aesthetics are also closer to everyday life, thus creating a body of highly accessible works. Some of the more representational works include: *Harvest Song on the String* for Chinese orchestra by Wang Danhong; *Silk Road* for Chinese orchestra by Jiang Ying; the erhu concerto, *Festival of the Sun*, by Zhang Zhao; and *The Shadow Beneath the Setting Sun* by Li Bo.

There are several professional Chinese orchestras in Mainland China, e.g. the China National Traditional Orchestra, Shanghai Chinese Orchestra, and the Suzhou Chinese Orchestra, as well as some other smaller Chinese orchestras that are affiliated with conservatories of music, such as the Chinese Chamber Orchestra, and the Shengfeng Ensemble of the Central Conservatory of Music, the Chinese Bamboo Flute Orchestra, and The Forbidden



上海民族乐团 Shanghai National Orchestra

在职业民族乐团中，中央民族乐团直属于中国文化和旅游部，是规模最大的国家级民乐团体；上海民族乐团和苏州民族乐团则是由该地方市政府资助的演出团体。这些职业民族乐团每年在国内外有大量的演出场次，比如在 2015 年 12 月，中央民族乐团 130 位表演艺术家曾赴美国华盛顿肯尼迪艺术中心、纽约林肯中心和卡内基音乐厅进行了五场商业演出以及三场中国民族音乐主题讲座。与此同时，这些乐团每年都会委约大量的新作品，在它们的委约作曲家中，绝大多数是来自大陆地区的中国作曲家。这些委约项目里既有原创作品，也有许多改编，配器的作品；既有民族管弦乐，协奏曲这样的传统编制，也有大型民族乐剧（如《玄奘西行》，《海上生民乐》）这样的类似西洋歌剧的大型剧目。

City Chamber Orchestra of the China Conservatory of Music, etc.

Among the professional groups, the China National Traditional Orchestra, directly administered by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China, is the largest traditional orchestra on a national scale; while the Shanghai Chinese Orchestra and the Suzhou Chinese Orchestra are performance groups subsidized by regional governing bodies. These professional groups present multiple concerts every year domestically and internationally, e.g. in December 2015, the China National Traditional Orchestra with its 130 performing artists embarked on a tour presenting five concerts and three seminars on Chinese traditional music at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. and at the Lincoln Center



中央民族乐团演奏家为美国小朋友示范唢呐演奏

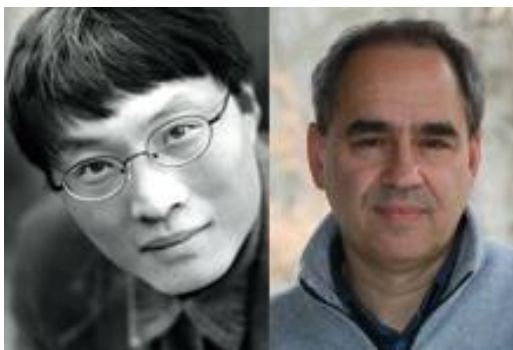
A member of the Central National Orchestra demonstrates suona playing techniques for American children.

在众多委约作曲家中，近些年越来越多地出现国际作曲家的面孔，比如：德国作曲家老锣 Robert Zollitsch 改编的琵琶协奏曲《天鹅》（中央民族乐团委约），德国作曲家克里斯蒂安·约斯特 Christian Jost 创作的民族音乐会《上海奥德赛·外滩故事》（上海民族乐团委约）等。那么对于来到音乐会的观众来讲，他们来自于社会的各个阶层并从事着不同的行业，这些新作品在展示作曲家独特个性的同时，也需要兼顾观众的可接受程度，所以每一首作品的可听性应该是大多数委约项目的首要条件。

for the Performing Arts and Carnegie Hall in New York, NY. At the same time, these professional orchestras also commission many new pieces, with the majority of the composers from Mainland China. While many of these new commissions are original works, there are also a number of arranged and adapted works. There are traditional Chinese orchestral or concertante works as well as grand theatrical works which are comparable to operas in Western music, such as *Xuanzang's Pilgrimage* and *Traditional Music from the Sea*.

There has also been an increase in international faces among the many commissioned composers, e.g. the China National Traditional Orchestra has commissioned the China-based German composer Robert Zollitsch (better known as Lao Luo in China) who arranged one of his own compositions into a pipa concerto entitled *Swan*, and Christian Jost's *Shanghai Odyssey – The Bund*, which was commissioned by the Shanghai Chinese Orchestra, etc. One of the most important criteria for these new commissions is their accessibility, particularly as the audience encompasses people from all walks of life, so these new commissions must balance

关于隶属于学院的小型民乐团体，他们有着更加灵活的乐器组合方式。比如中央音乐学院的圣风组合，它的主要构成元素是弓弦乐器：高胡（2），二胡（4），中胡（2），大阮（2），和打击乐（2）。该组合曾在 2013 年委约中央音乐学院的师生创作了 12 首新作品，并在世界各地举办专场音乐会，其中包括南非和泰国。这样的小型团体所演奏的作品基本都是新作品，因为他们的乐器编制往往是历史上没有过的，所以并没有像西方的弦乐四重奏那样拥有大量的已有作品。与此同时，这些团体的委约机制也更加灵活——它们的经济支持来自所属的音乐学院，既可以委约学院里的师生，也可以委约社会上甚至国际上的作曲家，并且所创作的作品是要具有相当的学术价值，即丰富了民族音乐创作的风格，也提升了乐团的演奏水平。比如中国音乐学院的竹笛乐团，曾分别委约了美国作曲家梁雷和霍夫曼 Joel Hoffman 为该团创作作品。



梁雷(Lei Liang) and Joel Hoffman

between the composers' own musical styles as well as being listener-friendly.

There is much flexibility with the instrumentation for the smaller ensembles that affiliate with the music schools. For example, the Shengfeng Ensemble of the Central Conservatory of Music is mainly made up of bowed string instruments: gaohu (2), erhu (4), zhonghu (2), with daruan (2), and also percussion (2). The ensemble has commissioned twelve new works in 2013 from the faculty and students of the Conservatory, as well as presenting featured concerts around the world, including in South Africa and Thailand. These types of smaller ensembles perform mainly newly written works, as their instrumentations do not follow traditional configurations, therefore, unlike other Western small ensembles (such as the string quartet) they do not have a large body of repertoire to select from. These ensembles also have more fluidity with their commissioning systems. Since they are financially supported by their affiliated schools, they could commission members of their faculty and students, as well as local and international composers. With the commissioned works representing a certain level of academic value, they not only enrich

在大陆之外的国家和地区，也有着很多非常活跃，高水平的民乐演奏团体。这些团体在国际化方面比大陆地区要先行一步，虽然它们如今的委约机制有限，但仍然以国际作曲比赛，作品征集等方式积极地推动着民乐的发展。比如香港中乐团，澳门中乐团，台北市立国乐团、高雄市立国乐团，台湾小巨人丝竹乐团，台湾采风乐坊，新加坡国际华乐团，新加坡鼎艺室内乐团等等。



余晖下的背影-照片

From a performance of Li Bo's
The Shadow Beneath the Setting Sun

the composition styles of traditional Chinese music, they also boost the level of performance of the ensembles, e.g. the commissioning of new works by American composers Lei Liang and Joel Hoffman by the Chinese Bamboo Flute Orchestra of the China Conservatory of Music.

There are also many excellent and active Chinese traditional ensembles beyond the Mainland China region. While their commissioning structure is a bit more limited, they are able to promote and develop Chinese traditional music by holding international composition competitions as well as through open calls for scores, taking a step ahead of their Mainland counterparts towards the globalization of Chinese traditional music, e.g. Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, The Macao Chinese Orchestra, Taipei Chinese Orchestra, Kaohsiung Chinese Orchestra, Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra, Chai Found Music Workshop, Singapore Chinese Orchestra, and Ding Yi Music Company in Singapore, etc.

Chinese traditional music and culture continue to develop rapidly as more and more domestic and international composers contribute to the repertoire, and an

中国的民乐文化正在快速发展，越来越多的中外作曲家加入创作，也有越来越多的中国民乐团走向世界。无论是职业乐团还是小型乐团，都分别在市场和学术领域为中国民乐留下宝贵的财富。

李博，美国密苏里大学堪萨斯城分校作曲博士，师从陈怡、周龙教授。曾就读于中央音乐学院附中及本科，2012年保送至本院硕士研究生部并获得宝钢国家奖学金，师从唐建平教授。



2017年起担任中国民族管弦乐学会理事。2012年获德国“保罗·欣德米特作曲家大奖”，2012年大型混合室内乐《月光 城墙 散文诗》获第五届“CONTEMPO”国际室内乐作曲比赛一等奖，2017年管弦乐队作品《飞寒》获国家大剧院青年作曲家计划二等奖及乐手最喜爱作品奖，2018年管弦乐队作品《无脚鸟》获日本武满彻国际作曲比赛二等奖，2018年管弦乐队作品《十面》获美国美国作曲家作词家出版家协会 (ASCAP)主办的莫顿古德全美青年作曲比赛大奖等。

increasing number of Chinese traditional orchestras are being introduced internationally. No matter what they are, these large professional groups or small ensembles bring invaluable Chinese traditional musical treasures to both commercial markets and academic campuses.

LI Bo is an award-winning composer from China. He earned his Master of Music in Composition at the Central Conservatory of Music as a direct-entry student of Prof. TANG Jianping in 2016, and completed his Doctor of Musical Arts in Music Composition at the University of Missouri-Kansas City in 2019, where his teachers included Dr. Chen Yi, Dr. Zhou Long, Dr. Paul Rudy, and Dr. Reynold Simpson. Among his most prestigious honors are first prize in the 5th CONTEMPO International Composition Competition (2012), Excellent Composition Award in the 2017 Music From China International Composition Prize, Second Prize and the Performers Favorite Work Award at the 2016–2017 NCPA Young Composer Program in China, Second Prize in the 2018 Toru Takemitsu Composition Award, and an ASCAP Foundation Morton Gould Award (2018).



Remote Heart and Unremote Tradition – My Experience of Composing for Traditional Chinese Instruments

By Jiří Kadeřábek



My deep interest in composing for traditional Chinese instruments dates back to the spring of 2016 when I spent a couple of days in southern Chinese province of Fujian. I was lucky to repeatedly experience Nanyin – a fascinatingly complex, delicate and moving traditional music style which is still alive in various communities as well as in public venues across this region. I immediately fell in love with it as well as its mostly elderly interpreters, their way of playing – and of course their instruments. As I was discovering more traditional music styles

during my almost month field trip across China – for which I will never be grateful enough to the China-CEEC Cooperation project – I was getting more and more familiar with traditional Chinese instruments, their characteristics, and possibilities. On top of that, at the end of the trip I participated in a workshop for traditional Chinese instruments at the China Conservatory of Music in Beijing and also another workshop specifically focused on traditional Chinese percussion instruments. During those events I was provided an opportunity to play the

instruments and experiment with them myself which in fact served as a preparatory stage for my composing a couple of weeks later—and thousands of kilometers away.

When I got home, I studied my notes, recordings, and the other materials I had collected during my trip and especially at the workshops. Since I was also reading old Chinese poetry and even learning Chinese on my own at that time, the idea of a piece just spontaneously came up. Tao Yuan-ming's poem *Drinking Wine* served as a starting point for composing the diptych *Remote Heart I* and *Remote Heart II* for traditional Chinese instruments ensemble and orchestra, respectively. Only at the very first stage of composition did I work with pentatonic scales and derived harmonies in order to reflect traditional Chinese music in the subliminal level of my music as opposed to obvious Oriental flavour or quasi-quotations. As per my usual compositional methods, I used a computer to devise unexpected permutations and harmonic combinations of the material, but the initial as well as final choices were purely spontaneous and intuitive. The way of dealing with traditional Chinese instruments – after my above-mentioned experiences – was in fact no different from any other composing of mine. Nor was my way of dealing with the

form for each piece as well as with the dichotomy within the whole diptych: I used the same material, almost the same instruments (ensemble versus orchestra), and to some degree even the same music. Both pieces include open sections where only certain rules and durations are pre-determined but the rest is left up to the players and the conductor.

While composing these pieces, I realized that a traditional Chinese instrument ensemble and especially the Chinese instrument orchestra is in fact closer to my personal aesthetics and to a certain extent better fulfills my long-term technical demands than that of modern Western instruments. For example, the absence of a fingerboard across the erhu family makes players enormously skilled and comfortable with glissandos and all kinds of slides – of course, this phenomenon is closely related to general dealings with pitch in traditional Chinese music but at the same time it is also typical for my own music. Similarly, I could not get enough of the families of ruan, pipa, and guzheng. I have often missed “true” plucking sounds in modern Western orchestras, finding those produced by harp and pizzicato strings to be too smooth and rounded, and as a compensation I have instructed players to use guitar picks instead of fingernails! As for the yangqin, I had been already

familiar with its relative the cimbalom which is used in the traditional music of East Moravia where I grew up. Then there are some unique traditional Chinese percussion instruments – especially the bangu and xiao – as well as a number of instruments that are to a large extent similar to those of modern Western orchestras. Of course, even in these cases a tricky technical aspect might emerge (as with the family of flutes – di) or a distinct sound characteristics might surprise, given instrument's otherwise familiar construction (as with the family of double-reeded suonas).

I was very happy and honored to get the first ensemble part of the diptych *Remote Heart* performed by Shanghai Conservatory of Music National Chamber Orchestra in Shanghai in 2017 and the second orchestral part by Suzhou Chinese Orchestra during the ISCM World New Music Days in Beijing in 2018. I should also mention that during rehearsals and performances of both pieces I did not come across any significant resistance or misunderstanding from the interpreters. One might easily expect such a problem given that I am a composer from such a different cultural environment and without compromise in my approach – I really used my usual way of composing and again, intentionally avoided to quote, imitate, or

in any obvious way follow traditional Chinese music (which would presumably make the interpreters more comfortable but after a while perhaps also bored). Even the pieces' open sections did not cause too much trouble – phenomena such as aleatoric and proportional notation just needed to be explained and their interpretation corrected or funnily enough, restricted for excessive arbitrariness. Who knows, maybe the old traditional music is, after all, not so remote from recently composed music.

*I built my house in inhabited surroundings,
But there is no noise of carriages and horses.
Do you know how this may be?
When the heart is remote, solitude comes.
I pluck chrysanthemums by the eastern fence
and see the distant southern mountains.
The mountain air is fresh at dusk.
Flying birds return in flocks.
In these things there lies a great truth,
But when I try to express it, I cannot find the words.*

—Tao Yuan-ming 陶淵明 (365-427):
“Drinking Wine”

Czech composer **Jiří Kadeřábek** received PhD at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague and studied also at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague and Columbia University in New York. Recently, he has been involved in composing large choral-orchestral as well as traditional Chinese instruments works and conducting his opera *No Man* at the National Theater in Prague. He is currently composing a large work for Ensemble Modern to be premiered at the Prague Spring Festival in 2020.



Solar Composer Nicolae Teodoreanu

By Irina Hasnas



Nicolae Teodoreanu
(26 June 1962 – 13 February 2018, Bucharest)

Ed. Note: Nicolae Teodoreanu died shortly after being informed that his 2017 String Quartet No. 2 was chosen for performance during the 2018 ISCM World New Music Days in Beijing. We asked Dr. Irina Hasnaș, who is the delegate for the ISCM Romanian Section to share some reflections for us about this composer most of us never had the opportunity to meet.

Nicolae Teodoreanu went across the stage of life like a rainbow—with dignity, serenity, and compassion for others.

Who is Nicolae Teodoreanu in light of his biography?

Mr. Teodoreanu studied with Ștefan Niculescu, Aurel Stroe, and Anatol Vieru at the

Universitatea Națională de Muzică București, where he earned his B.A. in composition in 1986. He later studied with Paul-Heinz Dittrich, York Höller, Dieter Schnebel, and Walter Zimmermann at the Universität der Künste Berlin from 1994–96, on a scholarship from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, and studied electroacoustic music with Dieter Kaufmann at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Vienna in 1996–97, on the Herder-Stipendium. He earned his Ph.D. at the Academia de Muzică Gheorghe Dima in Cluj-Napoca in 2002, with his dissertation *Intonation Systems in Romanian Folklore*.

Among his honours were a mention in the competition Carl Maria von Weber (1991, for his first String Quartet) and a residency in Dilsberg (1999), on a scholarship from the Kulturstiftung Rhein-Neckar-Kreis.

As a musicologist, he wrote articles for numerous publications in Romania and was active as a researcher at the Institutul de Etnografie și Folclor Constantin Brăiloiu in Bucharest since 1990. He co-founded the Romanian Society of Ethnomusicology in 1996, which is the Romanian section of the International Council for Traditional Music. In addition, he undertook research at the Colegiul

Noua Europă in Bucharest from 1999–2002, on a scholarship.

He taught as an associate professor of computer music, ethnomusicology, and musical analysis at both the Universitatea Națională de Muzică București and the Universitatea Transilvania din Brașov since 1990.

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Who is Nicolae Teodoreanu by way of his compositions?

Teodoreanu was a composer of stage, orchestral, chamber, choral, solo vocal and electronic works that have been performed throughout Europe. Below is a list of representative works.

STAGE

Corabia – a mini-chamber opera which may also be performed as a concert work, with libretto by the composer, after the Bible, Gert Kaiser, Ludwig Achim von Arnim, and Clemens Brentano, for 4/8/12 mixed voices, trombone, tuba, violin, and cello (1996)

Winter hymns. Songs at the Nativity of the Lord for soprano, mezzo-soprano, bass, mixed choral group and chamber orchestra (2011)

ORCHESTRAL:

Poem for large orchestra (1989)

Concerto for viola and orchestra (1991–92)

Vârstele timpului for large orchestra (1993)

Concerto for violin and string orchestra (1995)

CHAMBER MUSIC

String Quartet (1989)

Recitativo secco e basso continuo for trumpet and double bass (1995)

Heterophony for 3 alto recorders (1995)

Strigare de biruință for unaccompanied violin (1999)

Murmur for saxophone (soprano/sopranino/baritone), viola and piano (2011); version for flute/piccolo/bass flute, piano and percussion (2014)

Noison for flute in C, piano and percussion (2014)

Buds and flowers for two violas (2016)

String Quartet No. 2 (2017)

CHORAL AND VOCAL ENSEMBLE

Cantecul Bradului (on lyrics by Lucian Blaga) for mixed chorus (1993)

Ceremonial (texts from the Book of Psalms and folk sources) for mixed chorus (1994)

Strigare (text from Psalm 101) for 8 mixed voices (1995)

Sicut in caelo et in terra (text from the Bible) for 8 mixed voices and percussion (1999)

Lamnicu (Pedestal) for children's choir and percussion (2012)

Nunta (Wedding, on verses by Daniel Turcea) for 4 psaltic voices, violin, viola, Bb clarinet (doubling on bass clarinet), and harpsichord (2013)

Gloria Patri. Omaggio of Liviu Glodeanu for mixed chorus (2015)

SOLO VOCAL

Noaptea de cremene (cantata, text by Vasile Voiculescu) for mezzo-soprano and small orchestra (1986)

Lacrimă și Rază (text by Lucian Blaga), mezzo-soprano and piano (1988)

Anastasia (text by Daniel Turcea) for mezzo-soprano, flute, clarinet, cello, piano, and percussion (1992)

Cântarea nopții (text by Daniel Turcea), soprano, flute and guitar (2002)

Variations Varis for bariton (psalt) and instrumental ensemble (2007)

Primer (on Verses by Ignatie Grecu) for soprano and piano (2015)

ELECTROACOUSTIC:

Prima for fixed media (1996, revised 2002)

Cuvântul (The Word) for fixed media (1998)

Hău Zăbavă (Huu Funnel) for tape (2005)

Fântâna tinereții (Youth Fountain) for flute, cello and live electronics (2010)

Zumzet for electronic media, 8 channels or stereo (2013)

Greieri și clopote (Electronic crickets and bells) for electronic media (2015)

*

Who is Nicolae Teodoreanu as revealed in the contents of his music ?

Nicolae Teodoreanu's pieces are wonderful things—beautiful and melodious, without those contrasting aspirations, staples of the contemporary ethos. They can be relished with pleasure as well as curiosity. Teodoreanu was very well acquainted with Byzantine folklore and music and he often drew his inspiration from it.

Teodoreanu's ethnomusicological compositions and research were an attempt to prove and re-evaluate the psycho-cultural fundamentals of music, which he addressed both at the level of musical styles and physical acoustics. Special attention was given to sound and its expressive properties. In working with musical material, he often resorted to algorithmic and computerized methods for both his instrumental and electronic works. His recent compositional concerns included the fusion of advanced

European techniques with elements taken from various folk music traditions. The human voice was of particular interest to him, both lyrical voices and psaltic voices. The use of psaltic voices, though it comes from "traditional" music, sounds like it is from another world.

Here are some of Nicolae Teodoreanu's own words about music:

“I think the idea and the shape are born together. The idea is not something abstract, but it is already a prefiguration of something concrete, and its material, yet non-existent, is nevertheless virtually there. I cannot say that I have a program or a theoretical concept that I'm going to do. It's hard to define yourself. My feeling is that they're progressing with every new job. It's kind of tabula rasa, you have to reconfigure your palette. In fact, of course, there are some things going on, whether you want it or not. Sometimes I have gone from various morpho-syntactic aspects such as pentatonic structures, heterophonic or isonic techniques, oriental or baroque forms of ornamentation, polyphonic compositions of medieval origin such as organum or proportional canon. On the other hand, I have been attracted to electronic techniques, working with "sound objects" in which we could use continuum-marked musical matter without the

sequential cutting of the temporal domain into well-proportioned time values or precisely tempered tones.

“Since the 1990s, I have had a certain interest in traditional music. I was attracted to the diatonic structures of the pentatonic or pre-pentatonic type, which have a certain clarity and simplicity, a certain light, and which we consider to be original, ancient musical forms. Starting from a certain type of chromatic modality, more or less dodecaphonic – I employed an algorithm to the diatonicism present in these simpler, "primitive" scales. During my stay in Germany, I discovered that there is something simpler and "older than pentatonic" (as Marius Schneider says). This is the very sound that is born from a world of noise, from the indeterminate.”

This is Nicolae Teodoreanu, the solar composer who has left us an impressive musical heritage with his compositions and musicological studies. He built beautiful and harmonic sonorities and architectures, in ways similar to the work of a jeweler.

Romanian composer and musicologist Dr. **Irina Hasnaș** studied at the Ciprian Porumbescu Academy of Music with Ștefan Niculescu, Aurel Stroe, Alexandru Pașcanu and Nicolae Beloiu. She continued her studies with composer

Theodor Grigoriu, and in 2000 received a doctorate in music from the Cluj-Napoca Academy of Music. In addition to her compositional activities, Hasnaș has worked as an editor for Romanian National Radio since 1987. Her works have been performed internationally.



A Colourful and Versatile Figure – Remembering Franz Eckert (1931–2018)

By Anna Dorota Władyczka



Dr. Franz Eckert during the 2008 ISCM World New Music Days in Vilnius, Lithuania.

[Ed. Note: Longtime ISCM legal counsel and ISCM Honorary Member Franz Eckert died on Thursday, November 16, 2017, at the age of 86. Dr. Eckert served as the ISCM's legal counsel from 1971 to 2015. He was elected an ISCM Honorary Member for the great value of his work for ISCM in 2001. Born in Lower Austria, on November 14, 1931, Eckert studied law in Vienna and from 1961 worked as a commercial lawyer in Baden. In addition to being an internationally reputed lawyer, he was a musician, a social activist, a deacon of the Roman Catholic Church serving at the Klein-Mariazell Basilica, and a member of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre in

Jerusalem. He worked as a lawyer in a family business which was one of Austria's most prominent law firms. He also participated in the negotiation of the Treaty of Lisbon for the European Union and was the former European Commissioner in the General Secretariat of the Austrian Bishops' Conference. In addition to ISCM, Eckert worked on behalf of many other musical organizations including Jeunesse Musicales, the Austrian Section of the ISCM, and the Alban Berg Foundation for which he served on the board of directors. Anna Dorota Władyczka, who served on ISCM's Executive Committee from 2014 to 2018, has shared the following brief reminiscence and some photos.]



Franz Eckert in Slovenia in 2003

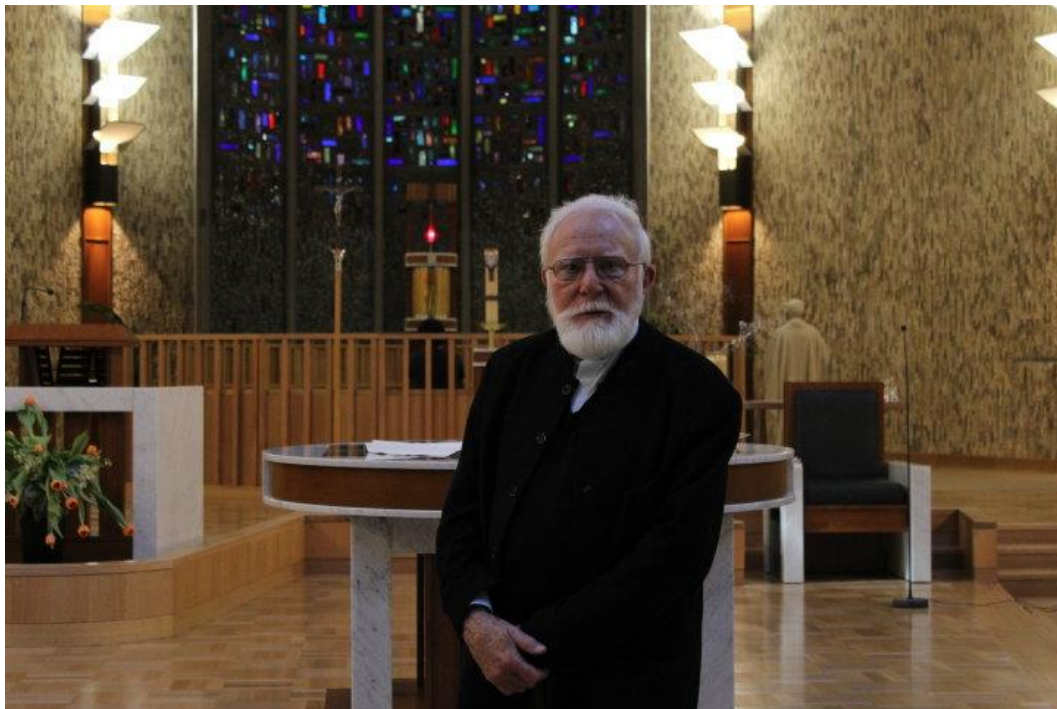
Professor Eckert was a colourful and versatile figure. The first time I met him was at the ISCM World Music Days in Oslo in 1990. This was my first festival and General Assembly of the ISCM. As the first delegate of the Polish Section, I was honoured to re-nominate Dr. Franz Eckert as a candidate for the ISCM Legal Counsel and he was re-elected. This is how we commenced our acquaintance, which soon evolved into a friendship which lasted for many years. I can remember many meetings with Franz and his family. Special places were Warsaw, Mexico City, Essen, Yokohama (where he was elected an ISCM Honorary Member), Slovenia, his family home in Alland, and Wrocław. Some memories have thankfully been saved in photos, many of which are on Facebook.



Dr. Franz Eckert meeting then Croatian President (and composer) Ivo Josipović during the 2011 ISCM World New Music Days in Zagreb.



Dr. Franz Eckert (left) with Henk Heuvelmans, Arthur van der Drift, Lars Graugaard, and Peter Swinnen in Ljubljana, Slovenia in 2014.



Dr. Frank Eckert in Australia 2010

IN MEMORIAM

[Ed Note: The following is a list of important people in the contemporary music community from around the world who have died in the past year as was reported ISCM delegates during the 2018 ISCM General Assembly in Beijing in May 2018 who also provided promotional photos unless they were already in our archives or provided by the deceased's publishers or next of kin. The photo of C. Taylor is by [Michael Hoefner](#) (CC 3.0). The photos of Z. Bujarski (by Andrzej Glanda) and L. Ciuciura (by Andrzej Zborski) are from the archive of the Polish Composers' Union / POLMIC; the photos of K. Droba, A. Nikodemowicz, and A. Rakowski were taken at the Polish Composers' Union by Marta Skotnicka-Karska and are reprinted with permission.]



Joseph Benakis

Greek composer, choral director and one-time vice president of the Greek Composers' Union
(29 March 1924 – 19 October 2017)

Glenn Branca

American composer and electric guitarist
(6 October 1948 – 13 May 2018)



Colin Brumby

Australian composer and conductor
(18 June 1933 – 3 January 2018)

Zbigniew Bujarski

Polish composer
(21 August 1933 – 13 April 2018)



Leoncjusz Ciuciura

Polish contemporary music promoter
and the co-organizer of the Polish Chapter of Jeunesses Musicales International
(22 June 1930 – 28 February 2017)

Paul Cram

Canadian jazz composer and tenor saxophonist
(11 August 1952 – 20 March, 2018)



Csaba Deák

Hungarian-born Swedish composer
Deák's 1994 composition *Novem* for saxophone quartet and brass quintet was performed during the 2005 ISCM World Music Days in Zagreb.
(16 April 1932 – 23 February 2018)

Dimitris Dimakopoulos

Greek composer and pianist
(17 March 1965 – 29 April 2017)



Quenten Doolittle

USA-born Canadian composer, conductor, and violist
(21 May 1925 – March 8, 2018)

Krzysztof Droba

Polish musicologist and contemporary music promoter
(25 July 1946 – 10 November 2017)

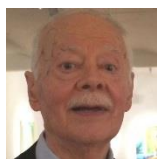
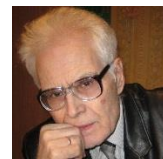


Dr. Franz Eckert

ISCM Honorary Member and ISCM Legal Counsel from 1971 to 2015
(14 November 1931 – 16 November 2017)

See page 33 for a brief photo essay in his remembrance.

Georgi Georgiev (a.k.a. George Georgiadis)
Russian composer and music educator of Greek ancestry
(7 October 1935 – 24 November 2017)



Richard Hundley
American art song composer and pianist
(1 September 1931 – 25 February 2018)

Milko Kelemen

Croatian composer who resided in Germany during the last years of his life
Keleman's orchestral work *Skolion* received its world premiere at the 1960 ISCM WMD (Köln)
and there were additional performances of his music during the 1958, 1967, and 2005 WMDs.
(30 March 1924 – 8 March 2018)



Matt Marks
American composer, French hornist, and founding member of Alarm Will Sound
He had been scheduled to perform with AWS during the 2018 ISCM WMD in Beijing.
(23 January 1980 – 11 May 2018)

Miroslav Miletich

Croatian composer and violist
(22 August 1925 – 3 January 2018)



Rev. Peter Mourtos
Greek sacred music composer who was based
in the United States for most of his life
(21 May 1922 – 23 January 2017)

Andrzej Nikodemowicz

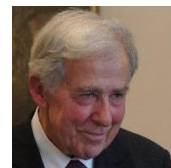
Ukrainian-born Polish composer
(2 January 1925 – 28 January 2017)



Graciela Paraskevaidis
Argentinian-born Uruguayan avant-garde composer and musicologist of Greek ancestry
Her brass quartet *Soy de un país donde* received its world premiere during the WMD 2006;
additional performances of her music took place during the 1982, 1990, and 1993 WMDs.
(1 April 1940 – 21 February 2017)

Andrzej Rakowski

Polish musicologist
(16 June 1931 – 3 April 2018)



Roswell Rudd
American jazz composer and trombonist
(17 November 1935 – 21 December 2017)

Michael Sahl

American composer
(2 September 1934 – 29 March 2018)



**Judith Sainte Croix**

American composer, keyboardist, vocalist, and conductor
(20 January 1949 – 17 January 2018)

Dieter Schnebel

German composer and musicologist

Schnebel served as the chair for the jury for 1977 ISCM WMD in Bonn and a highlight among many performances of his music during WMD festivals was the Dieter Schnebel Festival during the 1975 ISCM WMD in Paris and the world premiere of his *Thanatos – Eros* for orchestra with male and female vocal soloists during the 1982 ISCM WMD in Graz.
(14 March 1930 – 20 May 2018)

**Mark E. Smith**

British singer-songwriter and bandleader of the seminal punk rock band The Fall
(5 March 1957 – 24 January 2018)

Heiner Stadler

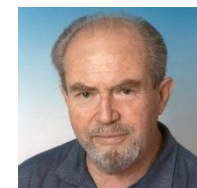
German-born American composer, arranger and record producer
(9 April 1942 – 18 February 2018)

**Cecil Taylor**

American composer, pianist and free jazz pioneer
(15 March 1929 – 5 April 2018)

Vassilis Tenidis

Greek guitarist and composer in multiple genres
(11 December 1936 – 8 February 2017)

**Nicolae Teodoranu**

Romanian composer

His String Quartet No. 2 (2017) was the work chosen in 2018 from the ISCM Romanian Section's WMD submission and was performed during the 2018 ISCM WMD in Beijing
(26 June 1962 – 13 February 2018)

See page 28 for an appreciation of Teodoranu's music and ideas.

Dimitris Themelis

Greek composer, musicologist,
and a co-founder of the Thessaloniki State University Music Department
(1 May 1931 – 11 June 2017)

**Olly Wilson**

American composer and musicologist
(7 September 1937 – 12 March 2018)

A Dynamic World of Music – ISCM WMD 2017, Vancouver

By Anna Veismane



“Vertical Orchestra 2017,” an ensemble of 18 electric guitars, performing in the atrium of the Vancouver Public Library. Photo by FJO. (For more 2017 ISCM Festival photos, see WNMM Vol. 27)

There are occasions when, at the end of the day, the implacable passage of time leaves a lot of unfinished work behind, and there are days when time stretches out, as it seemed to me to be the case on 2nd November 2017, when the movement of seconds appeared to be reversed and a day lasted for 34 hours. I arrived from a cold autumn night into an unrealistic Vancouver day which was just as rainy, just in time to make it for

the ISCM WMD 2017 opening concert.

This was a well-organized, carefully and long-planned festival, according to colleagues with many years of experience at the ISCM. I agree with this without any doubt, although I can only compare it with the festival held in Ljubljana two years ago.

One of the most controversial and essential aspects was the choice of musical pieces, so I asked David Pay, the Artistic Director of the WMD 2017 Festival, how the selection of works was carried out:

We (the creative team) trusted the musicians fully. We invited artistic groups from Vancouver and its vicinity with different stylistic orientations and temperaments. We wanted to showcase our culture; besides, inviting musicians from Europe and Asia would cost very much. We asked them to select some works from the scores submitted to the ISCM and to include music written by Canadian composers in the second part. Balancing in this way was justified because the concert programs turned out to be uniform and well-coordinated. In other festivals, I've had the feeling that musicians do not have a special understanding and willingness to play particular music. I, in turn, supervised the selection of work, tried to make sure that a musical piece from each ISCM section was included. The involvement of musicians in

the selection of musical pieces is not common practice at the ISCM festivals; we borrowed this idea from Belgium.

To make sure this article does not turn into a list of composer names that would be empty and redundant without the presence of music, I will focus my wide-angle lens towards certain regions. I was interested in Canadian music, because of its sufficient remoteness from Latvia and because it is not often heard in regular concerts, and in the creative works of Baltic composers, because of the possibility to see it from a different angle.

The music of our neighbours from Estonia was performed in two concerts; both composers, Tõnu Kõrvits and Märt-Matis Lill, were present at the concert. (They will also be producing the 2019 ISCM WMD which will take place in Tallinn and Tartu and link to the 40th anniversary of the Estonian Music Days.)

When the Buffalo Went Away, a musical piece by Märt-Matis Lill, which has been performed around the world many times, is a scary fragment of the history of the American Indians, which seemed to be composed for this

very occasion, specifically for these people (including musicians of the Standing Wave Ensemble), specifically for the place where, as the organisers of the festival gratefully said at the beginning of each concert, many indigenous tribes – the Muswueam, Squamish, and Coast Salish peoples – once used to live.

The Song of Song of Songs (from the Song of Solomon), a bright cantata of radiant softness by Tõnu Kõrvits, was performed at the concert of choir music by the voices of gentle timbres of the Elektra Women's Choir. The sound creation process of both the female choir and the mixed Vancouver Chamber Choir was velvety soft and caressing, and the listeners could feel it perfectly in two masterpieces by Canadian composers Jordan Nobles and R. Murray Schafer. Canadian avant-garde elder stateman R. Murray Schafer was elected an Honorary Member of the ISCM this year. I admit that I'm still charmed by the creative work of this outstanding composer. An outstanding performance was delivered by the Musica Intima vocal ensemble, especially the ethnically vivid, virtuoso performance by four male voices in the piece by Egyptian composer Amr Okba.

Lithuanian music was represented by Egidija Medekšaitė, a composer currently living in Scotland. *Megh Malhar*, an architectural piece performed by the Bozzini String Quartet, was composed using the musical technique of repetition and was based on Indian raga motifs dealing with the waiting for rain. *Tonight My Shadow Sinks Into the Wall*, a piece for violin solo by Vytautas Germanavičius, matched the temperament of violinist Müge Büyükçelen in terms of its nature and vitality. The artist played finely, in a virtuoso manner, singing Japanese haiku at the same time.

During the festival, a jury appointed by the General Assembly examined the works of young composers (under 35 years of age). This year's ISCM Young Composer Award, which includes a commission for a new piece for an upcoming ISCM festival, went to the Canadian composer James O'Callaghan, whose work was extremely sophisticated, multi-layered, and full of subtle details, bustling continuously in a fusion of electronics, acoustic instruments, and visual and spatial elements. A number of vivid claims for recognition were also made by composers Michael Taplin, Lachlan

Skipworth, and Grzegorz Pieniek. The music of Martin Rane Bauck was characterised by peculiar and intimate semitones: grey, greyer, and slightly greyer.

I had expected a breezier and more powerful wave of new music in the concerts of symphonic music played by the National Arts Centre Orchestra and the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra. The musical aesthetics of these pieces was closer to American movie soundtracks, with a few exceptions. The average arithmetic: a classical texture, predictable form development, and well-tested means of expression. In chamber music composers are possibly more likely to take more risks, to be more courageous and more open than when facing large collective conjuncture. However, here this manoeuvring between the jungle of contemporary scores and public-friendly repertoire was a matter of tactics: tickets were sold out to ALL the 27 concerts. The Orpheum Theatre, the home of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra with 2780 seats, could hardly be filled without a popular player of the sitar like Mohamed Assani playing for the public. In general, the interest of the general public can be explained by attracting

locally (meaning: from the entire vicinity of Vancouver) recognised musicians and using a long-term marketing strategy; interviews, promotions, studies, radio broadcasts, several live video shows, workshops. One must also mention the touching and significant help from volunteers, including people with disabilities.

Some of the unconventional events were free of charge, for example, the performance of 18 guitarists who played in the colour-lit glass niches of the Vancouver Public Library. The original music composition for 18 electric guitars sounded psychedelically and surrealistically, like a giant organ. It seemed like we were listening to a single big composition consisting of several parts. The unusual atmosphere in the huge hall drew the attention of a very large number of people. In the Instruments of Change Project, children and young people had the opportunity to improvise on various musical instruments and create music together with professionals. In the Sound Walk Project, one could hear the sounds and noises of the city, this time on a new quality level: listening in, assisted by a guide. At the Driftwood Percussion Ensemble stand-

up concert, musicians moved from one stage to another, with various objects – wooden boards, glasses, plastic pipes and a plethora of traditional percussion instruments – stacked on them.

Although it is uncomfortable to stand waiting for more than an hour, the idea of an ‘open door’ event is exactly this – come in and go away when you wish.

The three-part closing concert, at which *Mercurium* by Gundega Šmite was performed, was created with imagination and fantasy. Here, each of the three pianos – a concert piano, a prepared piano, and a piano with electronics – had a function of its own. The question – when exactly to prepare the piano – that is always so difficult to answer was answered successfully here. Surprisingly, the three-hour long marathon did not seem uniform or tedious. There was a variety of textures and types of touches, as suggested by the name of *The Art of Touching the Keyboard* (which is also the name of a solo piano composition by Judith Weir), complemented by video installations, electronics, singing, and narration; besides, each of the four pianists had a different style of playing. The reading of *Mercurium* by Rachel K. Iwaasa seemed to be immodestly fragile, and more abstract

and ethereal, compared to the interpretation by Latvian pianist Reinis Zariņš.

For the first time in the ISCM’s history, composers could send in graphic scores. Probably because Vancouver has the *Now Society Ensemble*. When I improvise myself, the sense that improvising is probably more exciting for me than for the listeners often creeps in. Not this time. In the musical piece by Fredrik Gran, one could follow the graphic score in a projection, and this showed the ability of the musicians to react sensitively, diversely, with a uniform sense of the form of ensemble. There was no lack of humour, either, when the public was invited to play a synthesizer during the performance of Henri Augusto, which—as it turned out—produced no sound (this could not be noticed immediately in the overall whirlpool of sounds). This did not prevent the public from waiting in the queue for this entertainment and even to play four-handedly.

The improvisation of Gabriel Dharmoo at the composer-performer concert was particularly memorable: a singer, dancer, and actor who built, in tandem with a video story, a theatrical scene of

the paradigms and clichés of contemporary music. A late night humour show for those tired of art. It was great!

Artistically, the highest peak of the Festival for me was the concert of the Montreal Contemporary Music Ensemble under the artistic direction of conductor Véronique Lacroix. The contribution of all the performing artists and the true and fair attitude towards the interpretation of complex music deserves quite some respect and recognition. Great performing artists: the Bozzini Quartet, the Emily Carr String Quartet, the Land's End Ensemble, the Aventa Ensemble, the Victoria Symphony, violinist Müge Büyükçelen, flutist Mark Takeshi McGregor. Composers from outside Canada: Jay Schwartz, Madeleine Isaksson, Veli-Mati Puumala, Lotta Wennakoski, Injaki Estrada Torio, Talia Amar, Kristian Blak; composers from Canada: Jordan Nobles, R.Murray Schafer, Zosha di Castri, Omar Daniel, Philippe Leroux, Hildegard Westerkamp, Ana Sokolovic.

Canadian music is characterized by freely individualized but clearly readable development of form, which

is most often combined into a single thread on the basis of the conceptual idea. I happened to ear-witness a professionally solid style of writing, a wide range of ethnic expressions which was not an end in itself but rather a means of expression bringing warmth and the sense of personal closeness. It's a promising and dynamic world of music in search of new ways, traditions, and its own self.

Composer **Anna Veismane**'s has been performed by Latvian National Symphony Orchestra, Latvian Radio Choir, string quartet ConTempo, ISSA Sonus

Ensemble and The Concorde Contemporary Music Ensemble as well as violinist Baiba Skride, violist Edmundo Ramirez, accordionists William Schimmel, Timo Kinnunen, pianist Lauma Skride, and guitarist Bogdan Mihailescu. Among her most recent world premieres were *Three Colored Blossoms* (The Queens New Music Festival, NYC) and Concerto for viola d'amore (I Solisti Veneti chamber orchestra, Italy, and North/South Chamber Orchestra, NYC). In addition to serving as a member of the Latvian Composer's Union's board and the chairperson of ISCM Latvia section, Anna Veismane works at Latvian Radio 3 – Klasika as a producer of music recordings and program manager.



Intensivo massimo!

– ISCM World New Music Days 2018 (Beijing, China)

By Anna Veismane



Outside Beijing's National Center for the Performing Arts. (Photo by FJO.)

From the Asian perspective, Latvia is a small exotic country. Getting to know the cultural habits of another country obviously stimulates us to reassess our perceptions and assumptions, since we are all placed in the centre of our subjective reality, looking at the world through the prism of our personal and collective heritage. It seems to us (meaning all European countries) that we are the cradle of culture. Indeed, we are. There are many historical facts serving as

evidence for that. As we watch the processes going on in China – huge investments in culture, new concert halls being built, progressive rate of overpopulation, booming economy – the shift in the centre of gravity of culture from Europe to Asia is quite real, even natural in the future. Does this sound too apocalyptic? In China, the air is filled with desires and expectations driven by the huge expansion. The Asian region is/will be full of commitment, ideas, and future

investments. This was also confirmed by the presentation of the 2021 Festival plan by the Shanghai and Nanning delegations and the subsequent vote of the General Assembly; the 2021 WMD Festival will be held in the cities of Shanghai and Nanning in China. “Yes, we have concert halls; yes, we have financial backing,” representatives of the two ISCM Chinese Sections claimed.

The success of the Beijing Festival is due to the close cooperation with the Beijing Central Conservatory, the unusual architectural forms of the beautiful, spacious concert hall, and musicians invited from the whole world. A wide range of different genres and styles – from electronic music to solos and duets, from choral music to works of symphonic magnitude – were performed in three concerts every day.



Before one of the concerts
(Photo by Bruce Crossman).

The sound of all the orchestras that performed at the concerts was marked by its scope, density, and distinct grandeur. But misunderstanding of the stylistics of contemporary music and use of exaggerated means of expression could be perceived in the performance of certain 20th century classics, such as *Three Postludes* by W. Lutosławski or *Three Intermezzi* by H.W. Henze. There were problems caused by the lack of proper communication. The composers whose music was performed by guest musicians were in a privileged position. Many Chinese musicians do not understand English and are not particularly familiar with the means of expression of contemporary music. While they have learned how to read the score, they fail to decipher the content and meaning in its entirety. However, no matter how hard it was to communicate during the first rehearsals, musicians tried their best to do everything possible at that moment. The fact that so many artistic collectives – Ensemble Modern, Alarm Will Sound, the Mivos Quartet, the Australian String Quartet, the Tokyo Saxophone Quartet, the Moscow Contemporary Music Ensemble – were invited from Europe and the United States specifically demonstrates the

willingness to collaborate, understand, and integrate in the circulation of the 21st century music.

Like all countries which have hosted the festival, China presented its national composers extensively, including those who have studied or now live abroad. *Ink Splashing II* by Denqing Wen, a concert for the Chinese traditional instrument suona and orchestra by Wenchen Qin, musical pieces for a saxophone quartet by Yang Xinmin, Guo Yuan, Yang Xiaozhong, *Bright Light and Cloud Shadows* by Gao Ping, *Blast* by Zhong Juncheng for the Alarm Will Sound Ensemble, these are the names and pieces I can readily recall. These musical pieces were colourful, professionally forceful music, with a gentle national touch at times.

Typically, the biographies of many Chinese composers start with a list of positions held in the political party and very vague and general descriptions, for example, stating that the composer has received awards at “many” contests, the composer’s music has been performed by “many” famous performers. There were also a few pieces *a la* Strauss-Mahler-Shostakovich, full of praise and pathos.

Piatti, played wholeheartedly on a high pitch, made one start well before the anticipated blast. The Chinese like pathos and magnitude, this is what they appreciate, but the burst of applause after the performance is short and formal.

Eating, walking, talking on the phone during a concert is part of the code of conduct of a well-behaved average Chinese person (by this I mean people who are interested in contemporary music at all). Later on I started poking those who were talking loudly with a finger, a nasty thing to do on my part but it helped. During the last concerts of the festival, the situation seemed to have improved, or maybe I just got used to such behaviour.

However, one can only learn from experience, and the desire and commitment of the organisers of the Beijing Modern Music Festival to raise interest in contemporary music must be praised. One must simply recall how limited contacts with the rest of the world were just recently.

The concert by the Mivos Quartet, in which *Trataka. Point Noir* by composer Andris Dzenītis was played, was surely the best in this Festival!

Does this statement contain notes of pathos inspired by socialist slogans? Just a tiny bit. I'm learning from my colleagues from other countries how to recognise talents, how to avoid condemning and complaining. In fact, the statement that the concert by the Mivos Quartet was the best, or, in a more impartial approach – one of the best, was backed by many professional arguments. Firstly, the repertoire was selected by the ISCM jury, while the programmes of other ensembles included compositions that they liked and had already been familiar with. It should be noted that concert programmes did not always provide complete information about the country of the composer, or whether the composer was eligible as a candidate for the ISCM Young Composer Award. String quartets composed by Marcelo Ajubitta (Argentina), Jean-Pierre Deleuze (Belgium), Austin Ho Kwen Yip (China Hong Kong), Nicolae Teodoreanu (Romania), Gyula Bankovi (Hungary), individually bright in character, different in temperament and playing techniques, were performed.

An uncompromising expression, contrasts of large fields of colour in the

musical piece by Andris Dzenītis which was performed at the end of the concert created a distinct peak of culmination. Those who formerly had the impression that Latvian music was a contemplative form of expression inspired by the landscape, found the musical piece composed by Andris surprisingly charged and dynamic, even destructive, yet memorable as a consequence.



The Mivos Quartet in performance during the 2018 ISCM World New Music Days. (Photo by Bruce Crossman.)

The doubt that the only rehearsal in the morning of the concert might not be enough to produce a high-quality performance was not substantiated. The musicians were familiar with the score and adapted individual details working together with the composer. Details does not necessarily mean things that are less important; details serve to create the overall picture and provide for a credible interpretation. Importantly, Andris's music has very precise notation, which should be

taken into account when submitting works for festivals and competitions. In fact, when submitting them anywhere.

The Quartet's performance was excellent throughout the programme, with a markedly well-placed balance. Unintentionally, I compared this performance of *Trataka. Point Noir* to the interpretation by the Sinfonietta Riga string quartet which was the first group to perform this piece; their interpretation created an even more marked feeling of the lack of compromise, the feeling of "being on the edge of a knife." Yet this time, too, the bow hair broke as a result of the concentrated very strong bow pressure, and there was no shortage of drama – *intensivo massimo!*

After the excellent presentation of the 2019 Festival by Estonian colleagues, I was asked when exactly Latvia planned to host an ISCM Festival. I was only able to mutter "we're thinking about it; we're considering it." The most important prerequisite is appropriate infrastructure: at least one large concert hall is required. Latvian musicians cause the least doubt, and this conviction is confirmed by the experience we've had at the Vancouver

and Beijing Festivals; performing artists tend to differ in their professional ability.

I wish to thank the Latvian State Culture Capital Foundation (SCCF) and the Latvian Composers Union (LCU). It is very important for composers to be present at performances of their music. No one has a particular interest or questions when the composer is invisible, unfamiliar, and intangible. We are here, we hear, we talk – *più intenso!*

NOTE

The following terms that I've used throughout this article were taken from the score of *Trataka. Point Noir* by composer Andris Dzenītis:

Piatti - Crash Cymbals

very strong bow pressure

intensivo massimo! most intensely

Più intenso! more intense

For a photo and biography of Anna Veismane, please see page 44.

Sprawling, Diverse, and Often Overwhelming – A Report on the 2018 ISCM World Music Days (Beijing, China)

by Stephen Lias



The Central Conservatory of Music's Prince Mansion Concert Hall (Photo by Bruce Crossman).

The annual ISCM World Music Days Festival is a sprawling, diverse, and often overwhelming array of concerts, meetings, receptions, installations, and networking. In my twelve years attending this event, it has taken me to such far-flung places as Hong Kong, Lithuania, Poland, Australia, Vancouver, and South Korea (to

name a few). It has (directly or indirectly) also introduced me to some of the most fulfilling artistic discoveries, most compelling travel experiences, and most long-lasting friendships of my career.

And so it was with great anticipation that I made plans for my first trip to Beijing for

the 2018 World Music Days Festival hosted by the Beijing Modern Music Festival. Not wanting to miss the opportunity to do some adventuring (and to clear my head after a long semester of teaching), I arrived a week early to backpack along the Great Wall and visit some of the villages in the region. This proved to be a winning formula and by the time I returned to Beijing, I was refreshed and eager to see old friends and hear new music.

With a festival as complex and multifaceted as ISCM-WMD, any report will (of course) be only one person's experience, so I make no apologies for having missed some concerts and for not being the late-night social owl who populates the nearly-endless after parties. My responsibilities as chair of the jury for the Young Composers Award required me to attend the majority of the concerts, though, and I formed some fruitful new relationships with delegates from other sections in the general assembly meetings.

How best to write about a festival like this? While chronologies are a typical approach, I find them deadly to read, and I'd prefer not to merely repeat what can easily be found in the program booklet. Rather, the elements

of the festival broadly fall into a few main categories for me:

- The Concerts (compositions, performers, audiences, etc.)
- The General Assembly (elections, planning, working groups, etc.)
- Matters Related to the Host (venues, organization, communication, etc.)

So I will organize my summary of the event around these overarching topics.

THE CONCERTS



Lias taking notes prior to the start of one of the 2018 ISCM WMD concerts. (Photo by Bruce Crossman)

By my count, this eight-day festival included 21 concerts featuring ensembles from seven countries (China, Germany, Japan, USA, New Zealand, Australia, and Russia). Together, these events presented roughly 144 pieces by composers from nearly 45 countries. Since there was no comprehensive list provided in the program, I'll include one here, but it may not be

exhaustive since some composers have dual citizenship, and some nationalities were not listed.

| | | |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Argentina | France | Norway |
| Australia | Germany | Poland |
| Austria | Greece | Romania |
| Belgium | Hungary | Russia |
| Brazil | Iceland | Serbia |
| Canada | Ireland | Slovakia |
| Chile | Israel | South Africa |
| China | Italy | Spain |
| Croatia | Japan | Sweden |
| Cyprus | Korea | Switzerland |
| Czech Republic | Latvia | Turkey |
| Denmark | Lithuania | United Kingdom |
| Estonia | Netherlands | Ukraine |
| Finland | New Zealand | USA |

The programming was admirably diverse, and embraced a wide range of styles, genres, ensembles, and artistic approaches. Some of the concerts, performers, and pieces that I found the most memorable were:

- The opening concert at the magnificent Centre for the Performing Arts. This wonderfully varied concert reminded me what ISCM is all about - diversity of programming and excellence in composition and performance. Highlights included:
 - The exceptionally expressive and evocative suona performance of Zhang Qianyan on Wenshen Qin's

Calling for Phoenix (China) at the opening concert. The colorful orchestration and captivating performance drew an exceptionally warm response from the audience.

- Ryan Latimer's exuberant *Antiarkie* (UK) which I found irresistible in its tongue-in-cheek irreverence.
- And (of course) the epic emotional climaxes and exquisite colors of Chen Yi's *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy* (USA).

- The engaging special techniques in Wen Bihe's electronic piece *Beyond* (China/Macau).
- Dynamic and expressive playing from the Tokyo Saxophone Quartet.
- George Christofi's deft mixture of traditional and extended flute techniques in his *Diplophonia* (Cyprus).
- The energetic and fiery performance of Martin Blessinger's *Exordium et Infra Furorem* (USA Texas) by violinist Jingye Zhang.
- The Mivos Quartet's uniformly excellent performance – I

particularly enjoyed the dynamic contrasts in *String Quartet No. 5: Time Motor* by Ho Kwen Austin Yip (China Hong Kong).

- Hu Yixuan's chamber opera *L'Accordeur* about a blind piano tuner.
- The heartbreaking purity of the Youth Choir's performance of Zhang Zheng's *That Time* (China).
- The German National Youth Choir's whimsical choice of socks. Little details like this make wonderful counterpoint to the often-stuffy world of concert music. (Of course their singing was great too!)
- William Mival's piece *Correntandemente (Running-ly-ish)* (UK). I was fascinated by both the piece, and the story behind it.
- Ligeti's *Métamorphoses Nocturnes* as performed by the Australian String Quartet. I didn't know this piece, but it was a great reminder of why we honor Ligeti. Variety, subtlety, rhythmic inventiveness, ... what a master. And so beautifully performed! One of my favorite moments of this festival.
- The evocative singing and microtonal elements of Saad

Haddad's *Takht* (USA) performed by the Hanzhou Philharmonic Orchestra.

Another highlight of the festival for me was the exceptional concert by Alarm Will Sound - particularly Charles Peck's *Vinyl* (USA). Tragically, this ensemble's participation at the World Music Days Festival came only two weeks after the unexpected death of founding member and horn player Matt Marks. The ensemble's stunning performance, coming on the heels of such devastating news, was a testament to both their professionalism, and to Matt Marks's memory.



Chen Yi salutes Alarm Will Sound and their music director Alan Pierson following their performance of Stefan Freund's arrangement of her piece *Sparkle*. (Photo by Bruce Crossman.)

One of my principal aims in coming to these festivals is to further my exposure to (and understanding of) musical styles and approaches that I might not otherwise

encounter. Thus, as I read back over my marginal notes from the concerts, I'm happy to see comments like:

"I have no idea what that meant."

"Not sure what to make of this."

"Out of sync, but maybe very cool."

I'm always reminded that the presented pieces selected from the ISCM submissions all went through a rigorous, multi-tiered vetting process both within their own sections, as well as by the hosts and presenting ensembles. So when I encounter pieces that I'm unable to make sense of, I'm very happy to assume that the fault is mine. This festival (as usual) challenged my ears and mind in all the right ways.

Of course, one of the central elements of the concerts each year is the selection of a winner for the Young Composers Award. This year, the jury (selected by Kjartan Olafsson) consisted of Olli Virtaperko (Finland), Samuel Holloway (New Zealand), and myself (USA). As chair, I was deeply indebted to the dedication and thoughtfulness of my fellow jurors, and it was with great pleasure that we presented the award on the final night to New York-based composer Michael Selteneich for his piece *Sparks and Flares*.



2018 ISCM Young Composer Award winner
Michael Selteneich

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

As is usual for ISCM, the general assembly meetings were positive and productive although sometimes slow, and occasionally heated. The agenda for these meetings is (by necessity) always quite full, and it can be challenging to move through it in a timely manner with such a diverse and multicultural society.



The first day of the 2018 ISCM General Assembly.
(Photo by Anna Dorota Władyczka.)

Principal among the outcomes of the General Assembly meetings included the election of Tomoko Fukui and George Kentros to the Executive Committee (replacing outgoing members Kjartan Olafsson and Anna Dorota Władyczka), and selecting Shanghai and Nanning, China as joint hosts of the 2021 festival. There were also substantive discussions of budget, planning, policy, and working group topics, but I will not enumerate them here since the minutes will be a better record of those activities.

It was unfortunate that there were a few moments during the general assembly meetings when things became uncivil – both in public and behind the scenes. While I understand the heated feelings that led to these outbursts, I don't think it behooves the nature of this society to descend to private bullying or public shaming. Thankfully, the Executive Committee handled these matters with delicacy and tact.

MATTERS RELATED TO THE HOST

I came away from the festival with a generally positive feeling about how it had been hosted. As compared with previous years, though, there were a few things that could have been managed more effectively.

Principal among these is the official program booklet. It had a surprising number of problems, mistakes, or omissions. I realize that in a document of this size and complexity it is almost impossible to get everything right, but there were some central matters of concern to me. These included:

- No list of ISCM sections and associate members. The funding and resources that each of the members devotes to supporting the World Music Days festival is considerable, and being able to show our local organizations that our name is listed in the official program booklet goes a long way to generating ongoing good will. It may seem like a small oversight to the organizers, but I'm sure many of the members were also unhappy about this.
- Errors in the country listed for some composers.
- No indication in the program of which pieces were eligible for the Young Composers Award. I believe this is actually a written policy for the host, and helps raise awareness of this important international prize. Likewise, there was no indication in the program about when the award would be announced.
- No indication of which pieces were official or individual submissions. Related to an earlier point, many of us depend on the program to show the benefit of our involvement in ISCM. Our single presented piece was listed only as "USA."

The society looks to the program booklet for the definitive archival record of what took place at these festivals, and some of these omissions seem quite significant to me.

The concert venues were beautiful and I was very pleased at how well-attended the concerts were, although I was a bit surprised at the frequent lack of concert decorum – particularly at the conservatory. People were constantly coming and going during the music, and creating a considerable amount of extraneous noise and whispering. At an institution preparing high-level musicians for professional international careers, I would have expected a higher level of respect for the performers.



ISCM Delegates interacted with composers studying at Beijing's Central Conservatory during the Composer Collider. (Photo by Chong Kee Yong.)

I don't recall ever having been to a World Music Days festival where there were so few receptions. Networking is the

foundation on which this society is built and there has always been a strong tradition (to everyone's benefit) of providing social/communal spaces before or after concerts where people can interact and form relationships. The Composer Collider reception, organized by a number of sections, served as a wonderful example of what could have happened almost every day.



Composer Collider organizers George Kentros (Sweden), Deborah Keyser (Wales), Susanna Eastburn (United Kingdom), Fang Fang (China Chengdu), and David Pay (Canada – Music on Main). (Photo by Bruce Crossman.)

Also conspicuously absent were guides to help delegates and composers navigate to the various venues. This has also become a welcome tradition with these festivals and many of the delegates were disappointed to find that no such help was forthcoming.

There was clearly a lot of excellent work being done by some of the people in leadership, but I think everyone felt

particularly thankful to Max Yin and Joseph Butcher who kept their heads and were always helpful and friendly, even when obviously overextended.



Festival organizers Li Shaosheng, Max Yin, and Joseph Butcher address the 2018 ISCM delegates after being thanked during the final ISCM General Assembly. (Photo by Anna Dorota Władyczka.)

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FAVORITE MEMORIES AND QUOTES FROM PARTICIPANTS:

I'll close my account by including some "snapshots" of impressions that other people had during the festival. I hope it will help provide a more well-rounded view, and demonstrate how multifaceted this festival was.

"If there is one thing I have learnt from my time in Beijing, it is that there is nothing quite as intense as sitting waiting for the China National Symphony Orchestra to perform your music, than trying to hold yourself together as you crunch through a fiery Szechuan peppercorn—an exhilarating and memorable experience all round."

—Ryan Latimer,
Composer (United Kingdom)

"Before Beijing, I never thought that I would become the ExCom. Moreover, until now I never thought ExCom's work was so hard."

—Tomoko Fukui,
Composer (Japan)

"The 2018 ISCM World Music Days Festival in Beijing was an uplifting and invigorating experience from start to finish. Being immersed in China's political and historical epicenter, and surrounded by the best of music-making in the 21st century, I could trace connections across cultures and across centuries, and I formed bonds of artistic kinship with musicians from around the world."

—Martin Blessinger,
Composer (USA)

“The Composer Collider event was a delight – a wonderfully warm, collaborative atmosphere as delegates (composers, performers, producers, promoters) mingled and made connections. Connectivity – and the development of new relationships – is one the most potent forces of the ISCM network.”

—Deborah Keyser,
Director, Tŷ Cerdd (Wales)

“It was very moving to hear this gutsy and infinitely sensitive group of performers, touching beyond music to Asian-Pacific cultural identity and spirit, especially in the work of my mentor for engagement with the Asian-Pacific, Peter Sculthorpe in his String Quartet No. 11: Jabiru Dreaming. I almost cried.”

—Bruce Crossman,
Composer & Associate Professor
(Australia)

“WNMD 2018 it was a great experience from the point of view of the high level of the performers and of the works included in the concerts. We met music and musicians from all over the world. For me it was interesting the gathering of many cultures and traditions. Besides this I discover a lot of connections in between several traditions. Also I have to mention that in my opinion it

was special to listen to music and musicians specialized in Chinese, art and tradition, deep tradition of the Empire. Most of the concerts and meetings were really Events. Thank you for such an experience.”

—Dr. Irina Hasnas,
Composer, Musicologist, and
Journalist (Romania)

The music of adventurer-composer **Stephen Lias** is regularly performed in concert and recital throughout the United States and abroad by soloists and ensembles including the Arianna Quartet, the Anchorage Symphony, the Oasis Quartet, the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival Orchestra, the Ensamble de Trompetas Simón Bolívar, the Boulder Philharmonic, and the Russian String Orchestra. His music is published by ALRY Publications, Alias Press, and Warwick Music, and appears on compact discs from Centaur Records, Teal Creek Music, Mark Records, and Parma Records. He is Professor of Composition at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas and is the Texas delegate to the ISCM.



Confucian Lateral Thinking and Daoist Flow in the Sonic Fire Gardens of Beijing – ISCM World New Music Days/Beijing Modern Music Festival 2018, 19–26 May

By Bruce Crossman



Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing—Passage Way to Confucianist thinking and Daoist flow.
(All photos by Bruce Crossman.)

I caught my first glimpse of Beijing out of the left corner window, as the plane angled for position in its approach to Beijing Capitol International Airport. Red-grid lines laid out the city-scape, almost as a macrocosmic mirror of the palaces within palaces, square-layered organisation of the hidden Forbidden City, before the plane quietly dipped into this ancient garden of Chinese knowledge—Beijing. Soon after

midnight I was flowing through late-night traffic in a taxi, bound for the combined Beijing Modern Music Festival and ISCM World New Music Days 2018, and sort of wondering how my taxi narrowly missed other vehicles. I began to relax when it eventually occurred to me that the Beijing driver had a type of natural flow that negotiated multi-faceted driving conditions with ease; it was as if the flow from the

nature of the city-scape allowed him to negotiate this multi-layered city with ease. The festival about to unwind before me, in hindsight, seemed to draw on this lateral order and imperceptible flow. Perhaps the lateral order precedents for the festival can be seen in the former New South Wales Art Gallery director, Edmund Capon's observations about Chinese philosopher Confucius's statement "junzi buqi"—that is, "a gentleman is not a pot".¹ Here, Confucian thought is not seen as something narrow and functional, but rather, is something that contains breadth and order that invigorates life; or as Capon elegantly puts it, Confucius "was a generalist – he practiced horizontal thought, and I've always had it fixed firmly in my mind that great ideas are horizontal in form, not vertical".² Secondly, this flow sensibility, present in the drive to the centre of Beijing and in the organic way in which the festival unfolded, could be seen to draw on a type of Daoist flow concept important to Chinese creative thought. The venerable New York-based Chinese composer and scholar, Chou Wen-chung, in his discussion on culture, sees creativity as a mobility within a multi-dimensionality of heaven, earth and humanity. He likens creative flow to Daoist thought, citing Daoist philosopher Zhuang Zi's statement "that which moves among things is *dao*".³

The Beijing festival, under the overall artistic directorship of Chinese composer Ye Xiaogang and his on-the-ground team headed by Max Yin, seemed to function through these ancient Chinese principles of Confucianism and Daoism. The laterally laid-out festival in proximity of the Forbidden City, flowed through various fire gardens of sound: the current seat of musical knowledge in Beijing at the Central Conservatory of Music, including Prince Mansion Concert Hall; through to leading venues in the city, such as the Beijing City Concert Hall, China National Centre for the Performing Arts, and the Forbidden City Concert Hall—adjacent to beautiful gardens in ceremonial rows and opposite the entrance to the Forbidden City with Mao's famous portrait over the gateway. The lateral thinking program drew on selections from 450 submitted works, including those from 54 ISCM member organizations as well as individual submissions, culled to 64 compositions. Performers included leading ensembles from all over the world, including Germany's Ensemble Modern and Alarm Will Sound from the U.S.A., and there were also exciting Chinese ensembles such as the Suzhou Chinese Orchestra and the China National Symphony Orchestra. Ye Xiaogang and his team had organised the concerts into a series of holistically thought-out strands; these went from lateral

layers of virtuosic chamber music to full orchestral sounds across both Western and East Asian instrumentation; its daily flow moved from the intimate to immense venues in a rich festival of fiery and gentle sounds within sonic gardens across the city.



Germany's Ensemble Modern— vigorous precision at the edge of the seat and the sound.

My memory of the first day in Beijing, Sunday, was of the startling brutality of the way in which the pianist from Germany's Ensemble Modern threw himself into his countryman Bernard Alois Zimmermann's work, *Présence* (violin, cello, piano). The thunderously brutal energy, reminding me of jazz pianist McCoy Tyner's robust New York energy, combined here with razor sharp classical precision and alive, sparking string gestures in a flurry of sound that gradually ebbed to a subtle echo of the pulse, but in unpredictable timings. This Frankfurt based ensemble gave a glimpse of the vitality of their German city culture—one of vigorous precision where music making is at the edge

of the seat and the sound. This incredible order in my mind was balanced by the beauty of the transcendent flow of festival artistic director, Ye Xiaogang's piano trio, *Colorful Sutra Banner*. Here, Ye constructed equally powerful gestures to the Zimmermann but within an overall sonic balm of harmonies that floated throughout the work. Its holistic shape was unified like a type of organicism from a sensibility present in nature, where musical gestures moved and undulated in a way so they never hit each other, but flowed within a cushioned envelope of sound. This Hearing Leaves concert in the cavernous CCOM Opera and Concert Hall, with its cochlea inner ear type design, left a memory of qiyun energy balance flowing between China and Germany.



CCOM Opera and Concert Hall—Cochlea Inner Ear Type Design.

Within the semi-circular design of the intimate CCOM Recital Hall, adjoining a multi-story student rehearsal tower block, the bending note and noise energy of guzheng performer Han Tianya tones were

delicately present in the electroacoustic concert, titled *Reflections*. Here, beautifully played extended techniques by Han with high presence computer sounds merged within flowing moments in Ukrainian composer Alla Zagaykevych's *Friend Li Po* (guzheng and electronics). In this concert, intimate solo instruments merged with timbre explorations through electronic sounds. The colour detailing available in Chinese instrumentation, where its instrumental construction aims at a Confucian single-tone exploration, was startling here in combination with modern technology. The rough energy of the intertwined sheng (a type of large mouth organ) sounds from Wang Yi and those of dizi (membrane laced wooden flute) performer Feng Tianshi appeared within fragments and groupings together with electronic sounds; these were hewn into an impressive sonic architecture by American composer Robert McClure in his *The Edge of Still* (dizi, sheng, and computer). Here in this intimate venue, musical flow amongst architectural sound was explored within a frame of noise-timbre exploration but extended from Ensemble Modern's Western instrumentation into a dialogue between Chinese tradition and contemporary technology.



Central Conservatory of Music Recital Hall—
Colour Detailing.

I remember on my second day, Tuesday, trying to find the venue for the rehearsal of my own work in an ancient courtyard outside the Prince Mansion Concert Hall, which is on grounds regarded “as the birthplace of Emperor Guangxu...[of]...the Qing Dynasty”.⁴ The beautiful ornate red and yellow foundation with an upward arching green roof seemed just like the Confucian courtyard where Du Linian and Spring Fragrance dreamed of an ideal lover (instead of studying) in Tang Xianzu's Chinese opera classic, *The Peony Pavillion*—the text used for my own music in *Garden of Fire* (mezzo-soprano, percussion and piano). A timely arriving phone text from the festival organiser indicated that the Prince Chun Mansion joined to the new concert hall behind in a garden-like enclosure; it was thoughtful intervention and also pointed to the artistic curation of intimate fusion compositions within formal boundaries. Here, northern hemisphere work meshed with that from the

southern sphere. Icelandic composer Bergrún Snóbjörnsdóttir, who has worked in bands with experimental indie rock artists Sigor Rós and Björk, had created music in *Esoteric Mass* (flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, trumpet, trombone) that proceeded in a semi-lit auditorium within a ritualistic minimalist grit trajectory. Closing this concert, was a similarly matching gritty Octet (for flute, clarinet, percussion, piano and string quartet) by Danish composer Simon Christensen. Almost as if the artistic directors had planned it this way, these gritty sonic walls seemed to frame my own modal-based and harmonically and texturally complex response to Chinese Opera, *Garden of Fire*. I felt privileged to have Central Conservatory of Music-trained musicians interpret my music. What was beautiful here was the way the Chinese performers drifted the timing and tonal colours of the work as if following Tang Xianzu's original formalised Chinese character instructions, which instruct the musicians to hold the sound up as they feel in their hearts. Mezzo-soprano Sun Shuang built phrases of dramatic strength and sensuous vocal quality under the percussive excitement of the accompanying performers; Sun also allowed for moments of poised timing of her vocally vulnerable sounds to be merged with the sensitively held pauses from pianist Cong Rong and percussionist Ren

Jingxue. Clearly, the artistic director had arranged the concert called Garden of Fire as a type of sonic garden of flow between Chinese and European music making.



Garden of Fire Concert—vocally vulnerable sounds merged with held pauses by Cong Rong (piano), Bruce Crossman (composer), Sun Shuang (mezzo-soprano) and Ren Jingxue (percussion).

That evening with my new-found friends from Belgium in tow, including the similarly East Asian aesthetically focused Jean-Pierre Deleuze, we headed out through the chaotic traffic in a shared taxi bound for the Beijing Concert Hall. We arrived in time, to be quickly ushered into front row seats throughout the auditorium for the drifting dream sounds of Chinese composer Zhao Jiping's *Zhuang Zhou's Dream* for cello and Chinese orchestra. I will never forget the gentle easing into the night air of the beautiful sonic balms of multiple erhus (Chinese 2-string violins) glowing sensuously in physical body sways of the players; whilst glistening high cello harmonics in delicate, static lyricism floated over the massed beauty of erhu

sounds below. The Suzhou Chinese Orchestra moved from this shimmering sensuality into an exciting middle section where the work collapsed into a deliberately dissonant cacophony; it was evident here, that the timbre resources of this group of players could handle any sonority in the same way that Western orchestras dive into Stravinsky's virtuosity. As if to prove this point, the artistic committee programmed Finnish composer Jukka Tiensuu's dissonant and gritty *Ihmix* for Chinese orchestra. Tiensuu's beautifully crafted sonic layering of knotty-grit interweaving of wind clusters and combined string-wind walls of sound worked with an almost Polish sensibility of Lutoslawskian 12-note walls of colour. Why would one write for Western orchestra when this frightening precision and sensuality of colour is available from Chinese orchestral playing as the basis of creativity? Clearly in this concert, titled *The Song of the Long March*, the drifting Chinese Daoist way had met with a Confucian-like order born of European thinking.

Awakening from my slumber, as if mimicking Chinese opera's heroine Du Liniang, I drifted into my third festival day, Wednesday, with excitement for the journey. Returning to the intimacy of the semi-circular CCOM Recital Hall a concert

of solo works, titled *Origami with Blackbirds*, formed a breathing space in the torrid schedule. Western cultural ideas of structured craftsmanship were present in the well-structured sonic arch of Cypriot composer George Christofi's *Diplophonia* (solo flute); here, the flautist Gao Xiping effortlessly handled the virtuosic flute writing and breath interruptions to bring the work to climax as if human breath were involved in an ecstatic moment. Violinist Zhang Jingye was caught between the logic of strong multi-stop gestures of almost Paganini-like virtuosity and jazz-inspired linear momentum in American composer Martin Blessinger's fusion work, *Exordium et Infra Furorem* (solo violin). Zhang handled the unfolding logic with seasoned virtuosity with a sense of logical expanding line. Clearly, the garden was one of sonic order as repose amongst colliding lateral thoughts.



Jean-Pierre Deleuze (composer) and America's Mivos Quartet—dovetailing sounds like multiple voices of spirit.

Early the next day, Thursday, my Belgian friend Deleuze had rushed off for his rehearsals with the vitally alive American-based Mivos Quartet in the CCOM Recital Hall. The concert also included another friend, Austin Yip from Hong Kong—with whom I would later navigate the traditional hutongs of Beijing at midnight. Perhaps this is also a good time to follow up on the friendship theme and string quartet sounds by comparing the Mivos' strength with the distinctive Asian-Pacific sensitivity of the Australian String Quartet. On Friday in the same space, the Australians presented a moving tribute to an iconic Australian composer and one of my early mentors on the Asian-Pacific journey, Peter Sculthorpe. Peter passed away recently, so it was a poignant concert for me.



Australian String Quartet—swaying body-motion energy and glowing energetic sound of Asian-Pacific cultural identity and spirit.

However, firstly, in Thursday's White Angels concert by the Mivos Quartet, Belgian composer Jean-Pierre

Deleuze's *Shôrô* (string quartet) shimmered and rose from resonance to the spiritual. Jean-Pierre explained to me earlier that he had recorded a Buddhist bell of a considerable resonance and spiritual presence in Japan and this had informed his thinking. Deleuze's mature work built beautiful spectrally-constructed envelopes of sound patiently, in which at the first layering of resonances seemed to suggest Buddhist monastery bell overtones. As the static and sensitive colour work unfolded it built to another overlaid climactic peak in which the dovetailing sounds seemed to cry-out like multiple voices of spirit, almost similar to the type of Japanese court music climaxes of Gagaku where wailing polyphony anchored by the sho (Japanese traditional bamboo mouth organ), a descendent of the earlier heard Chinese sheng, dominates powerfully. This subtly gripping piece from Deleuze was matched by Hong Kong composer Austin Yip's raucously invigorating work, String Quartet No. 5: *Time Motor*. Here, the younger composer, caught the energetic thrust of the Hong Kong city-scape in motoring minimalist rhythms that would suddenly via sideways into pressured gutsy bowing sounds almost like the vitality of the rich Cantonese language tonal variations. The Mivos sound was one of muscular strength that unfolded the long-scale logic of the contrasting energies—one spiritual in

nature and the other visceral in emphasis. Both of these pieces were resonances of East Asian gardens in inspiration—Japan and Hong Kong—and strongly envisioned as long-scale structures by the Mivos.

Secondly, on the Friday, it was a delight to discover and hear the Australian String Quartet in their Jabiru Dreaming concert at the Beijing Modern Music Festival, in the same space the American-based Mivos had occupied earlier. This was not just music making by the Australian Quartet, but a refined elegance and energy that defined an Asian-Pacific sound world through its nuanced colour sensitivities, raw vigour of sound, and transcendent floating arches of achingly elegant melodic lines as Pacific cultural identity, and at times a type of spiritual transcendence that the venerable late Filipino composer and ethnomusicologist José Maceda associated with the meditative chime-gong ensembles of the region. The Australian Quartet came into their own originality of sound in the repertoire of the Asia-Pacific region, especially from Adelaide-based colleague Stephen Whittington, and iconic Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe alongside Chinese composers Gao Ping and Tang Jianping. The Quartet's swaying body-motion energy of the cohered players produced glowing energetic sound as a single unit in Chinese composer Tang

Jianping's *Cui Zhuo*, recalling the glowing kinetic motion of erhu players of the Suzhou Chinese Orchestra, through to elegant Balinese melodies and raw juxtapositions of Australian mangroves and exciting kinetic rhythms of rice-bowl inspired tapping within a thorough-going structural sense in the Sculthorpe work, String Quartet No. 11: *Jabiru Dreaming*. This cohered ensemble playing defined a gutsy and infinitely sensitive group of performers, touching beyond music to Asian-Pacific cultural identity and spirit.



Forbidden City Concert Hall—huge wallops of sound colour and imperial bell-inspired resonances in Chinese composer Ye Guohui's music.

Friday's journey was concluded with the magical experience of ritualised bell-inspired, regal brass sounds of imperial China alongside gritty folk music orientated sounds of virtuosic dizi playing with the Hangzhou Philharmonic Orchestra within the Forbidden City Concert Hall. In the concert, titled *Wild Fire*, Chinese composer Ye Guohui's *Music from the Tang Court* (3 bili, 2 bamboo flutes, and

orchestra), built-up huge wallops of sound colour, almost regal in their imperial bell-inspired resonances; its guttural nature with contemporary edgy brass flutters and instrumental dissonances made a bracing early start to the concert. Fellow Chinese composer Guo Wenjing, notable for his work with innovative film director Zhang Yimou, provided a work featuring his wife, dizi virtuoso Tang Junqiao, in *Wild Fire* (Bamboo Flute Concerto No.2). As with Ye's work, *Wild Fire* also built dramatic bell-like brass sounds of imperial nature, but here they unfolded with a theatrical thrust of film narrative answered by dizzyingly gritty bamboo bends and textural grunt from dizi virtuoso Tang Junqiao. This line driven approach, arched through the Quran-like vocal lines of the orchestral writing with complex rhythmic drive of American-born composer Saad Haddad's *Takht*, drawing on his Diaspora Middle Eastern heritage. The work's hauntingly beautiful bends across prepared harp noise, sounding like the Turkish kanun's gritty sound, was unified as one utterance like an aching cry within the garden of imperial grandeur works flanking it.

The final day of the festival, Saturday, arrived amidst the whirlwind flow of ideas and exchanges of composers from around the world in Beijing. From the

funky American band Alarm Will Sound, through to the vitality of traditional Chinese instruments with the China National Symphony Orchestra, and out into the final hotpot around the hutongs in the Shichahai district, the day was a blast.

The 20-piece chamber orchestra Alarm Will Sound are renowned for energetic, Indie rock informed performances that also have classically conceived musical viscosity. The swaying punk-haired violinist's motions of manically committed and embodied sound rhythms were exciting—a sort of more abrasive version of the gentle flowing emergence of beauty from the earlier Suzhou Chinese Orchestra players. Chinese-American composer and 2006 Pulitzer Prize runner-up, Chen Yi drew on her Chinese opera experience formed during China's Cultural Revolution for a forward propelling work in *Sparkle* (presented here in an arrangement by Stefan Freund). Similarly, Hong Kong-born composer Stephen Yip propelled the players forward with his brand of Cantonese energy in *Realm of the Immortals*; guttural bursts of energy made the syncopation into colourful wallops of sound. Chen Yi's husband Zhou Long—the 2011 Pulitzer Prize winning composer—provided a subtle still centre to this high-octane concert. His considered *Bell Drum*

Towers seemed to inherit the scholarly deliberateness and colour subtly of his mentor Chou Wen-chung. Its sounds seemed to use sustain timbres to paint a sense of space, with understated sonic planes that harked back to traditional Chinese landscape painting's spatial ambiguity provoking contemplative thought.



America's Alarm Will Sound at CCOM Prince Mansion Concert Hall—Composer Zhou Long's subtle still centre to this high-octane concert acknowledged.

In *The Pine-soughing Valleys* night concert, which closed the festival within the CCOM Opera and Concert Hall, the traditional East Asian instrumentation in tandem with the China National Symphony Orchestra was bracing. The poetically titled work, *The Pine-soughing Valleys* for sheng, zheng and orchestra by Chinese composer Jia Guoping was stunning in its visceral virtuosity of the traditional players Zhang Jiakang on zheng (Chinese zither) and Zheng Yang on sheng (deep mouth organ).

I will never forget the military precision of Zhang Jiakang as she attacked, vibrated and sawed her guzheng strings in perfect flow with the synchronised swaying and bellowing of Zheng Yang on sheng with rock-n-roll style virtuosity, as if born of vigorous bird sounds breathing in nature. Jia's work was one gutsy ride of timbre fluctuation and orchestral chunkiness that did not let up; it was the high-energy end of Chinese literati qiyun flow. Later, with my Malaysian friend, composer Kee Yong Chong and his students from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, as well as Hong Kong/USA composers Fung Lam and the Yip 'brothers' (they're not!), we headed for the midnight nightlife of Shichahai, in the midst of the red grid lines of an aerially conceived Beijing. Here beer, broth, vegetables and differing meats with spice bowls were shared with outrageous humour and warmth at the festival's conclusion.



Concluding Sounds at CCOM Opera and Concert Hall—the bracing China National Symphony Orchestra and visceral virtuosity of Zheng Yang on sheng and Zhang Jiakang on zheng.



Hu Tong district, Shichahai—Australian composer Bruce Crossman, Malaysian composer Kee Yong Chong with his students from Shanghai Conservatory of Music, and Hong Kong composers Austin Yip, Fung Lam and Stephen Yip.

It seemed to me in this final garden of pleasure, that artistic director's Ye Xiaogang Confucianist lateral thinking and allowance for Daoist flow outside the mundane pot of life had born much fruit in Beijing. These sound and creative exchange gardens in Beijing had brought composers from over all over the globe together in boundary blurring creativity and cultural understanding between Asian-Pacific aesthetics and world new music cultures. I am thrilled that the World New Music Days Festival will return to China in 2021. Perhaps Chinese Mandarin should become one of the official languages of the International Society for Contemporary Music in recognition of the inclusive changing map of world new music cultures, as demonstrated in the Sonic Fire Gardens of Beijing?

NOTES:

¹ Capon, Edmund. *I Blame Duchamp: My Life's Adventures in Art*. Victoria, Australia: Lantern/Penguin, 2009, pp. 12-13.

² *ibid*, p. 16

³ Chou Wen-chung. "Wenren and Culture" (pp. 208-220, 256-264) in *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*. Eds. Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004, p. 213.

⁴ Oguchi, Keiji. "Completion of New Concert Hall in Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing" in *Nagata Acoustics: News 16-05 (No.341)* (2016). Accessed 15 June 2018, http://www.nagata.co.jp/e_news/news1605-e.html.

Bruce Crossman's sound world embraces Asian traditional musics, free form improvisation and European influenced interval-colour sonority towards a personal Pacific identity. Crossman's

music has been featured throughout the Asia-Pacific region including at the ISCM World Music Days (Sydney), Tongyeong International Music Festival (Korea), Asian Music Week (Japan), Tunugan (Philippines) and Pacific Rim Music Festival (USA). Wirripang has released several discs of his music including an album of compositions, *Double Resonances*, and one of piano improvisations with multi-instrumentalist Michael Atherton, *Resophonica*.



An Editorial Postlude

It's hard to believe that an entire year has passed since the publication of the previous edition of the ISCM's *World New Music Magazine*. This new 2018 Edition of WNMM is a celebration of and reflection on the 2018 ISCM World New Music Days, which marked the first time that this major 96-year-old international contemporary music festival took place in mainland China. Hosted by the Beijing Modern Music Festival, which was founded in 2002 at the Central Conservatory of Music by composer Ye Xiaogang, vice president of CCM, the 2018 WNMD was a fascinating amalgam of Eastern and Western aesthetics featuring numerous guest ensembles from all over the world as well as local and regional ensembles, many performing on traditional Chinese instruments.

Similarly, the 2018 WNMM is a collaboration between East and West. Since 2018 marked the 40th anniversary of the historic re-opening of the Central Conservatory following the Cultural Revolution, we asked Brigham Young University-based composer and musicologist Stephen M. Jones, who is currently writing a book about the development of contemporary music in China, to offer a brief history of the transformative changes to China's musical landscape that was largely a result of members of this famous "class of 1978." Since among the most memorable concerts of the 2018 WNMD were performances by Chinese instrument orchestras, we asked a more recent CCM graduate, composer Li Bo, to provide us with a short history of this unusual ensemble. Since Li Bo wrote his article in Chinese, we offer his original Chinese text (a first for WNMM) with a parallel English translation by Trudy Chan. In addition, Czech composer Jiří Kadeřábek, whose exciting work for Chinese orchestra was performed during the 2018 WNMD, has described his personal approach to working with these instruments. (We are grateful to Chinese-born American-based composer Chen Yi for connecting us with Stephen M. Jones and Li Bo.)

Romanian composer Nicolae Teodoreanu, whose String Quartet No. 2 was also featured during the 2018 WNMD, died only a few months before the festival, so we asked Romanian composer and musicologist Irina Hasnaş to offer some personal reflections on Teodoreanu, his music, and his idiosyncratic compositional aesthetics.



Frank J. Oteri (Photo by Jeffrey Herman)

During the past year, we also lost Dr. Franz Eckert, an honorary member of ISCM who served as ISCM's legal counsel from 1971 to 2015. Dr. Eckert's friend Anna Dorota Władyczka, who served on ISCM's Executive Committee from 2014 to 2018, shared with us some wonderful photos of him from various World Music Days festivals all over the world. In our first General Assembly in Beijing, the ISCM delegates reported to us the names of other important people in the music sector from their regions who died since our previous General Assembly in Vancouver. We honor all of them in these pages as well.

We offer three substantive reports of the 2018 WNMD, by Australian composer Peter Crossman, Texas-based composer and ISCM Texas delegate Stephen Lias, and Latvian composer/ISCM delegate Anna Veismane who also wrote for us a report of the 2017 WNMD. We are extremely grateful to Bruce Crossman for his extensive photographic documentation of the 2018 festival which further enhances these reports.

As with last year's WNMM, this current edition was a huge undertaking. Hopefully, for our next issue, others will want to join me in this quixotic endeavor. If you would like to be involved in the editing and production of WNMM, please send me an email, either via WNMM@iscm.org or fjo@newmusicusa.org; planning for both WNMM 2019 and WNMM 2000 is already underway!

—Frank J. Oteri

