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Original Article

Научная статья

Lifestyles and Repertoires of the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra of Yongjia County, Zhejiang Province, the People's Republic of China

Образ жизни и репертуар Симфонического духового оркестра восточных фермеров уезда Цяотоу округа Юнцзя провинции Чжэцзян Китайской Народной Республики

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Abstract. The Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra is a "concert band," a Western wind and percussion ensemble, established in Yongjia County, Zhejiang Province in the People's Republic of China. The band was founded by Commander Ye Guangming in 1975. The Orchestra performs concert works from this era. The Orchestra additionally provides services for funerals and family venerations, performing Chinese dirges. After China's Opening to the Outside World in 1980, Wenzhou in Zhejiang Province became the largest urban Christian center in China, becoming popularly known as "China's Jerusalem" (*Zhongguo de Yelusaleng*). By providing funeral music for the Christian clients of Yongjia and Wenzhou, the Orchestra developed a repertoire of Christian hymns, mainly of Western origins, but also indigenous Chinese hymns. The author of the article, an American trumpet player, collected ethnomusicological

Аннотация. Духовой симфонический оркестр восточных фермеров Цяотоу — «концертный ансамбль» духовых и ударных инструментов западного типа уезда Юнцзя провинции Чжэцзян Китайской Народной Республики. Группа была основана в 1975 году её руководителем Е Гуанмином (Ye Guangming). Оркестр исполнял произведения той эпохи. Оркестр дополнительно оказывает услуги по организации похорон и поминок, исполняя китайские панихиды. После 1980 года, когда Китай открылся внешнему миру, город Вэньчжоу в провинции Чжэцзян стал крупнейшим христианским центром Китая, широко известным как «Китайский Иерусалим» (*Zhongguo de Yelusaleng*). Специально для христианских клиентов Юнцзя и Вэньчжоу в репертуаре оркестра есть христианские, в основном западные, гимны, а также гимны народов Китая. Автор статьи, американский трубач, собирал этномузыкалогические материалы



materials in Qiaotou in the early winter of 2020, when he was appointed as a visiting professor of ethnomusicology at Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing. While in Qiaotou, the author performed a number of songs with the Orchestra, himself being a specialist in Chinese brass and wind bands and having published a number of articles on the subject.

Keywords:

China, Wenzhou, Zhejiang, Qiaotou, Wind Symphony Concert Band, National Music, Funeral Band, Music Entrepreneurship, Ethnomusicology

в Цяотоу в начале зимы 2020 года, когда был назначен приглашённым профессором этномузыкологии в Пекинской Центральной консерватории. Находясь в Цяотоу, он, будучи специалистом по китайским медным духовым инструментам и духовым оркестрам, исполнил несколько песен с оркестром и опубликовал ряд статей на эту тему.

Ключевые слова:

Китай, Вэньчжоу, Чжэцзян, Цяотоу, духовой симфонический концертный оркестр, национальная музыка, похоронный оркестр, музыкальное предпринимательство, этномузыкология

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The Circumstances Leading to the Study of a Concert Band in Qiaotou

This article is the third by the author for *ICONI* that stems from research of Chinese brass and concert bands [1; 2], the type which were introduced to China in the late 19th century by agents of change seeking to westernize the Chinese musical traditions by means of both community and military bands. The article draws on the history of the spread of brass band culture in China, as well as the author's prior research of Chinese funeral brass bands in New York [1] and a Chinese concert band in Beijing. [2] In a previous research work, he outlined the theory and the proliferation of brass band culture worldwide throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.¹ The generic classification

of this phenomenon is “concert band,” which must clarify all misapprehensions about musicians playing Chinese wind instruments. A concert band is a civilian version of the late 19th century European military band.² The Chinese term “*guan*,”

¹ Kaminski J.S. The Theory of Folk Brass Bands in the Modern World: A Twenty-first Century Perspective. *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*. 2022;53(2):401–422.

² Trevor H. Brass and Military Bands in Britain — Performance Domains, the Factors that Construct them and their Influence. *Brass Bands of the World: Militarism, Colonial, Legacies, and Local Music Making*. Ed. S.A. Reily and K. Brucher. New York: Routledge, 2013. P. 49.

which usually refers to a reed instrument, actually means “pipe.” Recently, the *guan* has begun to refer to the brass and reed wind instruments of the Western wind band, such as *guan yuetuan*, meaning “concert band.” The Qiaotou Eastern Farmers’ Symphonic Pipe Orchestra, or, better translated, the “Symphonic Wind Orchestra,” thus derived from the prototype of the European military band, and its repertoire reflects both Chinese national and European traditional values, a combination of both Western and modern Chinese elements.³

The Qiaotou Eastern Farmers’ Symphonic Wind Orchestra was founded in 1975 and officially implemented in 1993. It is a concert

band of Western wind instruments and percussion, comprised mainly of trumpets, trombones, horns, tubas, clarinets, and saxophones, along with one flute, one oboe, one bassoon, a bass drum, cymbals, a snare drum, and wood blocks (see photos 1 and 2). A gong is implemented in a unique band arrangement of the Chinese *jingju* opera melody *Su San Qijie* (*Su San’s Resolution*). The Orchestra’s repertoire draws from three musical categories: works based on the Chinese national traditions, funeral dirges, and Christian hymns that had been circulating in China since the first Protestant missionaries arrived in the 19th century from Europe.⁴



Photo 1. The Qiaotou Eastern Farmers’ Symphonic Wind Orchestra Performing at a Family Veneration on January 4, 2020. Yongjia County, China
[Photo by the author, 2020]

³ Nettl B. *Eight Urban Musical Cultures: Tradition and Change : Introduction*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1978. P. 10.

⁴ Fang-Lan Hsieh. *A History of Chinese Christian Hymnody: From its Missionary Origins to Contemporary Indigenous Productions*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen. 2009. 269 p.



*Photo 2. Lower Brass of the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra
[Photo by the author, 2020]*

Qiaotou is a town located to the east of one of the earliest rice agricultural settlements in the world, the Shangsán mountain culture on the Yangtze River Basin that dates from 7000 to 6500 BCE, as indicated by the carbon-14 testing of pottery jars found at the site. The jars are the earliest painted pots to be found in East Asia. The site also holds the earliest excavated tombs in Zhejiang, in the Neolithic city of Yiwu. It was built on the site of an earlier Kuahuqiao culture that contains remnants of the “Cross Bridge Culture” in addition to artifacts of the Shang, Zhou, Tang, Song, Ming, and Qing dynasties.⁵

⁵ Ma Li. 新时代浙江考古十大发现候选项目 | 义乌桥头遗址 [Top 10 Archeological Discoveries in Zhejiang Province in the New Era: Yiwu Qiaotou Site]. URL: <https://www.thehour.cn/news/521746.html> (accessed: 06/02/2022).

The word “Qiaotou” literally means “Bridgehead” and the town is located in Yongjia County, Zhejiang Province, north of the Ou River and 9.3 miles upstream and west of the major city of Wenzhou. The dialect of Yongjia is Wenzhounese, presenting the region around Wenzhou as a unique and closed system of trade that has dated back more than a millennium to the Song Dynasty. Wenzhounese derives from the ancient Wu language, influenced by Southern Min from nearby Fujian Province.⁶

The indication “Farmers” in the Orchestra’s name derives from the fact that all of the musicians are, essentially, farmers, coming from agricultural families who have entered into the field of entrepreneurship

⁶ Nanlai Cao. *Constructing Chinas Jerusalem: Christians, Power, and Place in Contemporary Wenzhou*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011. P. 15.

since the 1980s. Previous to the Opening to the Outside World in 1980, Qiaotou was little known outside of Zhejiang, and since then, it transformed itself from a farming community to the largest manufacturing center of buttons and zippers in the world. By 2005, Qiaotou was producing 15 billion buttons and 200 million meters of zippers per year.⁷ It came to be called “Button Town,”⁸ and a statue of a giant button now greets visitors on the parkway at the entrance to the town (see photo 3).

Oral tradition recounts how the first button workshop was established after three brothers found a few buttons on the street, and this gave them the idea to manufacture them. In 2005, the button and zipper industry in Qiaotou gained significant notice around the world. It grew to export 80% of the world’s clothing supplies. The year that the Qiaotou button industry began was 1980, the same year that the Chinese State Council officially declared the Opening to the Outside World (*kaifang zhengce*), which was unquestionably



*Photo 3. Statue of a Giant-sized Button Greeting Visitors
on the Parkway at the Entrance of Qiaotou
[Photo by the author, 2020]*

⁷ Watts J. The Best Market in the World: A Small Town in China is Now the Undisputed Global Capital of Zippers and Button, a Microcosm of What’s Happening Throughout the Country. *Salon*. URL: https://www.salon.com/2005/05/25/china_boom_2/ (accessed: 04/20/2022).

⁸ Lim L. Chinese “Button Town” Struggles with Success. *NPR: China’s Economic Challenges*. <https://www.npr.org/2006/08/22/5686805/chinese-button-town-struggles-with-success> (accessed: 04/20/2022).



one of the most revolutionary events in the history of the People's Republic of China. The opening increased the significance of foreign trade within China's economy, since in 1978 it was 5.2% of the Gross Social Product, while in 1986 it already reached the level of 13.7%. This shift in economic motivation came as early as 1975, when Deng Xiaoping called for an acceleration in exports, in order to pay for increased technological imports, and again in 1976, when Chairman Hua Guofeng called for the largest expansion of exports in foreign trade in Chinese history. It hit its stride in 1980.⁹ Traditionally an agricultural region, it witnessed an immense increase in productivity as the result of the 1978 introduction of the family contracted responsibility system that allowed farmers to become independent commodity producers, independent entrepreneurial activists, and promoters of capital accumulation and capital management. "The rapid industrialization and urbanization of rural areas during this period are attributed to the use of various agricultural surpluses brought about by agricultural reforms and their transformation into sources and elements of capital that promote industrialization and urbanization."¹⁰ These measures provided individual households the ability to produce goods of their own choosing in "sideline industries" for the open market after having fulfilled state quotas.¹¹ The result of these measures was rural per capita tripling, and successful agricultural households that became entrepreneurs created an urban environment. These urban households became the new patrons of the

new Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra. The Farmers themselves, being agriculturalists, as well, became newly industrialized, urbanized, and successful in sideline industries.

The author found the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra performing at a funeral family veneration in Yongjia County in January 2020. He had been researching Chinese brass bands in New York City since 2006, a time when he started observing brass bands performing at funerals in Chinatown. At that time, he joined an Italian funeral band that played at Chinese funerals. By 2015, he crossed over to a Fujianese band after meeting a number of Fujianese trumpet players and starting to learn to speak Chinese. As a background to this direction, the author's prior ethnomusicology work was in Asante funereal music in Ghana, since he completed doctoral studies in this field and published a book on the topic with Ashgate (now Routledge) in 2012.¹² The editor of his Asante book, Keith Howard, was at SOAS¹³ at that time. As part of his research activities, the author gave a presentation on Asante funeral music at the British Forum for Ethnomusicology Annual Conference at Durham University in 2012, where he informed Howard that he had a new idea regarding a second book, this time on Chinese funeral brass bands that developed first in the late 19th century and were modeled on the military bands of the European armies stationed in China. Howard gave him advice concerning this idea that ultimately led to his work of researching the band in Qiaotou. Howard suggested him to make a trip to mainland

⁹ Woetzel J.R. *China's Economic Opening to the Outside World: The Politics of Empowerment*. New York: Praeger, 1989. Pp. 21, 44–46.

¹⁰ Gu Yikang, Shao Feng. *Rural Reform and Development: A Case Study of China's Zhejiang Province*. Hangzhou: Zhejiang University Press, 2020. P. XXI.

¹¹ Woetzel J.R. Op. cit. P. 83.

¹² Kaminski J.S. *Asante Ntamera Trumpets in Ghana: Culture, Tradition, and Sound Barrage*. Ashgate SOAS Musicology Series. New York: Routledge, 2012. 203 p.

¹³ School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, U.K.

China in order to conduct a study of concert bands, comparable to the study carried out by him in New York, and observe what has changed in the migration. This is what the author has done, and some of this material is covered in this article and compared to the bands he had written about in his articles published in past issues of *ICONI* from 2021, No. 2 and No. 4.

In connection with this research, the author began giving presentations in conferences at Central Conservatory of Music, Beijing in 2018 and 2019, and eventually he obtained employment as a faculty member there. His account of how this unfolded and his first experience with concert bands on the mainland is written in issue No. 2 of *ICONI* for 2021. [2] After months of research work in Beijing, the author eventually aspired to go to Zhejiang Province to study concert bands near Wenzhou City, especially Qiaotou in Yongjia County on its periphery. He received this suggestion from Kaifei Lin, the same New York Chinese trumpet player who introduced him to the Beijing Sunshine Band via the WeChat texting app, also covered in the second issue of *ICONI* from 2021. [Ibid.] In Zhejiang there has been a significant increase of modern Chinese concert bands. In pursuit of this research, during his winter vacation from his work at the Central Conservatory of Music in 2020, the author made a journey to Wenzhou. He was met at the airport by Yun Ge, a highly skilled musician who is the lead trumpeter in the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra, and who is a friend of Kaifei Lin on WeChat. The plan of field work and the meeting was all facilitated by means of WeChat. The author spent only three days in Qiaotou and Wenzhou working with the concert band, since he was unable to return as the result of the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak occurring in China at that time. As the result of this pandemic, the author was not able to return to his classes at Central Conservatory of Music in March 2020, after he had already left for the United States on January 26.

The Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Orchestra also ceased its activities during this period, at which time the author maintained contact with the Orchestra's founder and director, Commander Ye Guangming, who later encouraged him to return to China to continue his activities. According to Ye's words,

Ha!

Wait patiently.

Don't rush!

After the rain comes a rainbow.

Wait! For those who have dreams,

God will arrange for you to succeed."

Meeting the Qiaotou Farmers' Orchestra

Trumpeter Yun Ge, whose name means, *Cloud Song*, brought me (the author) to stay at a hotel in Qiaotou near the residence of the family who were observing four days of veneration before a funeral. I was present for three days (Thursday through Saturday) for the concert band's activities engaged in video recording, photographing, and blending in unobtrusively. I did not attend the burial on the Sunday because of my personal taboo regarding research ethics. I believe that ethnomusicology is a benevolent study of a people's music wherein music is being used in personally ritualistic ways. An ethnomusicologist thus researches music in culture for educational purposes and a rite shall never become a spectacle for tourist observation on the part of a journalist or any other casual outsider. The author had previously attended numerous Chinese funerals in New York as a professional brass player in the bands, [1] and personal decorum had always been a tenet from the first day. Had I been an actual member of the Qiaotou Orchestra, or had I been acquainted with the decedent, I would have gone along. But by reasons of the mitigating circumstances just stated, I did not even ask for the permission to go, which I felt would have been an unprofessional request. Realistically, the purpose of the Qiaotou study was to gather information on the modern Chinese bands



that have spread throughout China, and not an anthropology of a funeral rite.

I met the Farmers on the morning of January 2, 2020 at the funeral site inside a green tent set up over the street in front of the family's residence. It was the first time I met Commander Ye Guangming (see photo 4), who later provided me interviews through WeChat during the SARS pandemic. Excerpts from the interviews are arranged below.

Ye is the founder and director of the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra. The orchestra was created



*Photo 4. Commander Ye Guangming,
Founder and Director
of the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic
Wind Orchestra
[Photo by the author, 2020]*

in 1975, the year when China's shift in economic motivation came with the government calling for an acceleration of exports (cf. above). The Farmers' Orchestra's founding, thereby, coincided with the plans for Qiaotou's economic and cultural development, and the reforming of farmers into industrialists.¹⁴

The Orchestra was founded under the care and guidance of the County Party Committee, the County Cultural Bureau, the Qiaotou Town Government, the Department of Culture, and many famous teachers. "Originally," Ye said, "we participated in most of the large-scale public welfare activities in Wenzhou. Later, we found out quickly that there were many funerals and weddings to play, mostly weddings."

Regarding the experience of creating a wind orchestra, Ye states, "Music is a dream worthy of everyone's pursuit. The goal is simply for everyone to be happy. Playing a wind instrument is as good as flying in the sky."

The band's rehearsals intensified after 1993, with the orchestra meeting weekly and practicing the latest repertoire. Ye adds, "Rehearsal is the spirit of teamwork and a glorious mission for each member."

The Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra is part of the orchestra guidance and art exchange, and currently comprises more than seventy musicians maintaining a balanced voicing of instrumentation. They have their own rehearsal hall, and they are an independent entity. The Orchestra participated at the Beijing-Shanghai-Hangzhou-Wind Music Competition numerous times, and won a First Prize in Eastern China and a Second Prize in the Shanghai International Wind Music Festival. They have also regularly participated in performances across China in Beijing, Shanghai, Dalian, Wuhan, Hangzhou, Wenzhou, and Yongjia County.

¹⁴ Gu Yikang, Shao Feng. Op. cit. P. XXI.

The Orchestra's "most glorious year," as Ye states, "was 1995, when they rose to the Hall of Elegance in the Shanghai Concert Hall." He adds, "This drew attention in the wind music circles." Ye also maintains pride for being invited to perform at Golden Hall in Vienna, although he did not go for financial reasons.

In 2014, the orchestra hosted the Wenzhou New Year Wind Music Concert that was recognized by wind music experts and praised by audiences and music lovers.

Ye frequently participates in national wind music and conducting training, and he has invited famous people in the music industry numerous times to work with the orchestra. Such notables were the director and principal conductor of the Chinese military band (name not given), and composers Yu Hai, Cheng Yiming, Lin Yousheng, Wang Hesheng, Ka Zushan, Chen Qian, and Yang Min.

During the week of January 2, 2020, the veneration for which the Orchestra was performing was Christian. Red cloth crosses were worn by family members on their clothing (see photo 5). Christianity in China did not surprise the author since he had played for Wenzhounese Christian funerals in New York and knew that Wenzhou was Christianized.

Since the Opening to the Outside World beginning around 1980, Wenzhou became the largest urban Christian center in China, popularly known as "China's Jerusalem" (*Zhongguo de Yelusaleng*).¹⁵ It grew as the result of a post-Mao Christian revival that laid dormant during the Cultural Revolution. With the liberalization of the 1980s, Wenzhounese Christianity grew from its grassroots and is regarded by sociologists of Christianity to be an indigenous religion,



Photo 5. A Cross Made of Red Cloth Worn on the Clothing of the Christian Family Members at a Chinese Funeral in Qiaotou, Yongjia County, China [Photo by the author, 2020]

which had developed on its own and has been revived by Chinese believers independently from foreign influence.¹⁶

Nanlai Cao explains how Wenzhou had always been remote from the rest of China and was able to maintain grassroots Christianity and capitalism. The region is surrounded by mountains on three sides and the East China Sea on its fourth. Before 1990, when a small airport was opened, Beijing officials had to travel to Wenzhou City by ferry from Shanghai. Wenzhou's railways also were not connected to the rest of the country until 1998.

The region at that time was not much involved with the central agricultural state, and it remained distinct. After the liberation of Wenzhou in 1949 by local guerrillas,

¹⁵ Nanlai Cao. *Constructing China's Jerusalem: Christians, Power, and Place in Contemporary Wenzhou*. Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2010. 232 p.

¹⁶ Ibid. P. 7.



the locals became native cadres who took leadership and were sympathetic to their own regional capitalism from a millennium ago via their shipbuilding and commercial transport industries during the Song Dynasty. Wenzhou's old trading links also enabled cross-cultural religious transmission from Western churches. The original China Inland Mission Church founded in 1867 by Scottish missionary George Scott still stands in Wenzhou's City Center.¹⁷

Cao maintains that Wenzhounese Christianity is indigenized because local believers inherited the faith from their parents or grandparents, and it is traced to a sector of Chinese Protestantism from the early 20th century independent from foreign missions.¹⁸ In 1958, China renounced Christianity as an alien force and what had been known historically to be an accompaniment to Imperialism. Wenzhou in 1958 then became designated as an atheistic zone, and churches were converted for other uses. The Christians became silent.¹⁹

Then after the reforms of Deng Xiaoping in 1975 and Hua Guofeng in 1976 (cf. above), Cao points out that the Wenzhounese Christian revival took place under the modernizing state, the new local governance, and the emerging capitalist consumer economy. Christians came back, and their blend of Christianity and capitalism recalls Max Weber's treatise on *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*,²⁰ basically stating that praying and devoting one's work to God brings financial rewards, especially through capital returns. Cao states that Wenzhounese Christianity is thus an intersection between

religion and political economy,²¹ and that the forms and meanings of its practices relate to the rise of the entrepreneurial class and regional modernity.²² However, Mayfair Yang contests the Weberian paradigm cast upon the Wenzhounese economy and states, in contrast, that Wenzhou's ritual economy has been carried over from Taoism and Buddhism from as early as the Song Dynasty trade, giving credit to Chinese ingenuity instead of Western.²³

After the author's meeting with Commander Ye and Yun Ge, the band began its performance around 9:00 AM. Band members did not wear uniforms on this day but ordinary clothes. They performed seated around a table inside the green tent. They routinely played two songs, hymns, or marches, and then rested (see photo 6). The author frequently played the trumpet



Photo 6. Qiaotou Eastern Farmers Symphonic Wind Orchestra Members Taking a Rest. (Commander Ye Guangming from left.

Yun Ge forefront right.)

[Photo by the author, 2020]

¹⁷ Ibid. Pp. 13–16.

¹⁸ Ibid. P. 16.

¹⁹ Ibid. P. 2.

²⁰ Weber M. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Translated by T. Parsons. London; New York Routledge, 1992. 326 p.

²¹ Nanlai Cao. Op. cit. P. 13.

²² Ibid. P. 17.

²³ Yang M. *Re-enchanting Modernity: Ritual Economy and Society in Wenzhou, China*.

Durham: Duke University Press, 2020. Pp. 4–6.



*Photo 7. The Author Playing the Trumpet
with the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra
[Photo credit: Yun Ge, 2020]*

along with them (see photo 7). By 12:00 PM the family and the band left the tent and went to the church dining hall for lunch. The author accompanied them and saw numerous farms and the town along the way.

The next day, January 3, the veneration at the tent began with the explosion of firecrackers. Firecracker sound deserves an anthropological explanation. Sound barrage is a taboo area of discussion in Chinese music, but the author has conducted research in the subject of sound phenomena created to metaphysically scare away evil spirits. Regarding the Asante of Ghana, the author stated, "Sound barrage is an ancient aesthetic based on sound energy and intensity factor. Its sonic force protects ancestors." Later, "Sound barrage acts in the metaphysical world to dispel evil spirits from court rituals, ancestor veneration, and funerals. The sound is in belief a spirit."²⁴ The author has

also observed this sound phenomenon at the Taoist and Buddhist Chinese funerals in Chinatown, New York, and has described it as creating a protective aura for the soul during its journey to heaven. [1] In Chinatown, the local residents generally regard firecrackers as loud sounds intended to frighten away Nian, the evil monster who comes around during New Year celebrations.²⁵ The practice of sounding firecrackers to scare away evil spirits also occurs in Buddhist monasteries in mainland China,²⁶ and the sonic use of these explosives takes place also at Confucian ceremonies in Taiwan.²⁷ Across religions,

²⁴ Kaminski J.S. Sound Barrage: Threshold to Asante Sacred Experience through Music. *International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music*. 2014;45(2):345–371.

²⁵ Friedman S. Top 10 Things to Know about Chinese New Year. *Travel: National Geographic*. URL: <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/article/celebrate-chinese-new-year> (accessed: 04/20/2022).

²⁶ Sczcepanski B. *The Instrumental Music of Wutaishan's Buddhist Monasteries*. Ashgate SOAS Musicology Series. New York: Routledge, 2012. P. 72.

²⁷ Laade W. *Taiwan — The Confucius Temple Ceremony: Music of Man Archive*. Jecklin-Disco JD 652-2.



both Kenneth Dean²⁸ and Stephen Jones²⁹ regularly observed firecrackers preceding rituals in their research work related to Taoism.

However, Christian Chinese in America regard firecrackers or sound barrages as coming from old folk religions, and they do not use sound this way. After reading Cao's work on Wenzhounese Christianity, the reader would presume this Christians living in that area had the same kind of attitude of rejection of the old Chinese ways, since Cao wrote, "Many Wenzhou Christians, like conservative evangelical Protestants elsewhere, are religiously intolerant and critical of those who do not share their faith."³⁰ And later, "They consciously avoid visiting Buddhist, Taoist, and popular religious sites or engaging in any religious activities they consider un-Christian, especially ancestor worship."³¹ However, the author did not find this attitude to be prevalent among the Wenzhounese Christians he had met. The very behavior of exploding firecrackers before the veneration is convincing that the family still held on to old Chinese folk beliefs of the ancestor and the use of sound as a metaphysical sentinel.

On January 3, some musicians were absent from the veneration, but the band was larger with people who I did not see the day before. Some musicians even played different instruments than they played the day before. I also noticed that many of the band members played their parts from memory.

Their repertoire alternates between Chinese and Western music, which is an example of Bruno Nettl's paradigm for "modern vs. Western music,"³² wherein westernization presumes music becoming Western through the accretion of Western elements, while modernization supposes retaining its traditional essence although modernizing. A purely Western work then is *España Cañí*, the Spanish march that they perform, while some Chinese marches become westernized by a greater incorporation of diatonicism. However, most Chinese marches or songs are either pentatonic or based on a pentatonic mode with the inclusion of hexatonicism appearing before cadences, making them thereby "modern" rather than "Western."

From his past experience, the author observed that the Chinese funeral songs performed by the Farmers' Orchestra are some of those that are played at Chinese funerals in New York by bands such as the Chinese Voices (Hua Sheng). [1] The difference, though, from the New York arrangements is that the Wenzhou and Qiaotou keys are a major fourth higher, demanding accurate control of the embouchure, especially by trumpet players sustaining their higher tones on the dirges (see Examples 1 and 2). As for national marches, the Qiaotou repertoire includes some of the same marches as the Beijing Sunshine Wind Band Art Troupe, [2] although, arranged differently. However, one aspect of the Western repertoire that is widespread in Chinese funerals, both in mainland China and in New York, is the performance of standard Protestant Christian hymns, which in Qiaotou were performed by both the Farmers' Orchestra and an electric *sizhu* (silk and bamboo ensemble of strings and flutes), a *sizhu* which was joined by an electric piano and electric drums to modernize the sound.

²⁸ Dean K. *Taoist Ritual and Popular Cults of Southeast China*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993. 304 p.

²⁹ Jones S. *Ritual and Music of North China*. Vol. 1, 2. Farnham, UK: Ashgate SOAS Musicology Series, 2007 (Vol. 1, 148 p.), 2009 (Vol. 2, 272 p.).

³⁰ Nanlai Cao. Op. cit. P. 20.

³¹ Ibid. P. 21.

³² Nettl B. Op. cit. P. 10.

On my last day in Qiaotou, on January 4, the Farmers wore a white ceremonial uniform (see photos 1 and 2). They performed only in the morning, without stopping for lunch because it was a Saturday and the Farmers had to attend to their sideline industries. The music for the rest of this day was supplied by the *sizhu* group.

Case Study: the Entrepreneurship of an Orchestral Trumpeter

I spent afternoons that week in counties along the Ou River with Yun Ge (see photo 3), the lead trumpet player of the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra. Yun is also the principal trumpeter of the Wenzhou Symphony Orchestra. After lunch on the first day, Yun brought me to the Qiaotou town center to introduce me to his wife and daughter. His wife is a percussionist in the Orchestra, where she plays the bass drum. Together we had tea at a friend's music studio that is used for teaching. The studio also sells music books, including Yun's collection of contemporary Chinese songs for saxophone. Yun also plays the saxophone.

Afterwards, we went with the family to Yun's home in Qiaotou to meet his parents. Yun's parents own and operate a pharmacy on the ground floor of their residence on a commercial street. They all live upstairs as an extended family. Yun's studio and brass repair shop is on the third floor, and it contains some vintage brass instruments, recording equipment, and files of band music handwritten in *jianpu* numerical notation. These meetings took place within the span of two hours, after which time Yun and I returned to the funeral veneration at the tent to resume performance.

The next day after lunch, Yun brought me this time to his business office in Qiaotou. In addition to being a trumpet player by culture, he is a farmer by tradition and now also maintains sideline industries as the head of Qiaotou companies that

manufacture buttons, clothing, watches, and toys. His companies supply for Danuo of Shanghai for international distribution.

Yun Ge's urban lifestyle that developed from the family contract responsibility system (cf. above) now makes him an industrial entrepreneur, and this stems from the reforms of 1978. Gu Yikang and Shao Feng describe the logic of the 1978 reform as being people-oriented. "The reform practices of Zhejiang's farmers have led to a people-oriented development economics model... Under the guidance of socialist theories with Chinese characteristics, Zhejiang has broken through the urban-rural dual social structure and opened a unique pathway for farmer-oriented marketization, industrialization and urbanization."³³ In contrast to the management of capital in the West, they add, "[Acknowledge] the leading role of the Party and its fundamental responsibility of supporting the people in entrepreneurship and wealth creation to form a common prosperity mechanism involving both government and the people. This reflects the necessity of managing the "invisible hand" of the market and the "visible hand" of the government in a scientific manner to develop the socialist market economy."³⁴ Furthermore, "The founding of businesses using agricultural surpluses, building of fortune from private capital, accumulation of savings by the people, rapid expansion of corporate capital and strong investment of government finance are all important characteristics of the operation of mass market economic capital as well as a unique mechanism for the capital accumulation of people-oriented economies."³⁵ The reform has given Yun a comfortable and diverse life also as a professional musician.

³³ Gu Yikang, Shao Feng. Op. cit. P. XII.

³⁴ Ibid. P. XVIII.

³⁵ Ibid. P. XX.

Within Yun's musical interest, his office contains a rehearsal and recording studio that he uses for himself or rents out. Yun took me on a tour of his facility this day and showed me the surplus of buttons (see photo 8). After the visit to Yun's office, we drove a long distance up the Ou River to Qingtian to practice playing new Chinese music together. The top song of the day



*Photo 8. A Batch of Buttons in Yun Ge's stock for Supply to Danuo of Shanghai
[Photo by the author, 2020]*

was *Nu'er qin (Daughter's Love)*, which we rehearsed with three other musician-farmer-entrepreneurs. Zhejiang and its people make a substantial contribution to national economy and culture as exemplified in the freedom exercised by the entrepreneurs with whom I practiced the Chinese songs.

The author's final day in the early afternoon with Yun Ge was spent going to his rehearsal hall on the outskirts of Qiaotou. This building maintained a large bass drum, but did not hold any recording equipment. Yun said that the hall was used only for rehearsals of brass, wind and percussion ensembles, and that he just wanted to show it to me before I left China. In front of his hall spread his farm, indicating crop rotation (see photo 9).

That late afternoon, we drove to Wenzhou where I listened to a rehearsal of the Wenzhou Symphony Orchestra at the Wenzhou Grand Theater, and then watched the performance in the evening. Yun Ge is the principal trumpeter of the Wenzhou Symphony Orchestra. The concert's program was a suite from the Chinese Revolutionary Opera, *The Five-Star Red Flag*. This opera is



*Photo 9. View of Yun Ge's Farm Indicating Crop Rotation
[Photo by the author, 2020]*

significant to the city of Wenzhou for the reason that Zeng Liansong, the designer of the Chinese national flag, came from Wenzhou.

The Repertoire of the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra

The repertoire of the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra may be divided into three categories: funeral songs and dirges, Christian hymns, and traditional music (marches and folk dances), the third of which is the most extensive. These categories do not include Western band works such as the *Radetzky March* and *España Cañí*, which have not need for analysis in this article.

Taking first the funeral dirges, the two most important dirges in all of contemporary Chinese funeral music are *Ai Yue* (*Sorrowful music*), composed by Luo Lang in 1945, and *Zangli Jinxing qu* (*Funeral march*) composed by Li Tong Shu in 1947. Both were fully discussed in my article published in issue no. 4 of *ICONI* for 2021. [1] In New York, in the Chinese Voices Band and other ensembles, these two dirges are played a major fourth lower than in Qiaotou, for the probable reason of lip endurance, where playing in the middle register, instead, makes it easier for the performers. In the New York-based bands, the range for the *B-flat* trumpet in *Ai Yue* is from the low *D* up to the fourth space *e*, which occurs often and still requires a considerable amount of effort. In Qiaotou, the trumpet players blow with ease through a controlled embouchure, yet their ambitus ranges to the *a* above the staff. While transcriptions of *Ai Yue* and *Zangli Jinxing qu* appear in issue No. 4 of *ICONI* for 2021, both in *jianpu* numerical notation and Western notation, I present excerpts from them in the present article, in Western staff notation, but in their transposed keys so that trumpet players have a chance to observe the notion of lengthy endurance exercised in this register at the tempo of 40 bpm (see Examples No. 1 and No. 2). The higher tones

of these keys, *g* and *a*, become articulated in long and sustained tones by the trumpets, especially in *Zangli Jinxing qu* where there is a *fermata* on the *a*. The ranges of the songs are fundamental differences from the way they are performed in New York. The reader may see my article in issue No. 4 of *ICONI* for 2021 for more references to these dirges. (Ibid.)

Example No. 1

Excerpt from “*Ai Yue*” by Luo Lang, mm. 21–25
[transcription by the author]



Example No. 2

Excerpt from “*Zangli Jinxing qu*” by Li Tong Shu, mm. 9–12
[transcription by the author]



The Qiaotou Orchestra also plays some of the same popular funeral songs that the Chinese Voices play in New York because these songs are so standard throughout the country and the diaspora and are also played by *sizhu* ensembles, as well as sung. However, in Qiaotou, the songs are often played in higher keys than they are in New York. The reader may reference again the Chinese Voices funeral song list in issue No. 4 of *ICONI* for 2021. In Qiaotou, I heard *Fuqin* (*Father*) in *E-flat*, usually played in *B-flat* in most of the New York-based bands; *Muqin* (*Mother*) in *E-flat* instead of *B-flat*, requiring the trumpet players to reach the high *a*; *Ke wang* (*Longing*) is played one step higher than in New York, the Qiaotou-based musicians playing it in *F* instead of *E-flat*; and, coincidentally, *Tuo Ling* (*Camel Bell*) and *Wei Le Shei* (*For whom*) played in the same keys as in New York — *E-flat*. Most of the Qiaotou Orchestra's repertoire though consists of national marches and folk dances



for their concert performances and are not funeral-related.

The second category of funeral music discussed in this section consists of Christian hymns. The history of Christian culture in China is not difficult to trace or to analyze, but finding the early Chinese sources for the hymns can be quite challenging. Wenzhounese Christianity has had its roots in the early Western mission churches after the Nanking Treaty of 1842 forced China to open the nearby Ningbo Port to foreign missionaries. In 1867, George Scott, the Scottish missionary, moved onto the evangelization of Wenzhou and founded the China Inland Mission Church there.³⁶ Since this time it must be presumed that the hymns have made their way into Chinese Christian worship, although many hymn tunes are lacking notation, due to their melodies having been taught by rote.³⁷

Thereby, the earliest Christian hymns in China were taught by rote with only the words having been printed, and only later they were written down by means of Western staff notation.³⁸ Fang-Lan Hsieh, after having engaged in extensive research in the Harvard-Yenching Library Archives, concluded that much of the primary sources of Chinese Christian hymnody were lost during the wars.³⁹ Nonetheless, Hsieh covers a tremendous amount of 19th and early 20th century Chinese hymnals from all over China and gives numerous examples from their pages, covering also indigenized Chinese hymns.

The traditional Western hymns I heard performed during the week I spent with the Qiaotou Farmers' Orchestra were *Amazing Grace* and *Nearer My God to Thee*, both played in the key of F, the same key as they are played in New York's Chinese funeral bands.

Amazing Grace was originally called *New Britain* in America, and it is of obscure origin, probably Scottish, having been brought over to America by the English Puritans during their pilgrimage to obtain religious freedom in the land across the Atlantic Ocean in and after 1620.⁴⁰ The original lyrics are unknown, and some musicologists argue that the melody is of African origin. In 1779, John Newton, a former African slave trader who later advocated for the abolition of slavery, became an Anglican minister and wrote new words for *New Britain* that made the hymn popular worldwide with the popular title *Amazing Grace*. This hymn is now played and/or sung in all the international denominations of Christianity including Wenzhounese and Fujianese Christianity, as I also have seen and heard it in New York. [1] Curiously, *Amazing Grace* is not found as an example in Fang-Lan Hsieh's Christian hymn collection. The question arises here as to whether it was taught "by ear," or by rote learning, and thus not in a need for notation, and then the text may have disappeared during one of the wars. Other than that, there is no trace of the introduction of *Amazing Grace* to China. The title of the hymn in Chinese is *Qiyi endian*.

Nearer My God to Thee is a 19th century hymn about death and difficult times and the comfort of being close to God. It is often used at funerals. Verses 1–5 of the original were written by English Unitarian poet and hymn-writer Sarah Fuller Flower Adams (1805–1848). Verses 2–4 of the original text are

³⁶ Nanlai Cao. Op. cit. P. 15–16.

³⁷ Kaminski J.S. *Jianpu* Simplified Notation and the Transnational in Musical Repertoires of New York's Chinatown. *Material Cultures of Music Notation: New Perspectives on Musical Inscription*. Ed. F. Schuiling, E. Payne. New York: Routledge. 2022. Pp. 111–123.

³⁸ Hongyu Gong. Hymnals and Hymnody in Late Qing and Early Republican China. *Journal of Music in China*. 2016;6(2):213–238.

³⁹ Fang-Lan Hsieh. Op. cit. P. XIII.

⁴⁰ Miller T.E. North America : class lecture (fall 1998). MUS 72602 — *Seminar: Music of the Americas*. Kent State University, OH.

based on the Bible: Genesis 28:10-22 (Jacob and the ladder to heaven coming closer to God). This first version was published in an 1841 compilation for a Unitarian chapel in London, and in 1844 the hymn was included in the Service Book published by Rev. James Freeman Clarke, D.D. of Boston for use in an American Unitarian church. In 1856, Lowell Mason composed and published the melody in use today, and Mason's melody is the best known and sung version.⁴¹ Therefore, the hymn was already widespread by the time George Scott began the evangelization of the region in 1867. Fang-Lan Hsieh states that hymnbook editors in China considered "Nearer My God to Thee" to be one of the superior hymn tunes to supply to the missions.⁴² The title of the hymn in Chinese is *Yu zhu geng qinjin*.

An indigenized Chinese hymn I heard the Qiaotou Farmers' Orchestra perform was *Yidian guo* (*Kingdom of Eden*). It is based on the melody of an agricultural song written by Jin Yongdao for a 1970 North Korean film entitled *Xianhua shengkai de cunzhuang* (*Village with Flowers in Bloom*). The melody became popularized with changed Chinese lyrics in Shenyang as *Shenyang ni shi wo de gu shang* (*Shenyang, You are My Home*), and the song was later changed again under Chinese Christianity sometime in the 1990s to become the indigenized hymn *Yidian guo*.⁴³ In New York the performance key is *B-flat*. The Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra performs it in *E-flat*, as shown for *B-flat* trumpet (see Example No. 3).

Example No. 3
 Excerpt from "Kingdom of Eden"
 melody by Jin Yongda
 [transcription by the author]



The third category of music performed by the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra is Chinese national music that includes marches and concert pieces, of which Beijing opera renditions and folk dances form a part. During that week in Qiaotou, I heard the band perform a dozen or so of these national concert works, and I collected their handwritten notations in the *jianpu* numerical system by digitally photographing them. However, the Orchestra maintains even more of these works within their library that I did not see. These notations as a category are immense and would require a number of volumes to present their expositional, theoretical, cultural, and historical analyses. Many of the Farmers' marches are the same as some of those performed by the Beijing Sunshine Wind Band Art Troupe that I covered in issue no. 2 of *ICONI* for 2021. [2] A march is called a *jinxingqu*, and this means a "military march."

Numerous Chinese military marches have been composed in the People's Republic of China since 1949/1950, such as *The People's Army is Loyal to the Party* that I covered in issue no. 2 of *ICONI* for 2021. The national marches are standard and known by all of the people on the mainland and throughout the diaspora. They are performed regularly by all of the divisions of the Chinese military bands in the People's Republic of China, as well as by the amateur Chinese concert bands throughout China. They reflect Chinese national values. The Chinese bands in New York also perform

⁴¹ Godsongs.net: The songs God's people sing together, "Near My God to Thee."
 URL: <https://www.godsongs.net/2011/09/nearer-my-god-to-thee-alternative-and.html>
 (accessed: 05/04/2022).

⁴² Fang-Lan Hsieh. Op. cit. P. 110.

⁴³ This information was gathered from a number of different Chinese informants, both in New York Chinatown and in mainland China via WeChat.



them on Chinese holidays as an enactment of transnationalism. [1] The reader may care to cross-reference my earlier articles in *ICONI* issues nos. 2 and 4 from 2021 that include lists of marches and national music performed by Chinese brass and concert bands.

Here (see photo 10) I present the *jianpu* notation of *Ben xiang guangkuo tiandi* and its first themes in Western staff notation (see Example 4). The most precise translations of this piece are either *Run to the Wide, Wide Sky Land*, or figuratively, *We're Off to the Vast Countryside*. It has a lively tune and

this unique selection of Chinese national music reflects the beauty and essence of the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra performance.

It was composed in 1976 by Zheng Lu for the Chinese People's Liberation Army Military Orchestra. Zheng was born in 1933 in Banqiao Village, Shunyi District, Beijing. In 1946, he joined the children's troupe of the liberated areas and in 1948 he became part of the Army's art troupe. In 1950, he was transferred to the Chinese People's Liberation Army Orchestra, and over the years he composed more than 300 works

Photo 10. The Trumpet Part for “We’re Off to the Vast Countryside” by Zheng Lu, in *Jianpu* Notation, from the Library of the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers’ Symphonic Wind Orchestra [Photo by the author, 2020]

for Chinese musicians and those from other countries.⁴⁴

We're Off to the Vast Countryside is representative of China because it reflects an ethnic folk dance melody, similar to those in the collections that were an academic and cultural priority at the time Zheng composed it in 1976.⁴⁵ The “countryside” dance nature of this melody is ideal for local Chinese bands and orchestras, such as the Qiaotou Farmers’ Orchestra, since it rhythmically and tonally reflects the sounds of the pastures of country life and the joys of dancing or riding in the fields. Its immense sound represents the open sky, while the timbre of the wood block creates the sound of horses galloping. Since the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers’ Symphonic Wind Orchestra had newly begun in 1975, at the juncture of economic and artistic reforms, *We're Off to the Vast Countryside* has been in Commander Ye’ library for a very long time (see photo 8).

Photo 8 shows the trumpet part for *We're Off to the Vast Countryside* in handwritten jianpu notation. It comes from the library of the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers’ Symphonic Wind Orchestra. Only the theme is given in Western staff notation in Example No. 4 — for copyright purposes. *Jianpu* is easy to read and is preferred by national Chinese musicians, both professional and amateur. *Jianpu* literally means “simplified notation,” and it uses movable *do*, wherein 1 is *do*, 2 is *re*, and so on, with dots above or below the numbers to indicate the register, and

Example No. 4

Western Musical Transcription of the First Themes in the Trumpet Part for “*We're Off to the Vast Countryside*” by Zheng Lu, from the Library of the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers’ Symphonic Wind Orchestra [Transcription by the author, 2020]



with dashes after or under the numbers to indicate duration.⁴⁶

Some of the other pieces I found unique to the Qiaotou national repertoire that I did not find yet in other Chinese bands are:

Chinese Soldiers
Soldiers March Forward Side by Side
The Road to Success
Fighting the Tiger on the Mountain
Army Civilians March Forward
The Joy of Friendship
Festivals of Shishuangbana
Look Home Often
In that Distant Place
The Alishan Girl
The Story of Spring
Our Life is Full of Sunshine

Conclusions

In 1984 a Chinese sociologist stated that the Challenge of the New Technological Revolution is bringing into play the creative capacities of the people.⁴⁷ With the coming of entrepreneurship to farming families and the international trade created from Qiaotou after the Opening to the Outside World, the freedom of wealth in the new market economy created the free lifestyles of the farmer musicians turned entrepreneurs.

⁴⁴ Baidu. URL: https://wenku.baidu.com/view/b3e3b570e109581b6bd97f19227916888586b96e.html?_wks_=1689511254444&bdQuery=%E9%83%91%E8%B7%AF%E6%98%AF%E5%9C%A8%E5%93%AA%E4%B8%80%E5%B9%B4%E5%88%9B%E4%BD%9C%E5%A5%94%E5%90%91%E5%B9%BF%E9%98%94%E5%A4%A9%E5%9C%B0%E7%9A%84

⁴⁵ Jones S. Reading Between the Lines: Reflection on the Massive Anthology of the National and Folk Music of the Chinese Peoples. *Ethnomusicology*. 2003;47(3):287–337.

⁴⁶ Kaminski J.S. “*Jianpu* Simplified Notation...

⁴⁷ Woetzel J.R. Op. cit. P. 76.



In conclusion, China's liberalized policies since 1975 have led the Qiaotou Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra to meet the challenges of providing professional, modern national music.

The Orchestra is a concert band, a Western orchestra of wind and percussion instruments that originated in Yongjia County, Zhejiang Province. The band was founded in 1975 by Commander Ye Guangming.

The Qiaotou Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra performs three categories of music, including such concert pieces as *We're Off to the Vast Countryside* by Zheng Lu. The Orchestra additionally provides services for funerals performing Chinese dirges, such as *Sorrowful Music* and *Funeral March*. After China's Opening to the Outside World in 1980, Wenzhou became the largest urban

Christian center in China, and by providing funeral music for the Christian clients of Yongjia and Wenzhou, the Qiaotou Eastern Farmers' Symphonic Wind Orchestra developed a repertoire of Christian hymns, mainly of Western origins, though along with indigenized Chinese hymns.

While in Qiaotou, the author performed with the Orchestra and conducted ethnomusicological analyses. This is the third article devoted to Chinese bands that he has written for *ICONI*. The author was successful in his fieldwork to find differences between the New York Chinese bands and the mainland Chinese bands. The mainland bands perform predominantly large concert works of national Chinese music, whereas the New York Chinese bands are funeral based with a selection of Chinese marches for parades and parties.



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