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“互联网语境中中外音乐交互影响研究”丛书 | 喻 辉 主编

Global Perspectives on Chinese Music in the Internet Age

互联网语境中中国音乐的国际视野

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屏幕音乐中的现实与虚构

——纪录片和故事片中的中国传统音乐再现

Reality and Fiction in Screened Music: Chinese Traditional Music Re-presented in Documentary and Fiction Films

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摘　要：电影再现中的“真实”和“虚构”是社会科学中一个长期存在的问题。音乐中“他者”的再现问题一直存在于早期影视人类学的著作中。当事物通过我们的陈述和它们的真实性显现时，现实就成为一种以事物间辩证张力为特征的古老的人类学和哲学的论题。电影作为一种视听陈述或世界再现是一种与书面文字一样的文本“建构”。写音乐文化与拍摄音乐文化一样，都是不可避免的对（音乐）现实的“创造性”处理形式。虽然目前对电影、流行音乐和媒体的研究体系已经建立，但民族音乐学研究对媒体音乐，特别是屏幕音乐的关注仍是寥若晨星。通过审视中西方商业艺术电影、纪录片、旅行纪录片和纪实电影中电影语言的使用，本文提供了一种对多种中国传统音乐形式的不同视听表达方式的历史分析和概括。本文通过音乐表现的视听再现，采用历时观察强调纪录片作为反映中国过去几十年里的社会变革的一面镜子，并提出一种针对屏幕音乐研究的民族音乐学观点。

关键词：China, documentary films, fiction films, traditional music, ethnomusicology

1 Representing Chinese Music in Fiction Films

The interest to "visualize" music and dance dates back to the early stage of the history of cinematography, marked by the advent of modern photographic technology of still and movie cameras at the end of the 19th century. Filming music and dance began with synchronized sound technology. In 1891, Thomas Alva Edison and William Kennedy-Laurie Dickson built a prototype called *kinetophone* (or *kinetophonograph*), a device capable of adding sound to the film, to which the kinetoscope was later connected to a phonograph to synchronize the images to sound. The first film to test the kinetophone was a 17-second film, *Dickson Experimental Sound Film* (1894) by Dickson, an experimental attempt to create sound motion pictures.

In the same year, Dickson and Edison made a short black-and-white silent film: *Chinese Opium Den* (1894). Very little is known about this film as no print is believed to exist and all that remains is a single still image. It is believed to be the first motion picture to explore the issue of drug usage. One year later, Dickson with William Heise made *Chinese Laundry Scene* (1895), known also as *Robetta and Doretto*: Outside a laundry, a Chinese man hits a police officer over the head with a basket, and then runs inside the laundry. The policeman also rushes inside, only to have the other man swing outside on the other side of a revolving door. The police officer refuses to give up the chase, but the Chinese man proves very elusive.

Cinema was introduced in China in 1896 with the names of "electric shadowplay" (*dianguang yingxi*), "western shadowplay" (*xiyang yingxi*), or "moving shadowplay" (*huodong yingxi*) (Berry and Farquhar 2006).[1] China's first films were opera films (*xiqupian*), in which classic opera were selected and adapted for screen. The first Chinese film, *The Battle of Dingjunshan*, directed by Ren Qingtai (任庆泰) aka Ren Jingfeng (任景丰), was made in 1905. It was based on an episode in Luo Guanzhong's historical novel *Romance of the Three*

1 *Yingxi* refers to China's ancient lantern shadowplay (*dengyingxi*) that used a lantern to throw shadows of puppets against a screen.

Kingdoms. The film consisted of a recording of a Beijing Opera performance of the Battle of Mount Dingjun, performed by the famous actor Tan Xinpei.[1] The first sound films made in the mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan of China were all based on Chinese opera:

> Following the production of *Dingjun Mountain* in 1905, the Fengtai company made seven more opera shorts. With *Dingjun Mountain*, Fengtai went from being a photo studio to becoming the first film production company in China. And, as China's first production company, Fengtai made nothing but opera films. When another film studio, the Shanghai-based Commercial Print Company (a subsidiary of a major publishing company), began production in 1918, it made two opera films with virtuoso Mei Lanfang. Indeed, opera remained one of the dominant genres of Chinese cinema from 1917 to 1924, according to Chinese historians, the first golden age of Chinese film (Yeh 2002: 83).

The arrival of sound film in the late 1920s allowed the adding of dialogues and sounds to film. *The Jazz Singer* (1927) directed by Alan Crosland is considered the first feature-length motion picture with synchronized sound and dialogue sequences, marking the decline of the silent film era. In China, the first sound film, *Sing-Song Girl Red Peony* (*Genü Hongmudan*, 《歌女红牡丹》, 1931), using the sound-on-disc technology, was made in 1931. The film was directed by Zhang Shichuang, interpreted by the famous actress Hu Die (胡蝶), and produced by Mingxing (Bright Star) Film Studio of Shanghai, in collaboration with Pathé Records. The plot is about a songstress, Hongmudan (Red Peony), who at the peak of her career marries an abusive husband who is completely dependent on her. When Red Peony loses her voice and stops bringing home money, her husband sells their daughter. In spite of the husband's bullying, Red Peony never thinks of leaving him. At the end, her husband finally appreciates her sacrifice. The background music drawing on traditional opera songs (featuring the most esteemed impersonator in Beijing Opera,

1 The Battle of Mount Dingjun was fought between the warlords Liu Bei and Cao Cao in 219 during the prelude to the Three Kingdoms period of Chinese history. Liu Bei's victory in the battle marked a major milestone in his Hanzhong Campaign.

Mei Lanfang),[1] played by traditional Chinese instruments such as *erhu* (a vertical two-string fiddle) and *pipa* (plucked lute), was added to silent film in 1935, using the sound-on-disc technology (*lapan fayin* or *pianshang fayin*), also known as Vitaphone (*witafeng*) or Movietone (*muweitong*) (Zhang and Xiao 1998; Zhang 2004):

> For the production of *The Songstress Red Peony*, dialogue and four opera songs were recorded onto cylinder wax. Because Mingxing could not afford to acquire sound equipment from the United States, despite hopes of competing with new American arrivals, the recording was completed in Shanghai's Pathé studio, which produced most records in China at the time. The results of recording on disc rather than on film stock were disappointing: out-of-sync sound, scratchy noises, and stiff speech. Despite these shortcomings, the film's significance in Chinese film history is nothing short of monumental (Yeh 2002: 84).

It is interesting to notice that the first musical film in China, which goes back to the 1960s, concerns a legendary singer belonging to a minority ethnic group (*shaoshu minzu*): *Liu San Jie* (*Liu the Third Sister*, 《刘三姐》, 1960), directed by Su Li, which tells the story of Liu San Jie, a legendary folk female singer of Zhuang minority in Guangxi, who became known for her singing. Sister Liu has been driven out of her native place by a landlord and forbidden to sing by his brother, but she manages to escape and arrives at a riverside village. Then the landlord kidnaps Liu San Jie who later escapes with the help of her lover and other people. Liu San Jie moves to other places to inspire people with folk songs. The movie contains many folk songs of Guangxi Zhuang minority and stunning scenery of Guangxi[2]: With its picturesque scenery and its melodious folk songs, *Liu San Jie* was praised as exemplifying the achievements of "national style" (*minzu fengge*) or "national form" (*minzu xingshi*) in post-1949 Chinese cinema (Yingjin 1997: 79).

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1 Focused on the legendary opera singer Mei Lanfang are the documentary film *The Worlds of Mei Lanfang* (2001) by Mei-Juin Chen and the fiction art film *Forever Enthralled* (2009) directed by Chen Kaige is a biographical film on Mei Lanfang.

2 Recently, a remake was made, inspired by Liu San Jie's story: *A Singing Fairy* (寻找刘三姐), 2010, staring Su Youpeng and directed by Zhu Feng.

According to the local tale, Liu San Jie was born in a village along the Liujiang River of Guangxi in the Tang Dynasty (618—907). She was not only beautiful but also good at singing folk songs. At the age of 17, Liu San Jie fell in love with a handsome young man who was also a good folk singer. The two swore they would never separate in their lives. The peaceful happiness was, however, broken by a hooligan in the village who had been for a long time attracted by Liu's beauty. This evil man decided to take Liu San Jie by force. He got his chance on a moonlight night when Liu and her lover were sitting on a big rock at riverside to enjoy the beauty of the moon. Suddenly, a gang of hooligans surrounded them. Liu San Jie and her lover had no way to escape, with no hesitation, the couple jumped into the roaring Liujiang River, hand in hand. Nowadays, on the day of March 3, local people will gather along the riverside of the Liujiang River, organizing a folk-song competition to mourn Liu San Jie.

It must be pointed out, however, that some years before *Liu San Jie*, other two feature films concerning ethnic minorities in China have been produced: *Lusheng Lian Ge* (also known as *Love Songs on the Reed Pipes* or *Lusheng Love Songs*, 《芦笙恋歌》, 1957) by Yu Yanfu, related to Lahu, a "nationality" (*minzu*) living in the basin of the Lancang River in Yunnan Province; and *Wu Duo Jinhua* (*Five Golden Flowers*, 《五朵金花》 1959) by Wang Jiayi, is centered on a love story involving a woman belonging to the Bai ethnic group in Yunnan. Both reinforce the stereotype of the minority presented as fond of song and dance, dressed in gorgeous colors, decorated with flashy ornaments, and engaged in romantic affairs.

The first film, *Lusheng Lian Ge*, is a love story set in the 1930s, featuring Lahu's resistance against the Nationalist Chinese Army and collaboration with the People's Army. "The Wedding Oath Song" was composed for this film by Lei Zhenbang, an ethnic Manchu composer known for his ability to incorporate ethnic music into his compositions:

> While the song is not a Lahu song, Lei is, as noted above, known to have drawn on traditional melodies in his compositions and it is likely that he sought out traditional Lahu music while composing. One element of the song that rings true as Lahu is the fact that it is a duet between a man and a woman, reflecting, perhaps intentionally, the traditional marriage practice of Lahu as distinct from

> the practice of Han and other patrilineal, patriarchal groups in the region [...]. This intentional and meaningful connection of a song composed and sung in Mandarin, the language associated with the dominant Han, to Lahu cultural practice appears to prepare the song for life as a hitchhiker (Pine 2012: 84).

The second film, *Wu Duo Jinhua*, is about a lovesick young man, who travels through the Bai area in search of his date, a young woman who calls herself Jinhua (Golden Flower), whom he exchanged songs with a year before. Prior to finding his Golden Flower, the man is led to four other women who are also known as Golden Flower. During his journey, this young man witnesses the active participation of these women in the economic reconstruction of a new China.

These films provide good examples of "minority film" genre in Chinese cinema, which celebrate official discourse on the solidarity between Han Chinese and other ethnic minorities.

The increasingly politicized climate of the 1950s and 1960s translated into less artistic freedom for the Chinese filmmakers. At the end of the 1970s and early 1980s, Deng Xiaoping initiated the PRC's reform and open-door policy. China ushered in a period of economic reform, accompanied by incremental cultural liberalization. Film production resumed, and the Beijing Film Academy reopened after a long time. In 1982, Chen Kaige was the first to graduate at Beijing Film Academy since the mid-1960s. His directorial debut, *Yellow Earth* (*Huang Tudi*, 1984), —with his classmate Zhang Yimou as cinematographer—made such a mark on the development of Chinese cinema: "*Yellow Earth* emphasizes imagery over plot, symbolism and song over dialogue, and ambiguity over explicit didactic function" (Farquhar 1992: 154).

Folksongs and folk music played by shawm bands (*guyue* 鼓乐) from Shaanbei, in the northern Shaanxi Province, have a prominent role in *Yellow Earth*.[1] The plot is very simple: In early spring 1939, a soldier of the arts division is sent to the remote area to collect folk songs in order to re-write them with communist lyrics

1 The documentary *Notes from the Yellow Earth* (2009) by Stephen Jones offers a panoramic view of ritual and folk music in Shaanbei. It shows bards performing at a temple fair to bless a family in distress, and shawm bands performing at a wedding, at funerals, and a shop opening (including their pop repertory with the "big band").

in order to boost the morale of the Eighth Route Army soldiers. While collecting folk songs to adapt as revolutionary anthems, a communist soldier opens the eyes of an ignorant peasant girl to the modernizing potential of communism. As Harry Kuoshu (a.k.a. Haixin Xu) writes in *Celluloid China*, "The collection and re-writing of folk songs is central to the Chinese communist literary theory. It was called 'new wine in old bottles' and writers were to take traditional popular literature and art and re-write them with a revolutionary content" (Kuoshu 2002: 225). Yang Mu describes the phenomenon of *geming minge* or "revolutionary folk song," referring to folk songs that praise socialism, communism, the government and its policies, the Communist Party and its leaders:

> The subject matter of these songs may vary, but their lyrics all have such "revolutionary" references. For example, a traditional love song text, "I love you because you are handsome and strong," may be re-composed as "I love you because you love the Party and work hard to construct socialism," and then be regarded as "revolutionary." A large number of such songs have been spread throughout the country by all available media, including musical performances, publications, educational materials, recordings, and radio and television broadcasts. (Yang 1994: 305)[1]

Many northern-style folksongs as well as wedding ceremonies, traditional festivals and rituals are included in this movie. Although *Yellow Earth* may be considered a fiction film, it shows two reenacted as true traditional ceremonies in their traditional socio-cultural context: the Ansai Waist Drum Dance (安塞腰鼓舞), performed by a large *yaogu* percussion ensemble of Ansai, and the Rain Prayer Ceremony, rites which placate the gods and so ward off the drought and pestilence.

Nowadays, the Ansai Waist Drum Dance is rarely performed at villages, because the young drummers have migrated to the cities and it is held annually in

1 Yang asserts that among the Chinese academic community, and in society at large, is common opinion the erroneous opinion that the majority of folk songs in Shaanbei are revolutionary folk songs. This stereotype led to commonly regard the "Shaanbei folk song" as representative of the "Chinese revolutionary folk song." (Yang 1994)

Yan'an during the government-organized New Year's festival, in which professional troupes stage waist-drum performances in the form of a street parade:

> In other words, the sign of a Yan'an waist-drum performance is now constantly mass-mediated, performed and consumed out of its original and spatial contexts, and its live performance now engages rural performers and urban photographers, tourists, and government officials much more than rural neighbors. At the same time, the Yan'an waist-drum dance was a recent target of national heritage listing and conservation. Urban intellectuals rushed to investigate its historical meanings and performative forms and spoke of it as an unchanging tradition. (Wu 2015: 20-21)

The final scene shows a Rain Prayer Ceremony within vocations to gods for rain by the prayers to the Dragon King, inspired by the rituals for "seeking rain" (*qiu yu*) or "praying [to the gods] for rain" (*qi yu*), practiced in many villages in the northern areas of China, because of the dry climate: "Such rituals are a prime example of the practical nature of local community rites and their close relationships to their geographical and social contexts. Here we see people struggling with what for them was the life-or-death problem of preserving their crops in the face of drought. They used irrigation where they could, but when they failed they fell back on symbolic means to evoke help from gods, such as the Dragon Kings who represented natural forces." (Overmyer 2009: 18)

In *Ritual and Music of North China* (2007), Stephen Jones considers the scene of rain prayer as a "romantic view" compared to the reality:

> Another occasional ritual is the rain ceremony (*qi yu*). Rain is desperately needed in north China, and the modern state has not been able to protect the population from the vagaries of the elements. The film *Yellow Earth*, evoking the 1930s, ends with an imposing rain procession, with barefoot males stripped to the waist, adorned with head-dresses of willow leaves. Kneeling in the dust, they prey hoarsely to the Dragon Kings, deities presiding over rain. Of course, this is a romantic view, whereas the reality today may seem more prosaic [...]. Rain processions in Shaanbei are commonly referred to as "shouldering the god

> sedan" (*tai shenlou*) or "shouldering the Dragon Kings" (*tai Longwang*). They mostly take place in the searingheat of the 6th moon. They are organized by a committee of senior male villagers, with all households contributing—only the women are not allowed to observe. The route is thought to be determined by the gods: in one village, they had to stop because the gods were leading them over a cliff. Musically, male villagers sing (or "shou," as they say) in solo and choral response, the "rain master" playing the gong, another villager playing the drum, while shawm bands may play on arrival at ritual sites. Since many Dragon Kings temples are on remote hillsides, opera stages are often in the village; on return to the village an opera troupe is commonly invited to perform to thank the gods. (Jones 2007)

Reality and fiction are also interwoven in *Song of the Phoenix*[1] (*Bai niao chao feng*《百鸟朝凤》, 2013), the final art film of the late director Wu Tianming (former head of the Xi'an Film Studio).[2] The film is a master-pupil story focused on a traditional musical practice: the playing of the *suona* (唢呐), a double-reed woodwind instrument used at country weddings and funerals, solo or in *chuida* ensemble (lit. "blowing-hitting," wind and percussion instruments ensemble).[3] The movie charts the life and trials of You Tianming, a young *suona* apprentice who goes on to form his very own *suona* troupe at a time when the presence of traditional instruments was declining in Chinese society. Tianming faces the harsh reality that his artistic calling is no longer in tune with a modern and urbanized China. Adopting a narrative method, the movie depicts two generations of *suona* players and their father-son relationship. Chinese ethnomusicologist Yu Hui captured the essence of this arthouse film:

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1 The title of the movie *Song of the Phoenix* ("Bai niao chao feng" also translates as "Hundreds of birds courting phoenix") is a well-known *suona* music piece.

2 Director Wu Tianming was considered a prominent figure among the Fourth Generation Chinese filmmakers who inspired many well-known Fifth Generation filmmakers such as Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige.

3 The *suona*, a kind of Chinese oboe, figures also in the Taiwanese feature film *The Suona Player / Chui guchui* (《吹鼓吹》) (1988, aka *For Whom the Suona Blows*), directed by Lee Daw-Ming / Li Daoming (李道明).

> Although the story is from a fictional novel, both the author of the novel and the movie director based their creativity work on personal experiences. The depiction of *suona* music, the instrument itself, the apprentice system, and the troupes' practices vividly reflect the real life situation. In Chinese mythology, the phoenix is associated with the sun, and the phoenix obtains new life by arising from the ashes of its predecessor. The movie demonstrates people's struggles in their changed lives, and their persistence, confidence, and seriousness when safeguarding their music traditions (Yu Hui. From the abstract of his paper "The *Song of the Phoenix* in a Changing Society" of the 1st ICTM Symposium on Audiovisual Ethnomusicology, *Ljubljana*, 2016).

Based on a 2009 novel by Guizhou writer Xiao Jianghong (肖江虹), but relocated north to Wu's beloved native province of Shaanxi—coincidentally the same region where it was set *Yellow Earth*[1]—the film is solidly in the genre of those dealing with changes wrought by the country's modernization, here via a story, from 1982 to the mid-1990s, in which a boy studies the *suona* only to find it in declining use when he takes over from his master.

The main topic of the film is that times are changing as the country modernises, and the traditional *suona* band is losing popularity in the countryside. One of the most significant scene of the film is when Tianming's *suona* band is playing at a village center and they are interrupted by a western styled instrumental ensemble that comes to play too. The crowd immediately gravitates towards the sounds of the trumpet opposed to the *suona*. The *suona* band then gets into an altercation with a patron who rudely demands the *suona* band stop playing so he can hear the westernized sounds. Tianming's *suona* which was passed down from his master gets destroyed during the brawl and it acts as the arduous realization that the *suona* is becoming meaningless. This scene is symbolic for what's going on in the world: As nations are becoming more modern, they are forgoing their past cultural heritage.

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1 The film was shot around Heyang County, Weinan Prefecture, Shaanxi Province, northeast of Xi'an, in summer 2012.

2 Representing Chinese Folk Music in Documentary Films

Far-east Asian music was the object of the ethnomusicological films shot by Robert Garfias, whose first filmic research projects began in 1966 in the Philippines and Korea (then edited in *Music and Dances of the Philippines and Korea*, 1969). His *concept-films*, based on specific performances, were produced by the University of Washington where he had established an ethnomusicology department, and they have been used as didactical tools in the classroom (Garfias 2004). Although he never made any film about Chinese music on field, he shot two short films on *kuqin* and *zheng* played by Tao Chu-Shen at the University of Washington in 1977.[1]

In the late 1970s, Bengali ethnomusicologist Deben Bhattacharya travelled throughout India and China collecting over 800 hours of recordings and shooting 23 films, some of them concerning traditional music in China: *Echoes from Tibet* (1980), *Folk Music from Inner Mongolia* (1983), *Chinese Opera* (1983), and the series *Performing Arts of China* (1983).[2]

In the last decades, a series of anthological documentaries titled *Quintessential Chinese Culture* has been produced by Huwa Golden International, in which are included some videos related to Chinese music and dances: *Peking Opera*, *Chinese Dances*, and *Chinese Folk Music* (2003) directed by Li Bing, author also of *Ancient Chinese Music Instruments* (2008). Among the audiovisual anthologies on world music for educational or didactical purposes, a special mention must be deserved to the *JVC Video Anthology of World Music and Dance* (1990; 2005), edited by Fuji Tomoaki, and produced by JVC in collaboration with the National Museum of Ethnology (Osaka) and Smithsonian/Folkways Records. Three of the twenty videos are focused on China: The first showing examples of Han instrumental music and dramatic musical genres, the second one focused on the music of two ethnic minorities of Yunnan (Yi and Naxi) and a Tibetan masked dance drama, and the third one dedicated to Uygur music of Xinjiang. Another educational audiovisual series, *Exploring the World of Music* (1999), produced and directed by Martin D. Toub,

1 The videos are available on streaming: http://www.socsci.uci.edu/~rgarfias/films.html.

2 He also shot a film on Taiwan musical traditions, especially the Peking Opera: *Silk and Strings: A Tale of Taiwan* (1973).

includes a video with an introduction to *qin* by Yu Hui.[1]

Among all Chinese musical instruments, the *qin* (琴), or *guqin* (古琴), an ancient Chinese plucked seven-string instrument of the zither family, has deserved a special attention by Chinese ethnomusicologist-filmmakers. At least three documentary films are focused on the Confucius' favourite instrument: *Qin Music on Antique Instruments* (1998) by Bell Yung, *Resonance of the Qin* (2000) by Willow Hai Chang and *The Heart of Qin in Hong Kong* (2010) by Maryam Goormaghtigh.

Dutch ethnomusicologists Frank Kouwenhoven and Antoinet Schimmelpenninck, founding members of CHIME, a foundation for the promotion of Chinese music research based in Leiden (Netherlands), are the authors of other video documentaries about Chinese music: *Guo Wenjing's Opera Fenyiting* (2004), *Musical Courting in China* (2004), *Hua'er Singing in Northwest China* (2005), *The Bells of Marquis Yi* (2005), *Masters of Chinese Traditional String Instruments* (2007), *Chinese Shadows: The Amazing World of Shadow Puppetry in Rural Northwest China* (2007).

Notes from the Yellow Earth: A Film about Music and Ritual in Shaanbei, China (2009), filmed in 1999 and 2001 in the Yulin region of Shaanbei (Shanxi Province) is a research film accompanying the book *Ritual and Music of North China* by British ethnomusicologist Arthur Jones. This is the first major ethnographic study of Chinese shawm bands in their ceremonial and social context. Jones describes the painful maintenance of ceremonial and its music there during the "Cultural Revolution" period, its revival with the market reforms of the 1980s and its modification under the assault of pop music since the 1990s. The DVD consists of a 47-minute film in two parts, showing excerpts from funerals and temple fairs.

Internet is also a rich source of didactical short clips or documentaries about Chinese traditional musical instruments, such as the series *A Guide to Chinese Instruments* by filmmaker Jonah Kessel, available on streaming on Vimeo, or *The History of Chinese Musical Instruments*, produced by CCTV, available on YouTube.

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1 Deserving of a special mention the didactical video *Introduction to Chinese Musical Instruments* (1992; 2007) by Yang Mu includes the following performers: Chen Baitao, *sanxian*; Chen Wenjie, *pipa*, *ruan*, *liuqin*; Chen Wenxiang, *yangqin*; Dong Quiming, *dizi, xiao, bawu, koudi, hulusi*; Feng Zhihao, *erhu, gaohu, banhu, zhonghu, jinghu*; Hu Weigang, *danguan, shuanguan, suona, haidi, dasuona*; Li Li, *sheng*; Wang Zhengtin, *sheng*; Yang Mu, *qin*, percussion instruments; The Australian Chinese Music Ensemble.

3 Ethnic Minorities' Music in Documentary Films

Music of ethnic groups[1] in China has been of interest to ethno-filmmakers since the films made by Bhattacharya on the music of the Uighur population in the Xinjiang region (*The Performing Arts of China: Uighurs on the Silk Route*) and the music of Yi and Bai of Yunnan (*The Performing Arts of China: Minorities of the Southwest*). Religious songs and dances of the Naxi as well as traditional Naxi music have been documented in *Naxi Art and Culture in Lijiang* (1966) by Qiu Pu, Yang Guanghai, Zhan Chengxu and Karsten Krüger.

In the 1980s, New Zealand composer Jack Body spent three months in China to work on the documentary film *"Big Nose" and Body Music* (1988) directed by Patrick McGuire. The documentary records his encounters with everyday music-making in Sichuan Province and Guizhou Province of southern China, especially the traditions of minority groups such as the Yi, Miao, and Gelao.[2]

Chinese ethnomusicologists are aware of the urgent need to protect ethnic cultural heritage of minority groups, a cultural memory that should be safeguarded because of the risk that it could be lost forever. By the late 1980s, the Yuansheng Studio, based in Kunming and founded by the late classical composer Tian Feng, has run educational programs to preserve traditional arts and recently organized an amazing annual traditional music festival. The story of this cultural center and its activities has been depicted in Liu Xiaojin's documentary *Chronicle of the Minority Institute* (2002).

In the last years, however, a new interest in musical ethnography and in filming traditional music is growing in parallel to the development of ethnomusicology in China (*minzu yinyuexue*).[3] Different approaches to represent traditional music

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1 The PRC government has officially classified China's minority peoples into fifty-five *shaoshu minzu* ("ethnic minorities" or "minority nationalities"), in addition to the Han majority.

2 Forty video tapes of raw footage from the *"Big Nose" and Body Music* expedition are included in the Alexander Turnbull Library's Archive of New Zealand Music. The documentary is available on streaming: http://www.jackbody.com/pages/big_nose.htm.

3 In Taiwan of China, ethnographic films concerning the music of different ethnic groups of the island have been made by Hu Tai-li (*Songs of the Pasta'ai*, 1989, and *Sounds of Love and Sorrow*, 2000) and by David Tawai Lee (*Songs of the Mountains, Dances of the Sea: Music and Dances of Taiwan's Indigenous People*, 1997).

through audiovisual media have been adopted. Let's consider, for example, the audiovisual representation of traditional music of the ethnic groups in Yunnan Province (Southwest China). Among the country's fifty-six recognized ethnic groups, twenty-five minority "nationalities" (*minzu*) are found in Yunnan. Three documentaries reveal different approaches to represent traditional music of the ethnic groups in Yunnan: The first one is a monograph dealing with a specific musical tradition, the second one is an edited research film including sampling of performances giving an overview of styles and genres of different ethnic groups, and the last one shows a travelogue filming style.

Treasure of the Lisu: Ah-Cheng and His Music (2010), directed by Yan Chun Su (with American filmmaker Les Blank serving as editor and story consultant), is a biopic that depicts an intimate portrait of Ah-Cheng Heng, a master musician and tradition bearer of the Lisu people. The Lisu are a Tibeto-Burman-speaking ethnic group of over one million people living in Southwest China, Myanmar, Thailand and India. In China, this ethnic group resides in the Nujiang Prefecture of Yunnan Province, southeast of the Tibetan plateau.

Starting in 2005, Yan Chun Su, a self-taught Chinese filmmaker, began to travel in the Nujiang (Salween River) Canyon in Southwest China to document the diverse music cultures of the people in that area, before their environmental and cultural patrimony was affected by the construction of hydroelectric dams. Spending an extensive period of time with one Lisu family, she worked as a one-woman crew in the production of *Treasure of the Lisu*, a 30-minute observational style documentary with occasional captions to provide context on the musical culture and religion of the Lisu people.

Ah-Cheng is both a musician and luthier, steadfastly preserving the crafts of making and playing the *chiben* (four-string wooden lute), one of the three "treasures" for the Lisu people—the other two being the crossbow and the knife, which Ah-Cheng is also skilled at making. The film begins with Ah-Cheng making a new lute with cutaways to scenes of daily life, while in the background we hear the musician's voice-over.

In a short span of time, three important issues emerge. The first is the power of *chiben* music to lift people's spirit and to "regulate" social relationships. Ah-Cheng's voice-over tells us "the *chiben* is the dearest to our heart, because it brings us

laughter and joy. Without the *chiben* to dance to, people fight when they get drunk" and "when you are sad, playing some *chiben* will relieve the sadness." Among the Lisu, instrumental music serves two primary functions: accompaniment for dancing and evening entertainment when the working day is over. But nowhere in the film can we see any social occasion in which people listen to the *chiben*.

The second issue is the rejection or retention of cultural practices in relation to Christianisation. During the twentieth century Protestantism began to spread through Lisu villages in the mountainous Nujiang region. The *chiben*, used widely in traditional religious gatherings, was considered a threat to this newly introduced religion and, as a result, was banned from the church. In fact, all traditional instruments were forbidden due to their connections with animism, ancestor-worship, and their association with alcohol consumption. In the past, the *chiben* was used to accompany dancing and drinking on festival days, sometimes around a fire, sometimes as part of festive processions into the mountains. Thus, the *chiben* has fallen out of popularity as a direct consequence of the spread of Christian beliefs among the Lisu. Nowadays, Christian worship consists of singing *a cappella* hymns in four-part harmony, the *ddoqmuq mutgguat* (praise songs), derived from North American urban gospel songs and influenced by Lisu folk multi-part singing, and *mutgguat ssat* (short songs), a kind of Christian pop-gospel accompanied by electric guitars and drums, and the *daibbit* dance.

The third issue is the continuity or rupture of their musical traditions as a result of the generational divisions. Ah-Cheng is presented as the only *chiben* maker and practitioner in his village. He received his musical knowledge from his father and he is concerned about passing it on to the younger generations in the village. However, the harsh reality is that younger generations are more interested in western music and instruments like the guitar. These youths tend to ignore traditional ethnic instruments like the *chiben*.

In two scenes showing Ah-Cheng's attempts to transmit his art, the dichotomies of tradition/modernity, past/present, old/young are apparent in discussions concerning oral transmission versus written notation. Ah-Cheng's voice-over explains, "Our Lisu music doesn't have written notes. The only way to learn is by listening and remembering it in your heart." Another scene shows Ah-Cheng trying to teach his youngest son to play the *chiben* but it is a tough task; Ah-Cheng's son

says, "It's very hard to understand what my father is playing. He doesn't have any written notes. It's very hard to learn just from hearing him play." Towards the end of the documentary, we hear Ah-Cheng's voice again: "If my grandkids become interested in *chiben* when they grow up, I will try hard to teach them. If they won't learn, I'm afraid what I know will be lost forever." Viewers witness a *chiben* lesson with Ah-Cheng's nephew suddenly interrupted by a ringing cellphone. Other shots capture the installation of a satellite dish and a TV broadcasting Chinese pop music. These images introduce the viewer to the rapid economic changes and technological development taking place in China, and their effects on traditional rural lifestyles of these mountain-dwelling people.

An example of a video showing a panoramic view of a variety of musical culture from Yunnan is offered by the documentary *From China's Southwest Borders: Minority Dances, Songs, and Instrumental Music of Yunnan* (2001) by Li Wei and Zhang Xingrong. This double DVD is a collection of edited research films offering a panoramic view of the musical cultures of twenty-nine Yunnan's ethnic minorities (including sub-groups) and China's ethnic majority, the Han. These video excerpts were recorded by Li Wei and Zhang Xingrong of the Yunnan Art Institute, who spent more than twenty years conducting field researches in Yunnan—a selection of their best field recordings have been published in two double CDs, *South of the Clouds: Instrumental Music of Yunnan* (2003). This two-volume set includes seventy segments showing short performances, most of them recorded in their original context.

Small Path Music (2012), produced and directed by New Zealand filmmaker David A. Harris, is a sort of travelogue or road movie structured as a travel diary shot over a period of eight months in 2010. The on-screen presenter is Laurent Jeanneau, a French experimental musician who has been travelling to Southeast Asia to document the local music traditions of ethnic minorities living in the mountains of Northern Laos and into the borderlands of Yunnan Province, Southwest China.

This 56-minute video is a wide-ranging made-for-TV documentary based on a journey collecting and recording folk songs, in which Jeanneau, in front of the camera, comments on the events he is observing or reflecting on what occurred during the day directly to the audience. Here the self-reflexive approach by this sounds collector offers a personal "ethic" perspective on the musical cultures he

documents during his fieldtrip and his relentless quest to capture audio recordings of vanishing indigenous music from ethnic groups of this vast region.

Jeanneau recounts his experiences of a decade of recording in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and China conducting fieldwork on the musical traditions of this area. We see how he relates to them and how his work has led his life in new directions. Through his work he met his wife, Tanding, initially his interpreter, and together they established the recording label "King Gong" to release Jeanneau's field recordings. He self-produced on his home-grown record label more than 80 albums recorded in ethnic minority villages in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and China.

The film shows Jeanneau wandering in the mountains on the border between China and Laos searching for traditional singers in all the villages he visits. Jeanneau is wary of government influences on traditional music in China and Southeast Asia. When he travels to villages in China, as well as in Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia, he asks people to sing and play the tunes they would perform for each other, rather than for tourists.

Several traditional singers are filmed and recorded during his trip. These scenes are intercut from time to time with interviews to the protagonist but not to the musicians. The video includes sequences of a wedding song of the Wa ethnic group, a *dage* group dance performed in a circle led by *lusheng* (reed mouth organ) player with choral singing in antiphonal form of two choirs (men and women) recorded among the Laluo (a subgroup of Yi ethnicity), a recitation of a Taoist text of Yi people, a "drinking tune" performed on a *tot* flute played by a Khmu musician of Northern Laos, a "drinking session" to celebrate a wedding in a Le family, a performance on a *khene* played by a Khmu musician, improvised singing of a love song by two Laluo singers, and a funeral pray chant among Bai people.

The *fil rouge* of the documentary is an appeal for the preservation and survival of traditional music cultures, highlighting the impact of the modern world on traditional cultures and the urgency to preserve it. Jeanneau also focuses on the issue of "ethnic tourism" (Yunnan is an epicenter of China's ethnic-tourism industry). Towards the end of the film there is an interesting scene in which a "Cultural Show" takes place in Shuangjiang (Lincang, Yunnan). It is a stylized and kitschy

performance for tourists.[1] Here the process of "folklorization" (or "fakelore") of ethnic music and dance pushed by government officials in China under the banner of promoting ethnic diversity emerges. Observing this performance, Jeanneau complains about the gap between the visual dimension (dancers in traditional costumes) and the musical dimension (an awful kind of country and western swing) and rejects the creation of artificial cliché to satisfy the aesthetic expectations of the tourists. In her book *Echoes of History: Naxi Music in Modern China* (2000), Helen Rees calls this process "domestic orientalism":

> The special talents and achievements of minorities in the performing arts are keenly promoted in China—to such an extent that the foreign observer comes away with a strong sense of a kind of "domestic orientalism" at work, in which the minorities are presented as an exotic alternative to the more staid and sober Han. An awareness of this tendency is necessary to any examination of minority culture and its promotion to the outside world (Rees 2000: 23-24).

Anthropologist Stevan Harrell, in his book *Ways of Being Ethnic in Southwest China* (2001), analyzes the phenomenon of "ethnic tourism" in China:

> Ethnic tourism in contemporary China is usually promoted by tourist bureaus at various levels of government, who work with local cadres to develop facilities for feeding and lodging tourists, as well as routines for receiving and entertaining them. Developing routines often involves taking native practices, such as dress, song, dance, drink, and sometimes even ritual, and adapting and standardizing them into performances that fit tourist tastes and schedules (Harrell 2001: 254).

Another film concerning ethnic minorities' music is *The Two Horses of Genghis Khan* (2009) by Byambasuren Davaa,[2] structured as a journey made by the

1 About the impact of the market economy and ethnic tourism on traditional culture of ethnic minorities in China see: *Planning for Ethnic Tourism* by Li Yang and Geoffrey Wall (Ashgate 2014).
2 Byambasuren Davaa has been co-director of the movie *The Story of the Weeping Camel* (2003), in which a Mongolian nomadic family's newest camel colt is rejected by its mother, and a *morin khuur* player is needed to play for her to change her mind.

Mongolian singer Urna Chahar-Tugchi, from Inner Mongolia (the autonomous region that is part of China) to Outer Mongolia (the independent nation). An old, broken *morin khurr* (horse head fiddle) compels singer Urna to take a road journey to Ulan Bator and the steppes of Mongolia. Engraved on the head of this *morin khurr*, left behind by Urna's grandmother, are incomplete verses from the ancient and forgotten song *The Two Horses of Genghis Khan*. The fiddle was damaged during the "Cultural Revolution" in Inner Mongolia. While in search of the missing verses and the music that accompanies them, Urna encounters countless strangers in a changing landscape.

Recently, the traditional music of the Miao (or Hmong) people of Southern China attracted the attention of many filmmakers and TV producers: *Love Songs of the Miao in China* (1992), produced by Japanese television NHK, *People of the Orient* (2010), directed by Jean François Bordier and produced by French production company ZED, and *Hmong, Musiques et Chants de Séduction* (2002) by Patrick Kersalé, produced by Geozik. All these documentaries capture the Miao lifestyle and culture, focusing on the communicative function of music—using instruments to "talk" is widespread among Yunnan minorities—and highlighting courtship rituals and love songs; in particular, the *duige*, songs in responsorial (one-to-one) or antiphonal (group-to-group) form, sung for fun, for purposes of allaying fatigue during labor, or for youngsters to find potential spouses.[1]

4 Chinese Music and Ethno-fiction

"Real" and "fake" in filmic representation is a long-standing dilemma concerning different ways to make a documentary film, particularly in relation to some issues such as the legitimacy of staged and scripted scenes, reconstructed or reenacted behavior, events provoked, instigated or encouraged by the filmmaker, etc. Indeed, every representation of reality is no more than a fiction in the sense that it is an artificial construct, a selective view of the world, produced for some purpose and

1 French ethnomusicologist Yves Defrance has made a short research film with no narration on Dong and Miao polyphonies (the video is available on streaming on Vimeo: https://vimeo.com/2653525).

therefore unavoidably reflecting a given subjectivity or point of view.

Nowadays, with the advent of documentary films in the worldwide commercial film arena as well as their expanding production in most countries of the world, most generic classifications of style, such as "documentary" and "fiction," have changed. This evolution, leading to the overlap of styles and genres, has placed far more overt, interpretive control in the hands of the filmmaker.

The effect of the *world music* phenomenon, spreading in the late 1980s, has led not only to an increase in documentary production, but also to testing new audiovisual languages such as the ethnographic docu-fiction inherent to ethnic groups or "ethno-fiction," produced by hybridization between documentary and narrative conventions of fictional-theatrical film. Since the 1990s, new languages became popular in world music documentary production not belonging to audiovisual ethnomusicology, nor to the "standard" television documentary, but increasingly closer to the type of docu-fiction (or docu-drama). The substantial differences between the two genres, documentary and docu-fiction, are based on different conventions that can be simply summarized:

1) The documentary shows "not-induced" performance practices in their own socio-cultural context and is constructed mainly on archival materials (photos, movies, documents, writings, etc.) and interviews; the docu-fiction is oriented towards the use of a narrative language, sometimes with poetic accent, focused on a story (*diegesis* in the film criticism language).

2) The docu-fiction implies a script and the scenes are "staged," all unusual features for a documentary *stricto sensu*; the subjects become "characters," "social actors" acting out their lives as "film actors" in front of a camera, following a script assigned to them by the director.

3) The documentary often presents comments on the images through a voice-over, captions or subtitles, while in the docu-fiction the message is implicit in the action (or, in some descriptive moments, may have an intervention of the voice-over during the action).

The gradual transformation of the documentary genre in docu-fiction with the acquisition of technical and narrative methods has enhanced the value of entertainment. In this way, the documentary, initially rejected by the schedule of the general television, finds its place thanks to the processes of "hybridization" of

genres in thematic channels.

This process of hybridization in the research of new languages depicting traditional music, raises the same doubts and questions already encountered in the "classic" documentary when dealing with forms and contents, observers and the observed, insiders and outsiders, and *emic* and *etic* approaches.[1] But in this case, the docu-fiction raises further issues related to the "correctness" of information, with the risk of trivializing the "ethnic music," as a form of hedonistic neo-exoticism.

Documentary and docu-fiction have different priorities, objectives and targets: concerning the balance between *information* and *entertainment*, the "standard" documentary focuses on the musical data trying to achieve a scientific rigor and objectivity to represent a musical culture, while giving little importance to the entertainment component; on the contrary, the docu-fiction tries to convey correct information (with some poetic license) through entertainment. The "standard" documentary is intended to represent reality, while in docu-fiction the reality of the facts is functional to the narrative.

In the late 1990s, the French production company Boreales by Barthélémy Fougea made eight world music docu-fiction of the series "Kids, Music and Dance" (1998). Those films, led by eight different film directors, drew the portraits of child musicians from around the world: a Chinese *lusheng* player, a Spanish guitarist, an Indian *tabla* player, a Bulgarian *kaval* player, a musician playing *steel drums* of Trinidad, a Cuban *conga* player, a Colombian *acordeón* player, and a *kora* player from Mali.

All movies have a narrative form in which the relationship of the child with his teacher and with his family, the importance of the musical instrument as a means of communication and expression, the social prestige enjoyed by the musician and the competition with other musicians, clearly emerge. The protagonists of the film are the same child musicians who play the part of themselves as real actors, but the most interesting fact is that the children themselves share the scripts along with the

1 The terms "emic" and "etic," coined by the linguist Kenneth Pike, are derived from the suffix of the word *phonetic* which pertains to the study of sounds, which are universally used in human language, and the word *phonemic* which is primarily concerned with the acoustics, external properties, and meanings of words. Applied to the study of human behavior, "etic viewpoint studies behavior as from outside of a particular system," while the "emic viewpoint results from studying behavior as from inside the system." (1967: 37)

directors during the survey.[1] In a *similar* manner to documentaries, those films have a voice-over to comment on the images and, *similarly* to fiction, the characters play a part following a script all inside of a staging. The model proposed by Fougea slightly differs from the "classical" docu-fiction to assume the guise of a "documentary-like fiction."

One of the ethno-fictions of this series is *Xiao Feng and His Lu Sheng* (1998) directed by Zhu Xiaoling. The film is focused on an 11-year-old child, Xiao Feng (Little Zephyr), player of the *lusheng*. The *lusheng* (芦笙) is a mouth organ with multiple bamboo pipes, each with a free reed (*huangpian*), which are fitted into a long blowing tube made of hard wood. According to the Chinese musical instruments classification in eight categories known as *bayin* (八音), the *lusheng* belongs to the category *gourd* (匏) and to the *sheng* (笙) family. The traditional *lusheng* consists of six tubes—the shortest one is one meter whereas the longest is as high as three meters—that produce five tones. *Lusheng* is used primarily in the rural regions of southwestern China, where it is played by the Dong and Miao ethnic groups. Performers often dance or swing the instrument from side to side while playing, or moving like drawing circular lines as it is shown in a scene of Alan Lomax's documentary *Dance and Human History* (1974) to explain the choreometrics theory.[2]

This is the synopsis of the ethno-fiction *Xiao Feng and His Lu Sheng*: Xiao Feng lives in Linlu village and belongs to the Dong (Kam) people, a minority ethnic group living in Guangxi, in Southern China. His intention is to follow the musicians and play music with them in the rice fields. Xiao Feng's dream is to become a great *lusheng* player, but his desire is opposed by his father, who wants his son to learn to plow the fields with the water buffalo. The master Yang, the village's music teacher, intends to select the most gifted boys to form a children's band, and for the first time in Dong history they will take part in the *lusheng* competition.

Some scenes are shot in the Dong drum tower, a distinctive architectural feature

1 Personal communication by the film producer Barthelemy Fougea.

2 Strikingly, the *Cantometrics* project developed by Lomax (1968) does not include any musical example from China.

of Dong villages, which represents a center of a village's social activity.[1] The voice-over commentary refers to traditional beliefs of the Dongs when comments: "The music is said to make the rice grow and the cattle fatten." In fact, according to Dong beliefs, *lusheng* music and dance originated in a religious rite held before spring ploughing to pray for fine weather for crops and good harvests. But, according to one of their taboos, the *lusheng* should not be played between the sowing and transplanting of rice seedlings, since it could attract plagues of insects. Finally, the child will take part in the *lusheng* competition that is held every year in the village to celebrate the first riceshoots.

The film shows the child's relationship with his grandfather who is also his master. His grandfather is a famous *lusheng* maker and player, who explains to him the history of the *lusheng*, dating back to 3000 years ago, and explains the meaning of the folk dances: the call for rain, the ancestors and the friendly spirits. He also shows his nephew some traditional practices concerning the construction of the instrument, starting from selecting the bamboo's quality and size, putting a small metallic reed slide at the base of the bamboo and some "secrets," for example, the *lusheng* should often be dipped into water to give it a beautiful sound. Finally, Xiao Feng's group win the competition and the film ends with Grandpa warning them, "Do not seek in the past, but listen with your hearts."

5 Sound Mirrors of Social Changes

Before 1976 access had largely been restricted to foreigner film makers in China. Western documentary filmmakers have been limited by the stand-off in relations between most Western countries and China. After 1976, as part of China's opening up to and by the West, there has been considerable interest by western film and television companies to film in China. Music has represented a bridge between the West and China. According to Merrylin Fitzpatrick, "The most successful of the

1 In each village, each clan builds its own drum tower. The drum tower embodies a particular clan's power and wealth. The higher, the more elaborated the drum tower is, the richer and more powerful is the clan who built it. In the past, the council of elders gathered in the drum tower. They discussed the affairs of the village. When the rules of the village were violated, they would decide on punishment according to customary law. The elder would beat the drum and the villagers would gather to hear what the council had to say.

films made in China since 1977, in popular and aesthetic terms, is the American documentary *From Mao to Mozart* (1981).[1] It has the subtitle *Isaac Stern in China*, making it clear from the outset that it belongs to that prolific category of recent documentaries, that of the famous person visiting China." (1983: 93-94)

At the end of 1980s, China underwent deep social and cultural changes. Rock was seen by the young people as the most modern and revolutionary kind of music:

> The desire to reach out and to adopt modern Western culture reflected a strong reaction among China's intellectuals to their long experience of enclosure (*fengbi*) and against traditional Chinese culture. Indeed, one of the major characteristics of rock in China during the late 1980s and early 1990s was the celebrated negation of traditional Chinese culture, especially of traditional Confucian values and morals, such as hierarchy, obedience, restraint, moderation, the privileged position of the collective (the state, society, and the family), and the suppression of the individual self and his/her desires and personal freedom (Baranovitch 2003: 41).

Rock entered into the cinematic space beginning in the late 1980s and provoked the formation of a specific genre, Chinese rock (*yaogun*). The phenomenon is the "leitmotiv" of the films made by two renowned Fifth Generation directors: Tian Zhuangzhuang (*Rock, Yaogun qingnian*, 1988) and Zhang Yimou (*Keep Cool, Youhua haohao shuo*, 1997).[2]

The post-"Cultural Revolution" era led to the creation of a new form of popular music, but also to a sort of "revival" of Chinese traditional music (*guyue*, ancient music):

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1 *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China* is a 1979 documentary film about Western culture breaking into China produced and directed by Murray Lerner. It portrays the famous violinist and music teacher Isaac Stern as the first American musician to collaborate with the China Central Symphony Society (Now China National Symphony Orchestra). The documentary *Musical Encounters* (1999) by Allan Miller, documents Isaac Stern's return to China twenty years after his original visit.

2 In *Beijing Bastards* (1993), Sixth Generation director Zhang Yuan focuses on Beijing rock'n'roll youth subculture.

> The enthusiasm for the word *guyue* (ancient/old music) or for *gu* (ancient/old) in other combinations is reflected in other parts of Yunnan, and indeed elsewhere in China. [...] In China as a whole the instruments known traditionally as *qin* (seven-string bridgeless zither) and *zheng* (multiple-string bridged zither) are today commonly called *guqin* and *guzheng* ("ancient qin" and "ancient zheng"). With the antitraditional iconoclasm of the "Cultural Revolution" now well past, to be able to claim antiquity for an item or tradition is to increase its value as part of China's cultural heritage. (Rees 2000: 173)

British television BBC has documented these contrasting social and musical changes in China, producing and broadcasting two documentaries: *No. 17 Cotton Mill Shanghai Blues: Music of China* (1984) by Jeremy Marre and *China Rock: The Long March of Cui Jian* (1991) by Greg Lanning.

No. 17 Cotton Mill Shanghai Blues: Music of China shows the return to traditional music in the post-"Cultural Revolution" era. In the early 1980's, China was just emerging from the repressive "Cultural Revolution" which very nearly stamped out much Chinese classical and folk music with their three thousand year-old traditions. Cautiously, musicians, singers, composers and conductors were re-emerging, beginning to revive some of the suppressed music.

Into this moment of regeneration came director Jeremy Marre on a quest to capture the true musical traditions of China. Constantly battling to avoid the dull "official" musical ensembles he traveled to Shanghai, Beijing, and far northwestern region of Xinjiang. In Beijing, he was able to film Wu Wenguang, a *qin* master. Later he encounters Mo Zhong, a Taoist priest, and temple drummer whose hands were broken during the "Cultural Revolution" in order to keep him from playing, as well as a young master of the *pipa* lute, who managed to perform brilliantly despite conditions which keep him from practicing.

China Rock: The Long March of Cui Jian is a portrait of Chinese rock star Cui Jian, who combined Western instruments and rock beats with traditional Chinese melodies (and in some songs with Chinese instrument, such as the *suona*), accompanied by powerful lyrics. A revolutionary rock star, dressed in the uniform of a PLA-soldier, decorated with the Communist red five-corner star, he released his first album—*Roch'n'Roll on the New Long March* (*Xin changzheng lushang de*

yaogun)—in 1989. Cui Jian began to spread rock as a new means of self-expression and liberation; he rose to fame with his song *Nothing to My Name* (*Yiwu suoyou*):

> Cui Jian is the only rocker in China who has moved the masses, whose music—in the past at least—has moved with(in) popular culture. The documentary directed by Greg Lanning, *China Rock: The Long March of Cui Jian* shows Cui Jian in his heyday, following his first album. He was still poor, living with his parents, struggling to find a place to rehearse, but especially aching to perform throughout China, to do his own "long march." This video shows how intimate the link was between Cui Jian's music and the people's aspirations. (Huot 2000: 169)

Lastly, the documentary *Fine Rain: Politics and Folk Songs in China* (2007) by Meera Jaffrey examines a wide range of songs and melodies, energized by a rich progression of archival footage, photographs, interviews, and present-day renditions sung in homes and on street corners. The origins, meanings, and political impact of several well-known songs are described, along with an illustration of *jianpu*, the traditional Chinese system of musical notation, and the distinction between *haozi*, or workmen's songs, and the urban style known as *xiaodiao*.

6 Chinese Music in a Globalized World

Transcultural and transnational musical encounters, linking East and West through music language, are the leitmotiv of three documentaries: *The Long Song Project* (2007) by Mehdi Ali, a musical meeting between Mongolian traditional "long song" *urtiin duu* (Khongorzul Ganbaatar, vocal), Chinese traditional music (Liu Fang, *pipa* and *guzheng*) and Western classical music (Yegor Dyachkov, cello); *Journey of Strings* (1997) by Hunt Hoe, exploring the history of chordophones, featuring the *zheng* from China, *santur* from Iran, *bouzouki* from Greece, guitar from Spain; and *The Music of Strangers: Yo-Yo Ma and the Silk Road Ensemble* (2015) by Morgan Neville, a travelogue about the Silk Road Ensemble, a group of master musicians from around the world brought together by acclaimed cellist

Yo-Yo Ma to perform and teach (featuring *pipa* master Wu Man).[1]

On the footstep of the acclaimed documentary *Buena Vista Social Club* (1999) by Wim Wenders, *A Farewell Song* (2013) by Arthur Jones and Luther Jones is a documentary focusing on a group of retired professional musicians who create arrangements of traditional Chinese tunes with a modern feel and an orchestral sound in an attempt to take on the prevailing apathy of the Chinese public. The film is centered on the lives of traditional Chinese musicians, *dizi* player Luo Shoucheng, *pipa* player Tu Weigang, *sheng* player Weng Zhenfa and composer Chen Dawei, all based in Shanghai. Following their retirement from local state-backed orchestras, the musicians—all friends—decide to re-band and record new material over which they will have complete control. After the first recording sessions, the film follows the men's personal stories: Luo Shoucheng returns to the neighbourhood he lived in as a child; Tu Weigang reminisces about their lives during the "Cultural Revolution"; Chen Dawei enjoys time with his young son; and Weng Zhenfa continues his reinvention of his instrument (the *sheng*) with master craftsmen at a local workshop. Composer Chen Dawei's sudden death takes them all by surprise and the second half of the film follows the remaining musicians' attempts to organize a tribute concert in his name.

7 Conclusions

The conventions of documentary film and fiction films are increasingly being "contaminated," the boundaries between the two filmic genres are increasingly blurred, as well as those between reality and fiction.

The film languages, both fictional and documentary, have a wide range of means for treating a musical reality. Their hybridization has led the documentary film to adopt a narrative language and, conversely, many fiction films show the tendency to represent a musical reality in a more "realistic" way.

In China, the interest for traditional music traces back to the very beginning of Chinese cinematography and the introduction of sound film in China in the early

1 Before this film, Morgan Neville has directed another documentary on the same subject—*The Silk Road Ensemble with Yo-Yo Ma: "Tangelwood Revisited"* (2012).

1930s. Between the end of 1950s and beginning of 1960s, folk songs of ethnic minorities had a prominent place in musical fiction films, based on love stories, witnessing the interest of Chinese cinema for ethnic minorities' music and culture. From the 1980s, with the advent of the "Fifth Generation" of film directors, "fiction" films tended to tell a story having as background 'real' traditional musical performances represented in their own socio-cultural context. Nevertheless, apart from some exceptions, Chinese folk music has been largely neglected by documentary production companies and by ethnomusicologist-filmmakers until the last decades.

In the last years, however, a new interest in musical ethnography and filming traditional music—in the form of edited research film and ethnographic documentary film, with a particular emphasis on minorities' musical cultures—is growing in parallel to the development of ethnomusicology in China. Moreover, different "cinematic languages" have been adopted by filmmakers to represent traditional music in China, from travelogue to ethno-fiction, conceived for a wider audience and oriented mainly to TV broadcasting. Hybridization of filmic languages has increasingly embedded a narrative style, making it possible to represent a musical culture telling a story.

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