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## **The Routledge Research Companion to Electronic Music Reaching out with Technology**

Simon Emmerson

### **The three paths**

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# 3

## THE THREE PATHS

### Cultural retention in contemporary Chinese electroacoustic music

*Leigh Landy*

#### **Prelude**

In the mid-1990s when I made my first tour as composer/musicologist in Brazil, I spent a week teaching experimental composition (encompassing both new approaches to note-based works as well as electroacoustic approaches) at a summer school at the Universidade Federal da Bahia in Salvador. The ethnic diversity of this Brazilian group was extremely broad, reminding me how global contemporary and, in particular, experimental music composition had become.

It turned out that the composer who founded the composition specialisation in Salvador was a Swiss composer, Ernst Widmer, who introduced serial composition to this part of Brazil. Most of the students, therefore, presented me with pieces that had roots in the second Viennese school of composition. However, in their speech and body language and during their free time, it was the music of Brazil and, more specifically, the Afro-Latin music of Bahia that they loved. I asked them during one of the sessions why their music did not resemble that, say, of Villa Lobos more, and their response was that he was a nationalist who had supported the former dictatorship and therefore they would never compose music with such Brazilian elements. This was a very surprising experience, as, outside of the country, Villa Lobos was seen to be such an icon of Brazilian music, and these students clearly all loved their country's music as well. Leaving the Villa Lobos issue aside, I have heard many Brazilian electroacoustic works throughout the years that include elements of its music, not least the rhythm as well as sounds of the daily life of Brazil, such as its street markets and its nature, often expressed through today's sampling culture. One can also identify the passion or spirit of Brazil in a number of electroacoustic works, an influence that seems at first to be extra-musical. These links to a culture and its musical heritage form the focus in the current chapter.

#### **Contextual elements**

This chapter, including its case studies, has been inspired by a couple of areas that have not been given much attention in the field of electroacoustic music studies:

- Socio-cultural aspects of electroacoustic music associated with the field of ethnomusicology. This subject can be approached from the point of view of where a particular music fits

within a given society – this will not be our focus here. But it can also deal with cultural and musical elements that can be found in a given culture's repertoire. In this chapter, the cultural area will be China, an interesting case due to the fact that most forms of contemporary music (in the Western sense) were banned during the Cultural Revolution (ca. 1966–1976) leading to the question: which sources of inspiration have been of importance to Chinese electroacoustic music composers?<sup>1</sup>

- The use of samples<sup>2</sup> as a building block in composition: How sampled materials are treated musically can form an important aspect of composition. Part of the world of sample-based composition, or works in which samples play any role, is the use of sound and musical materials from a given culture. In electroacoustic works, when using samples one can take something old and make it new by recomposing it, 'orchestrating' it so to speak.<sup>3</sup> Sampling culture involves the grabbing (appropriation, plundering) of something existent and placing it in a new context. In this chapter, all cases of sampling will be based on the composer's respect for the sounds in their original contexts.

Composing with sound can be found across a wide range of practices and involves people of various backgrounds, ages and abilities. For example, UNESCO, in its DigiArts project,<sup>4</sup> celebrated the use of the sample, as its goal was to get people of all ages, but in particular young people, to work creatively with a selection of themes shared universally (such as water), organising sounds they have recorded and/or made themselves. This visionary initiative focused on developing countries making digital sonic art accessible to people around the globe. Tools for sampling are easily available using portable digital devices, and sampling culture might be seen today as a contemporary form of folk art (or people's art). In this chapter, the case studies will initially be chosen from both the professional and 'underground' arts cultures.

Our subject will be the use of aspects of Chinese culture, including its music, by Chinese contemporary composers of electroacoustic music. Our case studies will focus on a number of 'generations' of composers who have studied at the Central Conservatory of Music (CCoM) in Beijing, starting with a pioneer of electroacoustic music in China, Zhang Xiaofu,<sup>5</sup> and, following this, on so-called 'underground musicians' who are not associated with China's elite conservatories. My understanding of how these composers approach the various aspects of Chinese music and culture in their works from an etic (outside-of-culture) point of view has been supported through interviews and internet correspondence with the composers to ascertain their views on how they composed certain works from their own emic (inside-of-culture) point of view.

### **A bird's eye history of electroacoustic music in China<sup>6</sup>**

There is very little literature regarding electroacoustic music in China, in particular during its early years. A Beijing-based team completed the first version of an as-yet-unpublished document, *China Electronic Music Development Events* (中国电子音乐发展大事记), in early 2016 during the writing of this chapter. The combination of this document and the interviews has led to this introductory overview.

The story begins in 1981, not many years after the end of the Cultural Revolution, when Jean-Michel Jarre performed an 'Electronic Night' at major venues in Beijing and Shanghai and visited the CCoM demonstrating an FM synthesiser, the first such demonstration in China. Three years later, in 1984, the CCoM held the first-ever electroacoustic concert in the country. In the same year a Computer Music Lab was opened for research at the Jiaotong University in Shanghai, the first of many. In 1986, Martin Wesley-Smith and Ian Fredericks came to CCoM to install and introduce composers to the Fairlight Computer Music Instrument (from Australia).

In the same year, the sister Beijing institution, the China Conservatory of Music (CCM), opened an electronic music 'tone colour' lab under the direction of Li Xian.

However, it is in the following year that the first electroacoustic production studio was launched by Liu Jian with Wu Yuebei at the Wuhan Conservatory of Music. Liu had been in attendance at early CCoM events and had already created electroacoustic works. In this same year, Zhang Xiaofu collaborated with Chen Yuanlin to make the first electroacoustic work for film in China. The first Chinese electroacoustic music CD (Zhang) was to follow in 1988, at which point China was already catching up, at least within the conservatories and some universities with developments (such as the use of MIDI, analogue studios, digital approaches, etc.) throughout the country. At this time there were nine conservatories in China, all of which offer instruction in electroacoustic music today. Xi'an joined in 1988, continuing until, within the last 10 years, Chengdu (Sichuan Conservatory), Tianjin and Shenyang all offered their first courses and furnished their studios. In 2015 Hangzhou opened the tenth conservatory (Zhejiang Conservatory) and immediately started to build its studios, including two full-time members of staff teaching electroacoustic music.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout the 1990s festivals started to make their appearance, symposia became more frequent and, in 1999, the International Computer Music Conference was held at Tsinghua University in Beijing. Today, both CCoM and Shanghai Conservatory hold annual back-to-back international festivals in October. Many universities now offer courses in electroacoustic composition, performance and education throughout China. As in other countries, sonic creation can also be found in art schools, design departments and media faculties. The development of electroacoustic music in China has been fairly rapid and reflects its rather unique economic journey.

Equally important to its growth in terms of education, creativity and dissemination is how musicians started working in its early years, given the political developments and the restricted cultural scene that preceded it. To investigate this we return to the CCoM in the late 1970s to early 1980s, where a new generation of composers was forming, all studying at more or less the same time, all having experienced severe restrictions in their musical lives when they were young. These composers included Tan Dun, Chen Yuanlin and Chen Yi (the first woman to gain a master's in composition at CCoM) as well as Zhang Xiaofu. Zhang finished his degree in 1983 and became Professor in the Composition Department in 1984. Tan, Chen Yuanlin and Chen Yi all provided masterclasses at CCoM during this period. All were originally trained in instrumental composition, including if not focusing on Chinese musical traditions. They all were to add what was then called electronic music (as an all-embracing term) in the early 1980s. The CCoM had major international composers visiting from time to time but housed only a very modest collection of cassette and LP recordings, and virtually no scores of Western contemporary works, which might explain why they would all include electronic sounds in their works within the styles that they were already developing. There might have been more of a *tabula rasa* due to the historical hole caused by the Cultural Revolution, in combination with little repertoire from which to profit.

This clear evolution probably planted the seeds of the relatively high interest in Chinese elements in the electroacoustic works that were to evolve over the next decades, as this was part, if not the main focus, of their approach already. As Zhang put it in a personal communication,<sup>8</sup> there were three domains of electronic music in the early days: first, the seeds of what was to become electroacoustic music in China; second, 'electronic music for everyone', referring to the more popular approach of musicians such as Jean-Michel Jarre, as well as those making electronic music for film, radio and television but also for performing arts productions, as he did; and, finally, the new computer music that usually involved a keyboard, as was the case with

the Fairlight CMI and with early Midi devices. The earliest studio at CCoM was limited to stereo, and composers were only able to create basic electronic sounds, thus making integration with their instrumental approaches challenging. Electroacoustic music production as we know it began to flourish in the mid-1990s. By this time, Zhang had studied in Paris, and the others had all gone to the United States, two of whom (Tan and Chen Yi) studied composition and Chinese music with Chou Wen Chung at Columbia University.<sup>9</sup> Tan has subsequently evolved into a major composer, perhaps China's most famous, and Chen Yi won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize in 2006. All of these composers have continued writing China-influenced music despite lengthy periods outside of their native land. It is within this context that the following case study has been chosen.

### Case study: 'the three paths'

Two tendencies<sup>10</sup> have evolved that are worthy of note: (a) the proportion of mixed<sup>11</sup> music pieces appears to be higher than in most other countries, and (b) the proportion of music that consciously involves aspects from the musicians' own culture – China in general but also its diverse regions – is also higher than in most other nations in which there is an active electroacoustic music scene.

With this in mind, what is of interest is: (a) the artistic result of pieces of an essentially sound-based medium including note-based instruments; and (b) the motivation for making China-informed electroacoustic compositions.

It is somewhat difficult to determine exactly how the preference for mixed music evolved in China. Some think that a number of key composers of the older generation who studied abroad were attracted by European mixed music practices of the 1980s and '90s, along with the fact that they were trained in (Chinese) instrumental composition. Others present arguments heard throughout the globe that audiences want something to look at during concerts. Others still point out that most electroacoustic music composers were originally trained as instrumental musicians. The truth can probably be found somewhere between these. In any case, as live electronics developed rather slowly in China – although perhaps more rapidly in underground scenes during this century – mixed music performance makes sense given the wealth of talented performers at the conservatories.

Mixed music compositions can basically be classified into two types: (a) works in which the recorded part (or live electronic part these days) uses similar materials to the live performers, and (b) works in which there are different sound worlds, the live part offering primarily note-based performance and the sound part often a mixture of notes and other sounds and/or resonances. The vast majority of Chinese mixed works fall into the second group.

I have suggested a distinction can be made between music which is based on the traditional musical note (possessing pitch) and works focusing on sounds not originally intended as notes. I created a term for this second type, *sound-based music*.<sup>12</sup> Mixed works of the second category, due to the focus on the live performer(s), tend to concentrate on note-based material, thus merging traditional practices with the sonic opportunities provided by electroacoustic music composition (for example, pitch-based resonances that extend the sound of the live performers). This remark is a bit of a simplification, however.

Most Chinese instruments produce sounds that can equally function as 'notes' or 'sounds' in the terms defined earlier. In addition, the development of extended techniques starting in the previous century means that there is at times a fine line between the perception of a note or sound in such works. Think of some of the noise textures that a *pipa* (which belongs to the same

family of instruments as the lute) can produce, or an *erhu* (a bowed two-stringed instrument), *suona* (double reed), *dizi* (bamboo flute) and so on. Furthermore, East Asian music is unique in its ability to articulate a single note to evolve morphologically in highly sophisticated ways, recalling the Buddhist notion that 'a note has the right to be its own universe'. Where Western ears are more acquainted with the sequence or gesture, Eastern music often focuses on the level of the single breath or note. Here one might draw parallels with the electroacoustic notion of focusing on sound quality and morphology as opposed to a note embedded within many others in a score.

This focus on mixed music is, however, not the key interest here. It is the other tendency that will be investigated in greater depth, namely the desire by composers of a broad range of ages, who are working or who have studied at the CCoM, to include a variety of Chinese influences into their music as a form of inspiration.

### China-inspired electroacoustic music

In preparation for writing this chapter, four composers were interviewed to examine the influences that were most relevant to their electroacoustic music compositions in which Chinese elements were of importance. This case study involved online discussions with the composers, listening to their works and face-to-face interviews.<sup>13</sup> The composers were: Zhang Xiaofu (b. 1954, CCoM) and three of his (former) students: Guan Peng (b. 1971, currently working at CCoM), Li Qiuxiao (1985, who recently completed her PhD and now works at the brand new Zhejiang Conservatory in Hangzhou) and Qi Mengjie (known as Maggie, b. 1989, studying for her PhD with Zhang Xiaofu at the time of these interviews).

A key focus of the discussions with the composers was therefore to do with their decision to employ Chinese elements in their music. Three types of influences or 'paths' evolved which may be seen to be reasonably distinct. What was of interest was to discover commonalities and differences between the composers regarding these three paths (as exemplified here). Two of the three paths are based on musical ideas, and the third is based on ideas from culture beyond music. They are:

#### 1 *Sampling*

This is the most obvious of the three. Take sounds from Chinese music and offer them as sonic material within an electroacoustic music composition, allowing for recognition of the source (or type) of the music to act as a means towards identification within the composed work. Musical samples might involve, for example, Beijing Opera, Tibetan chant, overtone singing, the sound of any Chinese instrument and so on. Similarly, the use of samples from daily life can form different types of experiential links. This latter approach is more commonly used by musicians outside of Chinese academe and also artists working in the area of sound art (see the later section on underground scenes).

#### 2 *The use of Chinese instruments and/or musical approaches*

The presence of Chinese instruments offers listeners an experiential common ground, at least for those in China or within its diaspora. Composers see this choice both as a celebration of musical roots, but also as a means of opening up the world of electroacoustic music through the 'known'. Beyond this, the use of Chinese compositional approaches or vocal/instrumental techniques is another potential common-ground aspect of electroacoustic music. Personal experience suggests that this application of approaches and techniques is not always as immediately audible as a composer might think, thus limiting some listeners' links to experience.

3 *Inspiration from Chinese culture (e.g., Buddhism, Taoism, poetry, philosophy)*

This is perhaps the least tangible and is more difficult for younger composers in general. This third path focuses on Chinese extra-musical cultural ideals being reflected musically, whether they are to do with Taoist avoidance of formalisation or the ability to interpret a poem of Li Po in a wide variety of manners. Some composers have been accused of talking about such inspirations as a marketing tool, but composers who articulate such extra-musical influences are normally articulating their pride in their culture, thus aiming to form an integral foundation in their creative work. Inspiration from Chinese culture can influence sounds chosen, structural approaches and even the composer's relationship with his or her work. As was the case regarding applying Chinese compositional approaches and techniques, this final influence is understandably not always audible to untrained listeners. For example, a work influenced by Taoist thought that has a structure resembling the flow of water as opposed to a pre-imposed form might not be heard as such by a listener unaware of the form's signposts. Regardless, we are speaking about dramaturgical forms of inspiration, not necessarily a means towards guiding the listening experience.

There may be other sources of Chinese inspiration to today's composers of electroacoustic music, but these three featured in most discussions, and no other key type evolved during this research. It might be suggested that these three paths could be related to more common archetypes, namely materials, instruments and philosophy. This is true, but I have decided to stick with these more tangible items for the sake of clarity. The main thoughts raised during the interviews now follow.

## Zhang Xiaofu

Key works chosen:

*Le chant intérieur: poème fantastique*

For Chinese bass flute [*dizi*] player and electroacoustic recording using material from the *dizi*, *xiao* and *xun* – bamboo flute, end-blown flute and ocarina, 1988–2001.

Versions: with and without live performance, with and without video.

The latest version (2001) is discussed here;

*Nuo Ri Lang*

Fixed medium version 1996.<sup>14</sup>

*Visages peint dans l'Opéra de Pékin II*

Fixed medium version with video, 2008.<sup>15</sup>

The lengthiest and most unstructured and wide-reaching interview took place with Zhang Xiaofu. It covered the early years of electroacoustic music production in Beijing and the many problems encountered at the time, his experience studying in Paris and, of particular relevance here, how works, in particular the three presented, are influenced by his culture and its musical heritage. The three were chosen due to their availability (in two cases) and their overt links with Chinese culture. They are by no means exceptional in his oeuvre.

He made it clear that, despite all that came with the Cultural Revolution, he was first and foremost a product of Chinese culture and the nation's cultural history. He was resident for advanced studies in Paris at the Conservatoire Edgar Varèse and the École Normale de Musique de Paris between 1988 and 1993. This was of great value in terms of gaining insights into electroacoustic composition techniques (first analogue, then digital) and, of course, mixed music also formed a major part of electroacoustic music composition in France. Over the years, his links with both the GRM in Paris and Grame in Lyon demonstrate that he has never lost his connections with the country of this extended residency. While maintaining a very strong leaning towards the acousmatic approach to electroacoustic composition, the content of virtually his entire oeuvre is very much oriented towards Chinese musical traditions and cultural values. This was the primary focus of the interview.

Zhang is someone who aims to echo and celebrate the profundity of his culture in his compositions. This can manifest itself in a number of ways. Studying a number of his works led me, in fact, to the three paths that are being presented here, as all of them appear, some more than others.

Reading any programme note, the third path (inspiration from Chinese culture) seems always to be taken. It is true that many people are sceptical about what is placed in liner or programme notes, but the basis, beyond any compositional and/or technical challenges in Zhang's works, is to do with concepts emanating from (ancient) Chinese thought. Clearly these form part of the inspiration and the dramaturgy of the works. In some cases, such as *Nuo Ri Lang*, he is inspired by his experiences in other, distinctly different Chinese cultures, in this case in Tibet. Although it shares Buddhism with most of the rest of China, Tibet is seen to be an exotic culture by the Han Chinese. As it turns out, Buddhism is at the heart of this piece. The three pieces have been chosen because they range from primarily sample based (*Visages peints*, including the video content), through a combination of sample-based material with a reliance on the sound of Chinese music (*Nuo Ri Lang*), to the use of traditional and extended instrumental techniques (*Le chant intérieur*). All three demonstrate the combination of respect for and extending of Chinese musical traditions.

Although Zhang presents his works to his students in some detail, what he communicates to his public through programme notes has virtually nothing to do with how he composes or what technology he uses. He focuses instead on the dramaturgy of his works. This is very important, for the listener will notice a clear fusion of two disparate influences, those derived from China and those acquired during his years in France, much more than specific concepts of new compositional methodologies. The French influence is not specifically based on Schaefferian theory (or any other specifically) but instead on the sound that has developed over the decades at the GRM and its international diaspora. As this is a true fusion, these techniques of acousmatic gestural music are applied using Chinese materials – this is Zhang's signature and stands in contrast to more internationalist tendencies heard worldwide.

As can easily be heard in the music, he often speaks of finding a balance between music and 'noise' as he calls it (notes and sounds),<sup>16</sup> and this is indeed a key characteristic of most of his works, while pitch and rhythm play a fundamental role in all of them. In short, his training as an instrumental composer is never totally relinquished. We shall look chronologically at the versions of the three works that have been chosen. It is important to know that Zhang often makes several versions of each work – he calls this one of his trademarks – and therefore we need to see what happens when we hear other versions of these same pieces.<sup>17</sup>

*Le chant intérieur* is a fully composed work for Chinese bass bamboo flute (*dizi*) and stereo recording featuring the sounds of three Chinese wind instruments. It is the only work of the

three that in terms of sound does not vary to a large extent between the electroacoustic versions. The work was originally composed in 1987 for *dizi* and large Chinese orchestra, a work in three movements lasting about 30 minutes. The following year, using a production studio, as opposed to an electroacoustic music studio, in Paris, Zhang produced the first electroacoustic version involving the limited technology present, focusing on the first movement only.<sup>18</sup> He was able to obtain several synthesisers and attempted to find sounds that would blend well with the Chinese flute. As successful as this 1988 version is, it would be after Zhang's return to China in 1993 that he would become able to create the sounds he really sought for this work, culminating in the 2001 version, which employed source material from the three Chinese wind instruments. From this point onwards, there was one version of the work focusing on the live performer and the recording, while in another the performer is recorded and integrated with the recorded part, and this is enhanced by a beautiful abstract video that is often projected as part of the performance.

The recording includes instrumental material that is abstracted and floats between note and sound events. The live material, although primarily consisting of notes, is composed in a traditional way including the extended techniques that bring us closer to what Zhang calls 'noise'; for example, the use of bamboo with the *dizi* can sound like a prepared flute, with paper and resin inserted, creating a noisy texture. There is a good balance between homogeneous sounding passages (*dizi*, recording) and parallel but complementary ones. In short, this is mixed music in which some of the live sound material is integrated into the recording part. Nonetheless, the work, given the prominence of the main *dizi* part, comes across like a concerto for wind instrument and fixed medium recording.

Listening to the music, one might hear reflections of non-Chinese genres such as short jazz-inspired riffs, but the techniques involved are mostly so clearly Chinese that one never feels that one wanders far from a modern work based on traditional musical characteristics. The recorded part is filled with note or sound gestures that, due to the careful use of reverberation, seem to create a coherent musical space. *Le chant intérieur* is seen by many specialists in China and beyond as Zhang's strongest work. The virtuosity in performance is a key characteristic, and the work develops structurally in clear episodes, but the listener's focus never leaves the interplay between live and recorded (wind instrumental) sounds.

*Nuo Ri Lang* is a fixed medium work that starts immediately as if one is entering a ritual. Inspired by Tibetan Buddhism, the work uses much source material that can be linked to Tibet's religious music, whether from metallic sources or using vocal sounds. In particular the vocal sounds are taken from Buddhist chant and manipulated musically to create this celebration of 'the spiritual essence of Tibetan culture' (liner notes with the CD recording). Zhang mentions one stimulus in this work, namely things to do with 'rotation'<sup>19</sup> due to Tibetan notions of 'Zhuan Jung' (turning the wheel with a sutra inscribed) and 'Samsara' (The Wheel of Transmigration). This is easily seen in the video part of the work but is much more challenging to perceive aurally.

*Nuo Ri Lang* shares the episodic quality of *Le chant intérieur*. Zhang never makes his works too dense or complex for the listener, and navigating one's way through is not at all difficult. In this work pitch-based passages are interwoven with more textural ones but the contrasts are limited, so that they all seem to belong together naturally. The journey is, as remarked earlier, one of a ritual, that of a culture within China that is somewhat exotic to the composer, although he has visited Tibet on more than one occasion.

It is in this work that the distinct versions demonstrate another aspect of Zhang's oeuvre.<sup>20</sup> Where the *dizi* piece (*Le chant intérieur*) was further developed during the years, the versions consisted only of a live/combined recording version with or without video added; *Nuo Ri Lang* exists in many versions: recording-only form; recording plus video; a version with a

percussionist; and another version with several percussionists, several dancers and video. This is, in fact, rather typical of Zhang's approach to his works. He claims that the percussion part is also inspired by Chinese thought through the choice of the materials used: bronze, leather, wood and stone underlining the third path. Nonetheless, the addition of the percussion, according to the composer, offers a level of contrast between the lengthy materials in the recording and the more grain-like sounds produced by the live performer. Although much of this material is not pitched, this part of the version comes across as more note-based and indeed forms a strong contrast with respect to the recorded part that offers nothing similar. The visual additions of the dancers using Buddhist movement material as part of their choreography and the video (with Tibetan imagery) creates a strong multimedia performative element that demonstrates our paths well, but the key contrast is between the recorded part and percussion, turning this into a very different listening experience.<sup>21</sup>

*Visages Peint* is perhaps the work that falls closest to Chinese musical tradition, as the material is solely based on sounds from Beijing Opera. At the same time, it is perhaps the most experimental of the three. There are so many characteristic sounds that one can associate with this genre, and many of them are used regularly throughout this piece, although presented differently due to the use of fairly straightforward electroacoustic montage techniques including simple, clear transformations. Its video part consists solely of normal and manipulated images related to Beijing Opera, in particular the actors' faces and masks. The integration of real and manipulated passages from Beijing Opera form part of the special character of the work. Also, the rhythmic development of non-percussion samples adds a level of surrealism, as these appear to be coming from the 'wrong' sources.

The *version* of this work with five percussionists<sup>22</sup> is again quite different, as the listener's attention is focused on the interplay between pre-recorded materials and live performance and less on the detail of the recordings themselves. Both audio-visual and the live percussion plus recording versions have their individual strengths, as is the case with the mixed versions of *Nuo Ri Lang*. In ethnomusicological terms, one might speak of variants as opposed to versions due to the significant differences for the audience. The fixed medium versions in these two works have been chosen above the variants in the first instance, as their links to the three paths are more clearly audible.

### Guan Peng

Although Guan's list of electroacoustic works is in fact quite modest, the path that took this composer from his self-described 'early works' (2000 onwards) to the composition *Variation* (of 2008) is one from student to the discovery of a sonic signature. The two *Fusion* works that follow, both mixed pieces, to a degree move away from his teacher, Zhang's, influence.

Guan stated in our interview that his earliest works were written whilst studying with Zhang. In fact, the first four works were bundled into a suite entitled 'Cadenza', three of which were included on his CD of that title.<sup>23</sup> He describes this period as one where he was introduced to Zhang's works (including analyses of traditional Chinese music in support) and works from the 1970s and 1980s from the GRM but not a huge amount of other repertoire. The CCoM Musicacoustica Festival was still in its early phase,<sup>24</sup> not the large-scale annual festival that it is today. There were fewer visitors, in particular international visitors, meaning that the opportunity to expand knowledge of repertoire was not as great as it is for Chinese students today.

He divides his few electroacoustic works into 'periods'. The four initial works forming 'Cadenza' are seen to be clearly Zhang-inspired. 'Cadenza' consists of the works *Feng Yue* (2000), *General's Order* (2002), *Dust* (2004) and *Extremes* (2006). Guan's technique develops with every

work. The connection with Chinese materials becomes more sophisticated as well, the last two works focusing on the Chinese double-reed instrument *suona* and Tibetan chant (as in Zhang's *Nuo Ri Lang*), as well as multiphonic singing which can be found in and around Mongolia, other outer regions of China and beyond.

The piece that follows the 'Cadenza' suite is *Variation* (2008). This work focusing on bell sounds (including Tibetan bells) is very different from the early ones. Guan explains that this is due to two important steps: (a) an interest in Denis Smalley's concepts related to spectromorphology, which he heard about at a Musicacoustica event, and, in consequence, (b) a greater interest in 'sounds' above notes. He maintains that the Chinese influence is less than in the earlier works. However, after I discussed specific aspects such as rhythm, dynamic development and gestures with him, he admitted that his intention was to depart from 'typical' Chinese sounds to spectromorphologically developed sonic gestures using Chinese materials. To my ear, through this development Guan has found his compositional voice, and he agrees. *Variation* plays a very careful balancing act between sound and note, exploring gesture and texture much more than the earlier works.

The two *Fusion* works that follow introduce Guan's first mixed works thus focus much more on pitch and note-based aspects than *Variation*. This might seem strange, as it is not the logical progression that one might have assumed from his previous work focused on spectromorphological issues that had little to do with note-based approaches. He claims that in *Fusion 1* (for piano and electroacoustic sounds – 2010) he was attempting to blend Oriental and Western influences in particular in terms of his approach to the piano, as some of the writing was inspired by *guqin* (a zither) techniques. In *Fusion 2* (for piano, cello, flute and electronic sounds – 2013), he was more interested in the fusion between live instrumental and electronic sounds. He claims (and I agree) that this is his least China-influenced electroacoustic work thus far.<sup>25</sup>

Guan, like the composers who now follow, was much more guarded than Zhang when speaking of the conscious use of Chinese culture and philosophy in his works. Whether this was due to a personal standpoint or a lesser knowledge of these things is hard to tell. He offered the suggestion that one of the reasons to follow in Zhang's path was the lack of knowledge of the international electroacoustic repertoire. This may have been true, relatively speaking, at the time. However, students in later years clearly have had access (perhaps with a VPN link allowing them to break the 'Great Fire Wall')<sup>26</sup> to a much larger repertoire, yet they, too, are also following the paths we have defined.

### Li Quixiao

This composer's electroacoustic oeuvre, featuring several mixed works, is more extensive than Guan Peng's, including multimedia works and some experiments with live electronics. The ability to hear the Chinese influences is slightly more challenging than in the other presented composers' works. Her CCoM experience started at the Conservatory's middle school when she was 12 years old, but she wasn't to hear any electroacoustic music until her 18th year. Her reason for going into the field was most surprising. It was her belief that she would more easily find a job in this field if she chose it! In fact, just after completing her doctorate, she was offered a place at the brand new Zhejiang Conservatory in Hangzhou, which opened officially in October 2015, that is, the month that I met her.

Some of her interview comments were equally surprising – even provocative. For example, she said she preferred McDonald's to Chinese food and spoke of Smetana's *Moldau* as a great inspiration to her. She followed this with the remark that she used to hate Beijing Opera, as it was 'noisy'. Were the children of Chinese economic success rejecting the past and turning

inevitably towards Westernisation and modernisation? Prying a bit further led us back to the paths I have defined, as during her years of study she in fact gained a strong respect for Chinese music and culture, including the much-disdained Beijing Opera. Of course, this respect was further supported under Zhang's tutelage.

Of all of the composers interviewed, Li is less involved with sampling. She is more interested in translating the techniques and spirit of Chinese music in her works. In fact, to exemplify this, she gave as an example of her work, *Bristle with Anger* (for clarinet, violin, cello and fixed medium recording – 2009), which is inspired by the Beijing Opera aria, 'Ji gu ma cao' and involves modest sampling from Beijing Opera materials. She also said that aspects of her instrumental writing were taken directly from Beijing Opera recitation and instrumental performance.

In another Beijing Opera-inspired work, *Magnolia* (for soprano, related to the "Qing Yi" role, and fixed medium recording – 2010), the inspiration for the piece and the text used offer a specific Chinese element to the work's content. She says that the best way to convey the Chinese quality of a work is through a story, through lyrics, programme note or audience knowledge of the original story behind a work, and that this is a path she follows often in her works. Yet Li's approach to composition is also inspired by a variety of tendencies, not least highly dissonant passages that evolved in Western contemporary music over the last century, and this is quite audible, too, in both compositions.<sup>27</sup>

In discussing the paths and the border between notes and sounds, she claims that she was taught to pay attention to Chinese philosophy by Zhang but finds it difficult to express and apply. She thus focuses on notated and recorded musical elements and, where relevant, samples. She admits that instruments can produce a wide spectrum of sounds, but as most players in her experience are uncomfortable with new music, she works with them as note-based interpreters. With this in mind, she says that contrasting sounds appear on the recorded parts, thus creating a more heterogeneous mix. She even speaks of using different 'languages' for the live and recorded parts, one being deeply rooted in note-based (contemporary) composition, the other offering broader and largely different sonic possibilities. I do not believe that Zhang would ever describe composition technique in this way. Li has composed in a combined Chinese-influenced but also Western-inspired manner for the last eight years. She claims to be involved with Chinese thought and music in each work, but her compositions sound much more internationally focused in style than the first two composers, again due to her experiences gained during her study in the US.

### Qi Mengjie

The final composer we shall discuss was in the midst of her PhD study at CCoM at the time of the interview. In her case, she has been guided equally by former CCoM composition instructor Jin Ping (now Professor at the China Conservatory of Music in Beijing) and Zhang. This is of interest, as Jin has been involved in teaching live electronics and multimedia to his students in China and the US and thus perhaps offered her a complementary musical outlook to that of Zhang. Qi claimed straight away that the use of Chinese elements in composition was indeed introduced by Zhang but was not forced on his students. She was a relative latecomer to electroacoustic music, making her first work under Jin's guidance when she was 21. In the following year, her second work, *Echoes for Woodblock from Peking Opera* (2010), composed as a first-year master's student, won first prize in the Musicacoustica Festival's electroacoustic music (acoustic) competition of that year. This work clearly uses percussion samples but, at the same time, is highly gestural and at times abstract. Although one can hear that she was brought up with note-based composition in her approaches to horizontal, vertical and structural developments,

this is nonetheless a much more sonic ('sound-based') work than most of the works from all three other composers. As she puts it, although many of the musical ideas may come through note-based concepts, they 'move' to sound by way of spectral thinking. It is with this piece that she claims to have found her 'way' of composing, creating a structure through joining together clear sections, not dissimilar from Zhang's episodic approach. As she put it in the interview, she is interested in articulating elements from traditional music 'in another way' using electroacoustic approaches. These may include sampling, using granulation to create rhythms or working with vocal sounds using analysis/resynthesis approaches. Qi is the only composer who integrated a modest discussion of techniques with that of her musical vision. Her approach to Chinese philosophy is limited to words describing her spirit whilst composing. She says that this differs from work to work, from how it is inspired to how it is composed.

Her style has continued developing. Her latest piece at the time of writing was *Lin Chong Fled at Night* (for Peking Opera performer and electroacoustic recording – 2015) – from 'Water Margin', one of the most famous Beijing Opera novels. In this work she uses, for example, granulation of Beijing Opera samples and a composition method involving what she calls the restructuring of traditional musical structure.<sup>28</sup> During the first two performances of this work, Qi changed the piece slightly for the two different circumstances. The premiere was in a mid-sized space, the CCoM recital hall, where the Beijing Opera performer was not far away from anyone in the space. He therefore not only danced but also vocalised part of the piece using improvised utterances from Beijing Opera not dissimilar from those recorded in the electroacoustic part. In a second performance a few days later at a large theatre in the city of Xiamen, she asked the performer just to dance, as the necessary intimacy of the vocals in that space would have been lost. This flexible approach, taking spaces and audiences into account when performing experimental music such as Qi's, is a means of better connecting with the public. Although the material that forms the basis of this work is clearly note-based, the result is much more a sound-based composition. Her next (at the time of writing) *untitled* work, completed whilst this chapter was being written, was for live *guqin* and recording, thus a step towards her professor's main means of composition. Nonetheless, when asked whether these new forms of presentation would influence her sonic signature, her reply was that that was unlikely, as she had found her way of composing and she felt it was working for her. Regarding the three paths and the future, her response was quite clear: 'I am a Chinese composer and need to keep my speciality and character'.

## Discussion

These four composers have very different voices, yet there is a reasonably strong case for saying that Zhang Xiaofu is responsible for a form of a 'school of composition'. In his case the goal was to celebrate the possibilities of electroacoustic technology whilst, at the same time, offering his students the ability to celebrate the breadth and depth of Chinese culture, including Chinese musical culture, in their works. If we argue that dramaturgy is one of the greatest access tools in this field, it is surprising that the third path, of non-musical aspects related to Chinese culture, was the one least trodden. Again, this may be a generational development that reflects the entire world's loosening connections with the past. Look, for example, at the demise of most European countries' folk music over the last 100 years or so. Chinese youth are also exhibiting similar changes of attitude and interest. Nonetheless, what is not explicit can be made implicit, as Chinese music is a reflection of broader culture, and thus these new works may indirectly have been informed by, for example, Taoist or Buddhist thinking. In contrast to most Western composers, there was a clear (and noteworthy) avoidance in all four interviews of talking much

about compositional construction. This does not mean that all four composers engage solely in intuitive bottom-up composition. But the avoidance of focus on formal techniques and a greater focus on the flow of sounds suggests a more oriental sensibility. This third path is perhaps the most intangible – as it would be in most countries unless one is creating stereotypes. Still, it was clear that all composers were consciously demonstrating a desire to develop both respect and dynamism with respect to their own culture.

### China's underground scenes

It has to be said that everything discussed previously is intended to be presented as 'high art'. I have argued elsewhere<sup>29</sup> that sound-based music forms its own paradigm (or 'supergenre') that often ignores the high/low art division. As time has progressed, some staff and students at Chinese conservatories have created works that sit outside of this high/low boundary as well; some in the form of live electronic performance, others as sound installations, for example.

Of course, there is a good deal of electroacoustic music made outside of the walls of conservatories or universities in China. I have seen very little crosstalk between the conservatories and independent musicians creating very inventive works. These musicians extend the range of usage of Chinese elements to soundscape, text-sound composition and much more.<sup>30</sup> Many have a more experimental spirit than the four composers introduced here, and thus perhaps they come closer to the *tabula rasa* approach introduced earlier, in the sense that some of these artists may not have had any formal training or have been introduced to key repertoire at all, at least prior to the availability of works by way of the internet. The pioneering work of the Taiwan-born and Hangzhou-based sound artist and art historian Yao Dajuin has provided invaluable materials including online broadcasts<sup>31</sup> and a series of CD recordings, such as a wonderful overview of underground work that can be found on the CD 'China: The Sonic Avant-Garde'.<sup>32</sup> The online liner notes,<sup>33</sup> although brief, offer a valuable overview of the types of experimentation that Yao included on this double CD release. Examples of interest to this discussion include:

- Hu Mage's "chai-mi-you-yan-jiang-cu-tang" (firewood, rice, oil, salt, soy, vinegar & sugar, 2002), a humorous piece in which the title's syllables are grabbed from samples from mainly popular music. These are difficult for anyone to catch immediately; however, when they do, this familiar Chinese phrase is reborn artistically.
- Yao Dajuin's (or Dajūn as notated in the liner notes) own soundscape and sampled compositions under the artistic name of {City name} Sound Unit. The two examples here are (Beijing Sound Unit) *minibus pimps* (1999), which captures the cacophony of sounds of minibus drivers attempting to attract customers on the streets of Beijing, made in collaboration with Li Ruyi. Yao himself as Shanghai Sound Unit recorded two broadcasts of one single text which he synchronises in the piece, *Leili Fengxing* (With the Power of Thunderbolt and Speed of Wind, 1998). Yao calls this 'reverse-engineered sound art' using a government propaganda text that will leave its Chinese listeners in hysterics not least due to its cliché-driven writing style and, thus, the resulting sound of the synchronous voices that result from this. Yao comments: '[there is] a juxtaposition of high-minded bureaucratic ideals and lower-class colloquial diction' allowing him to double 'the sarcasm inherent in the text' (from the online CD notes).

Yan Jun is an important underground figure of interest here and will serve as this section's case study. Yan (b. 1973) was involved in popular music criticism and, later, organisation prior to investigating more experimental forms of music making. Today he is known as an experimental

musician and poet but also someone who has organised a number of experimental music events, many involving both improvisation and noise, especially in Beijing, where he is based. He is also responsible for the guerrilla label Sub Jam. In conversation with him in May 2015 (Beijing) and December 2016 (Leicester), he spoke of the early years of experimentalism in China and how important Yao's broadcasts had been.<sup>34</sup> Yan's work ranges from popular music influenced approaches to field recording to chant, noise and much more. One might suggest that he is more concept-driven than someone with his own particular 'sound'. He agreed that his music was neither high art nor popular culture but simply something for his particular listening community. He added that none of the Chinese musicians in his direct circle had any links to conservatories such as CCoM and that many are self-trained.

I asked Yan about the three pathways and was told that he does not normally use samples specifically from Chinese music in his works but might include samples taken from recordings he possesses of any kind. He also said that he does not feel that his music is inspired by any particular Chinese music tradition.<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless, he was aware of traditional Chinese music, including Qinqiang, a form of Shaanxi opera, which is distinct from Beijing opera, from a young age. However, regarding the point of non-musical influences, he shared a number of passionate comments. He suggested, for example, that he prefers to call many experimental improvising musicians, 'free-will musicians' (as opposed to musicians influenced by free jazz).<sup>36</sup> This notion of free-will music demonstrates, like many other statements Yan shared, deep roots in Buddhist thought. He makes a distinction between the 'free' in music and the will of being, thus something he sees as natural. He is not particularly interested in musicians who simply perform or act. Although it is hard to conceive of him rehearsing a particular fixed performance, he stated that: 'If you don't practice; you can't talk'. This sentence concerned those who claim to understand Buddhism, illustrating his view about knowledge and the right to communicate, adding that this was obviously also true about music. One could claim that this thought is also true for students in the Western tradition, but, in this case, normally the goal is fixed. In Yan's case, practice allows for free will. Speaking and acting represent, in Buddhism, reaching one of its highest levels (of which there are eight in Chinese Buddhism).<sup>37</sup>

If musical principles were not directly influential, artistic ones would be. He spoke of the path from calligraphy to painting for Chinese artists throughout history, the learning of embodied flow and gesture forming the basis of both. He cited the work of Ni Zan (a fourteenth-century painter) in which the painted shore of a body of water may appear like a straight line; however, upon closer inspection, the embodied gestures lead toward a complex of textures and movement based on a well-practiced flow. This reminded me of the aforementioned remark about notes possessing the right to their own universe. When Yan agreed, I suggested that this was a particular Oriental approach applied by only a few in the West. A Western approach might be based more on a phrase or other form of passage working.

However, Yan does not like to see things simplified to 'this sounds Chinese' or Asian. Another Buddhist-inspired remark he made was: 'Don't try to make a sound better – just a sound', meaning that a given sound already possesses its own beauty. For someone associated with the art of noise, these are remarkable thoughts. When discussing underground music in China, in particular in Beijing, he declared that many, but not all, such musicians had roots in popular music traditions. He distinguished between those who continued to do so within a more experimental sonic context and those who moved on, perhaps becoming more involved with approaches associated with conceptual art. He claimed that there was a renaissance of concept art currently, including many younger artists who may not know the work of the Western conceptualists of the 1980s.

He made some distinctions between artists of his generation, the first generation to have the freedom to experiment, and those practicing today. Firstly, he stated that his generation

knew little about repertoire and history until Yao's broadcasts became available, as other repertoire did subsequently over the internet. He distinguishes his earlier career from younger artists today who are confronted with (as he says) 'too much information'. Secondly, he describes the artists who developed these new means of organising sounds within his generation as 'small', relating to their modest personalities, a clear anti-celebrity stance. He added that one might call this 'loser's music' but also music made by people 'who are content with small sounds that last a lifetime'. He added that 'being big is retro', regarding the second-generation artists. Unhappy with that, he suggested that artists 'do not need to be sexy – don't move, jump' but instead should investigate novelty through their dealing with sound.<sup>38</sup> He felt that some younger musicians were becoming more influenced by a popular culture that they shared and hence were more interested in spectacle, a form of 'big'. The names of friends, artists of his generation, include Zhe Wenbo, a self-taught clarinet player; Soviet Pop, a synthesiser duo; Yan Yulong, a self-taught violin player who is 'unable to read scores'; Liu Xinyu 'a no-input mixing board player who had never heard of Glenn Gould and was not interested in Cage'. Although these artists may, in some way, be demonstrating influence by the likes of Cage, Lucier and Fluxus, 'they had no knowledge of them'; instead, he suggested, this music was 'reacting to its own reality'.

Naturally, not all underground music celebrates Chinese culture in any direct way; still, these few paragraphs have demonstrated that many outside of academe are just as linked to their culture as Zhang Xiaofu. What we learn from these examples is that two of our three pathways are being followed, namely that of the use of samples and of extra-musical Chinese considerations, in this case more socio-cultural or political than religious or philosophical. The use of specifically Chinese composition practices, particularly instrumental ones, is most likely less relevant in these sound-based contexts. Suffice to say that the paths presented in this chapter's CCoM-based discussion are by no means unique to the Chinese conservatories, as illustrated by the examples introduced in this section.

### **In sum**

A key point of interest is how these traditional elements can be innovatively applied in music. Although our CCoM case study is a specific example, it is generalisable across conservatories in China to a large extent.<sup>39</sup> As discovered in the examples just given, the three paths are also of value in experimental music outside of the conservatories, although perhaps less clearly. What is important here is how the specific cultural elements and the respect associated with them, when combined with a musician's aesthetic, are communicated to various audience communities, a subject worthy of further investigation. I have often spoken of an audience's need to connect with new experimental forms of music. Shared experience is the most efficient way of achieving this, and using cultural aspects that are identifiable to the listener exemplifies a great means to access. The works by Zhang Xiaofu and the 'generations' of students that have followed him offer various approaches to composing electroacoustic music as well as means of connecting with a public broader than the elitist one mostly associated with this musical genre elsewhere. This has to do, at least in part, with the experiential links they offer in their music.

To what extent are these paths of relevance beyond China? The answer to this has to do with the extent to which composers seek such cultural and experiential links. As China's introduction to electroacoustic music has been somewhat different to that of other nations, no generalisation is possible beyond the fact that this country would find itself at the high end of the scale of the application of an international version of the three paths. The proportion of European and

American composers, for example, consciously following the path of using local music cultural or extra-musical influences would most likely be lower. In contrast, in these other countries, the application of sampling in its broadest sense would perhaps be comparable with our Chinese examples, whether the samples are of other music, urban or nature sounds, or sounds from daily life, even adding the links gained by performing site-specific works. This relaxation of interest in one's own culture can be seen to be both an indication and a consequence of today's global culture. Put another way, such musicians' culture is more of a global culture making the pursuit of the first path a very different notion than in the Chinese case. This same global culture is today quite present in China, too; however, thus far many musicians have chosen to retain and modernise their culture through their music.<sup>40</sup>

### Postlude

Through the exemplary vision and sound of Zhang Xiaofu, I have found ways of working with Chinese musical approaches, using Chinese instruments and Chinese recordings of music and voice (for example from Chinese radio broadcasts, but also music recordings) focusing both on the *cultural* and the *musical* aspects in some of my own works. Perhaps being 'an outsider' can allow one to take things to places that others from within the culture itself might not visit creatively, whilst intending to demonstrate the most profound respect to the 'other culture'. All three paths have been followed. The music produced obviously offers a different form of signification to Chinese and non-Chinese listeners, as is the case in the works discussed earlier, but it has been invigorating to reach deeply into a culture that has proven its importance both historically and through permanent renewal.<sup>41</sup>

### Notes

- 1 I first visited China in 1993 as a visiting professor at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and have visited on a regular basis since. Watching electroacoustic music develop rapidly in this country has been an extraordinary phenomenon. The term 'conservatory' is used here instead of the British 'conservatoire' due to its being the favoured word in China.
- 2 The word 'samples' is meant here as the use of a recording, regardless of length, of any sound, be it a clip from a musical work, a nature recording or anything else.
- 3 See Manuella Blackburn (2016) 'Analysing the identifiable: cultural borrowing in Diana Salazar's *La voz del fuella*' for a related discussion.
- 4 See, for example, [http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=1391&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=-2\\_77.html](http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1391&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=-2_77.html) – [accessed 11.11.2015].
- 5 Chinese names commence with the family name, and this tradition will be maintained in this chapter.
- 6 For a wider context within the region see Battier and Liao, 'Electronic Music in East Asia' (this volume, Chapter 2).
- 7 The eleventh conservatory is due to open in 2016 in Harbin, where a similar electroacoustic presence is expected as in Hangzhou.
- 8 Voice-recorded WeChat messages on 3 February 2016.
- 9 The author also studied with Chou Wen Chung at Columbia, a composer closely associated with Edgard Varèse. He played a major inspirational role regarding both Chinese music and culture.
- 10 Based on the author's experience of Chinese electroacoustic works and conversations with Chinese composers.
- 11 Mixed music normally refers to works for voice(s) and/or instrument(s) and fixed medium recording. Today it can also refer to the former combined with the use of live real-time electronics.
- 12 In Landy (2007).
- 13 The interviews with all four individually took place during and just after the 2015 Musicacoustica Festival in Beijing (30 October to 1 November).

- 14 Both these first two works can be found on the CD with this piece as its title, on *Zhongguo wen lian yin xiang chu ban gong si* (中国文联音像出版公司) (China Federation of Audio-visual Publication Companies): Beijing [2006] ISRC CN-M35-06-0002-0000/A•J6
- 15 Recording not yet commercially available.
- 16 It is worth taking note of the fact that a note can be notated onto a score, but one also hears notes or note events/objects in recorded materials. Similarly, one can notate sounds beyond notes on scores using extended techniques; sounds or sound events/objects are common currency of acousmatic sonic composition.
- 17 Examples from all three works, as well as the other composers discussed, are in the CCoM Case Studies – List of Works (below).
- 18 He said that he had also made some popular music and *chanson* arrangements in this studio during his stay.
- 19 Zhang used the word ‘round’ in his programme notes.
- 20 See also the remark about variants following the discussion of *Visages peint* next.
- 21 There is a notable exception of the percussion-focused episode within the piece for a short while starting at ca. 11.30 in the tape-only version – in this case integration takes place between the percussion and the recording.
- 22 It was composed prior to the video version, although both are dated 2007. Further versions for two voices and recording (2009) and *jinghu* (a bowed instrument) and recording (2011) were also composed.
- 23 ‘Cadenza’ People’s Music Publishing House: Beijing [2010] ISRC CN-M26-09-0011-0010/A•J6. This CD also includes his work *Variation*.
- 24 It commenced in 1994 and grew progressively to the week-long annual event.
- 25 Guan also composes instrumental music including music for film, similar to Zhang. These works are not covered in the present discussion.
- 26 At the time of writing this chapter, there was no way to gain access to sites such as Google, Facebook and, more important here, YouTube or Soundcloud without a VPN through which one is ‘seen’ to be logged in in another country than China, thus allowing the user to reach such sites.
- 27 These tendencies were further reinforced during a visiting scholar residency she had at the University of Missouri-Kansas City (2014/15) at the end of her PhD period. It is at this institution that Chen Yi is currently based.
- 28 This interesting notion is to do with recontextualisation and is analogous with the use of a sample recontextualised in a work.
- 29 E.g., (Landy 2007) *op. cit.*
- 30 It is hoped that this will be a subject of a future publication. In the research that took place during the preparation of this chapter, it was discovered how modest many of these musicians were, and how difficult to find and to interview – in sharp contrast to the conservatory composers.
- 31 A worthwhile starting point is a webpage with downloads of a number of his broadcasts including a very wide mix of Chinese and overseas music: [www.mediafire.com/?d6hm7hniwrneu](http://www.mediafire.com/?d6hm7hniwrneu) (accessed 11 November 2015).
- 32 Post-Concrete 005: Berkeley (2003).
- 33 [www.post-concrete.com/005/notes.html](http://www.post-concrete.com/005/notes.html) (accessed 11 November 2015).
- 34 They have subsequently worked and performed together.
- 35 Ironically, having informed me of this, he performed an untitled piece the following night in which he used techniques borrowed from Tibetan chant and, whilst using a microphone and particular loudspeakers, moved around the space, changing pitch until his chant found and benefitted from a resonating frequency of the space. This was clearly an exception, whether conscious or not.
- 36 This point and a few others have been taken from both our conversation and Yan’s text that is to appear in the second volume of *Audio Culture*, edited by Christoph Cox and Daniel Warner, in preparation at the time of writing.
- 37 In our email exchanges, he also spoke of noise groups, such as *Meifeisan*, being influenced by an anarchic form of Taoism and educated high art composers as Confucianists.
- 38 There are, of course, exceptions: one of the younger musicians with whom he works who is clearly interested in sound and very conceptually driven is Zhu Wenbo.
- 39 All of the composers interviewed agree that this was the case.
- 40 A laudable goal in my view.
- 41 The works include: *Sonic Highway Exits Neglect Grammar* for *sheng* (mouth organ) player/speaker and stereo recording (1995), *China/Music* 中國/音樂 *Old/New* 舊/新 for eight-channel recording (2013),

*Chinese Radio Sound* 中国广播之声 for five-channel recording (2013) written in collaboration with Shenyang Conservatory of Music students, Zhao Zhengye and LIU Zhuoxuan, and *xūn* 坝 old / new 舊/新 for eight-channel recording (2015).

## References

- Blackburn, M. (2016), 'Analysing the identifiable: cultural borrowing in Diana Salazar's *La voz del fuelle*', in *Expanding the Horizon of Electroacoustic Music Analysis* (S. Emmerson & L. Landy eds.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Landy, L. (2007), *Understanding the Art of Sound Organization*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

## CCoM Case Studies – List of Works

### *Zhang Xiaofu – electroacoustic works*

- Le Chant Intérieur* (flûte basse Chinoise et bande), 1987–1988 (10'12"). Premiere: Musicacoustica-Beijing, Wang Ciheng, 1994.
- Ciel cent réponse* (soprano dramatique et musique électroacoustique), 1992 (11'30"). Premiere: Paris, Chen Yanyu, 1992.
- Dialogue entre le monde différents – Suite de musique électroacoustique*, 1992–1993 (9'50"). Premiere: Paris, 1993.
- Nuo Ri Lang* (multi-group percussion mixte et musique électroacoustique), 1996 (18'44"). Premiere: INA-GRM, Radio France, Jean Pierlot, 1996.
- Esprits de la montagne* (soprano dramatique et musique électroacoustique), 1996 (11'44"). Premiere: MUSICACOUSTICA-BEIJING, Silvia Schiavoni, 1996.
- Virtual Reality* (two erhu and electronics), 1996 (14'20"). Premiere: MUSICACOUSTICA-BEIJING, Yu Hongmei, 1996.
- Beijing Arias* (jing hu, Beijing Opera voice and electronics), 1997 (13'58"). Premiere: MUSICACOUSTICA-BEIJING, Yu Hongmei, Wang Xiaoyan, 1999.
- The Yarlung Zangbo River II* (3 Tibetan voices, symphony orchestra and electronics), 2001–2002 (22'50"). Premiere: Beijing, China National Opera Symphony Orchestra, Luo Sang, 2002.
- Le Chant Intérieur – Fantastic Tone Poem* (bass bamboo flute, digital image and electroacoustic music), 1987–2004 (13'30"). Digital image: Ma Ge. Premiere: MUSICACOUSTICA BEIJING, Wang Ciheng, 2004.
- Nuo Rilang* (multi-group percussion, digital image and electroacoustic music), 1996–2004 (18'40"). Digital image: Ma Ge. 2004. Premiere: MUSICACOUSTICA BEIJING, Yu Xin, 2004.
- Visages peint dans les Opéra de Pékin No.1* (5 groupes de percussion et musique electroacoustique), 2007 (17'30"). Premiere: Beijing, Percussion Clavier de Lyon, 2007.
- Visages peint dans les Opéra de Pékin No.2* (image digital et musique electroacoustique), 2007 (13'55"). Digital image: Ma Ge. Premiere: MUSICACOUSTICA-BEIJING, 2008.
- Visages peint dans les Opéra de Pékin No.3* (Peking Opera soprano, dramatic soprano and electroacoustic music), 2009 (12'50"). Premiere: MUSICACOUSTICA-BEIJING, Wang Xiaoyan, Xenia Hanusiak, 2009.
- Visages peint dans les Opéra de Pékin No.4* (jing hu and electroacoustic music), 2010–2011 (11'50"). Premiere: MUSICACOUSTICA-BEIJING, Yu Hongmei, 2011.
- @ *to the Mars* (percussion, interactive image, sound and electroacoustic music, 2012 (10'20"). Premiere: MUSICACOUSTICA-BEIJING, Yang Yiping, Feng Jinshuo, Wang Chi, Wu Xi, 2011.
- Le Chant Intérieur – Fantastic Tone Poem* (bass bamboo flute, dance, digital image and electroacoustic music), 1987–2012 (13'30"). Choreography: Chen Maoyuan, Digital Image: Ma Ge. Premiere: MUSICACOUSTICA-BEIJING, 2012.
- Ciel Cent Réponse* (voix de baryton dramatique, 2 groupes de percussion et musique électroacoustique), 2014 (11'20"). Premiere: Poly Theatre, Beijing, Shi Kelong, Percussion Clavier de Lyon, 2014.
- Earthbound Annals: Memories of Sound from Traditional China* (multimedia music theatre for Chinese folk singers, suona horn, mixed percussion, natural sounds and electronics), 2014 (11'20"). Premiere: Poly Theatre, Beijing, Qi Fulin, Chen Youping, Wang Min, Xu Haixia, Shen Xiangli, 2014.
- Nuo Ri Lang* (multimedia music theatre for multi-group percussion, dance, digital image and electroacoustic music), 2014 (18'50"). Choreography: Wan Su. Digital image: Ma Ge, Zhang Chao. Premiere: Poly Theatre, Beijing, Thierry Miroglio. 2014.

*Dancing Ink* (xun/xiao/di, erhu, pipa, percussion and electroacoustic music), 2015 (17'20"). Premiere: GRM, Radio France, Li Yue, Yu Lingling, Guo Gan, Thierry Miroglio, 2015.

*Dancing Ink* (xun/xiao/di, erhu, pipa, zheng, percussion, electroacoustic music, video animation and multimedia performance), 2015 (17'20"). Video animation: Lampo Leong. Premiere: MUSICACOUSTICA-BEIJING, Li Yue, Li Jia, Song Feifei, Wang Ning, Bai Kai 2015.

### ***Guan Peng – electroacoustic works***

*Feng Yue* (acousmatic music from Suite *Cadenza*), 2000 (6'00")

*General's Order* (acousmatic music from Suite *Cadenza*), 2002 (6'04")

*Dust* (acousmatic music from Suite *Cadenza*), 2004 (10'30")

*Extremes* (acousmatic music from Suite *Cadenza*), 2006 (12'31")

*Variation* (acousmatic music), 2008 (11'30")

*Fusion I* (piano and electroacoustic music), 2010 (8'44")

*Fusion II* (piano, cello, flute and electronic sounds), 2013 (8'40")

### ***Li Qiuxiao – electroacoustic works***

*Trip to the distant past* (electroacoustic music), 2008 (7'10").

*Sacrifice* (guzheng, zheng, cello, percussion and fixed media), 2008 (11'30").

*Rhythm* (electroacoustic music), 2009 (8'12").

*Bristle with anger* (clarinet, violin, cello and fixed media), 2009 (7'14").

*Magnolia* (soprano, Peking opera 'qing yi' and fixed media), 2010 (8'11").

*Speak softly water* (electroacoustic music), 2011 (6'52").

*Mushroom cloud* (electroacoustic music), 2012? (6'10").

*Silhouette of childhood* (piano and fixed media), 2013 (15'16").

*Speak softly water* (electroacoustic music and video), 2013 (5'10").

*The dancing shadow* (flute, cello, piano and fixed media), 2013 (8'30"). (Commissioned by ELECTROACOUSTIC-BEIJING).

*Wu Song fights the tiger* (clarinet and fixed media), 2014 (6'18"). (Written for Dr. Jun Qian's "East meets West" recording project).

*Comedy* (string quartet and fixed media), 2014 (9'20").

*Dancing on the plate of jade* (electroacoustic music), 2015 (5'01").

### ***Qi Mengjie – electroacoustic works***

#### *Electroacoustic music*

*Spectral Color*, 2011 (6'27")

*Echoes of woodblock from Peking Opera*, 2012 (5'20")

*Transfiguring of Crystal*, 2014 (4'46")

*The Road to Krakow*, 2014 (4'32")

#### *Mixed electroacoustic music*

*Autumn* (violin and electroacoustic music), 2013 (11'00")

*Lin Chong Fleed at Night* (Peking opera singer and electroacoustic music), 2015 (7'00")