

CHINESE LITERATURE *and* CULTURE *in the* WORLD



**LISTENING TO CHINA'S
CULTURAL REVOLUTION**

Music, Politics, and
Cultural Continuities

Edited by Paul Clark, Laikwan Pang,
and Tsan-Huang Tsai



LISTENING TO CHINA'S CULTURAL
REVOLUTION

Edited by Ban Wang

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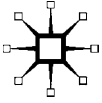
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Introduction

Paul Clark, Laikwan Pang, and Tsan-Huang Tsai

After an academic conference in December 2010, Chen Fumin of the Academy of Social Science, critic Meng Fanhua, and I drove back to the city from a Beijing suburb. It was already midnight, and we were lost, caught in the freeway heading nowhere. In the middle of finding our way home, I was surprised to hear Chen and Meng suddenly sing the famous arias from [the model opera] Shajiabang: “In the beginning there were only seven or eight guns in our military unit just established.” “Ai, this woman is not a simple one.” I was not surprised by two old guys trying to act young, but rather by their extremely strong “cultural memory”—so natural that these memories had become part of their language and behavior.¹

This incident was recorded by a young professor born in 1980, who was perplexed by the robust “cultural remembrance” of his seniors when compared to the complete nihilism of his generation in China, which has no history and believes in nothing. Getting lost in a highway system caught perpetually in the postindustrial infrastructural loops and darkness, these two senior professors quickly resorted to their common musical memories to form a common bond and provide an emotional anchor. The author reflects that although the members of this Cultural Revolution generation were deprived in their own ways, their cultural and communal adherence is the envy of the younger generation. We must admit that this sturdy cultural embeddedness is foreign not only to the younger generation in China but also to most people in Western liberal societies. This sense of assurance—that there are people around them sharing the same aesthetic bonds and cultural memories—cannot be replicated easily in today’s consumer society.

We believe that the Cultural Revolution model performances, or *yangbanxi* (which were mostly operas), as well as the entire musical

culture of the period form the backbone of the revolutionary culture of the time, when everyone listened to the same music and sang the same set of arias at political gatherings, in schools, and in their public and private lives. While the official culture of the time had many sensorial and aesthetic dimensions, music was its central component. Today we might look down on this type of revolutionary music as clichéd and monotonous, but these works continue to be powerful in providing people with a sense of emotional anchorage in a rapidly changing world. This uplifting musical culture, stressing transcendence and magnificence, clearly carries strong ideological messages and political values. In this book, we strive to explain how the music was political, and how politics can also become musical. More than most other cultural forms, music is abstract in content, yet it can also send concrete messages and have a concrete impact on people. If the musicians at the time were given the task of translating politics into music, we are now trying to do the reverse, and with full awareness that meanings could be both lost and created in translations. As such, we are not here to explain how music was used as a transparent tool to carry political messages, but to emphasize that there were necessarily mistranslations and ambiguities. Through this analysis, we can further explore the meanings of the Cultural Revolution, a historical project that was meant to change the “soul” of the people, through drastic destructions and constructions. This book aims to illustrate both the musical and the political meanings of this musical culture by exploring their interactions and mutual translations before, during, and after the Cultural Revolution.

While the music styles acceptable to the regime were limited, we would be wrong to consider this musical culture as composed solely of a few famous arias or operas. First, there were at least 11 model, new-style Peking operas on different themes circulating at the time. There were also ballet dramas highlighting popular songs (such as “The North Wind Blows” in *The White-Haired Girl*). Symphonic works and a piano recital were also included in the *yangbanxi* repertoire. New feature films were produced in the early 1970s, and many of them featured new music scores and interludes (see chapter 5 in this volume). Most importantly, there were many more transplanted dramas produced by local opera troupes based on the original stories of the *yangbanxi* Peking operas, the musical styles of which were already hybrid (see chapters 6, 7, and 8). At the same time, many revolutionary songs were produced and broadcast, along with *yangbanxi* music, by the loudspeakers put up in the public spaces in almost every community. Classical music—Western and Chinese—was not entirely suppressed. Some of them were transformed into revolutionary forms and some were rescued for different

purposes—such as for the sole appreciation of Chairman Mao himself (see chapters 2 and 9). Music was central to the revolutionary culture of the time, with the *yangbanxi* occupying a pivotal position while different kinds of music were also created or revived.

Although it was a time of forced homogenization, and most people had limited access to music, overall they listened to a much wider range of music than is often assumed. In terms of musical form, although China's unique national forms were emphasized, internationalism still underlined the entire revolutionary culture, indirectly indicating a relatively open mind-set to different cultural forms (see chapter 4). In terms of social penetration, it was also a time when amateur performances were encouraged, so that music no longer belonged solely to professionals or to those who had the proper training. Music was “democratized” to be accessible to the entire population, and everyone could become revolutionary through music (see chapter 3). It was also a long decade, and the musical culture changed substantially during the period. In the early years, many revolutionary songs were created by the Red Guards on their own; these would be replaced by institutionalized music productions in the 1970s. The musical styles of the *yangbanxi* also underwent a substantial transformation, which is discussed in detail in some of the chapters included in this volume (in chapters 1 and 10). This rich repertoire of music would continue to impress the people, and the soundscapes of the Cultural Revolution have never stopped being relevant ever since (see chapter 11). We do not want to overstress the diversity of the musical culture, but we should also not make a blanket characterization, or even condemnation, of the music on the basis of a quick impression, because behind it are actually many layers of history and culture.

As official records, personal recollections, and unpublished materials (such as program notes and recordings) become increasingly accessible, new horizons are opening up for the study of this musical culture. New materials are available for us to question the orthodox view of the era as one of destruction and loss and to encourage new perspectives in terms of understanding the creativity and experimentation that took place at that time. The work of China-based scholars such as Yang Jian (1993), and works of scholars such as Paul Clark (2008 and 2012) and Barbara Mittler (2013), among others, reflect the emergence of new, more nuanced approaches and assessments of the Cultural Revolution experience.² There are now new possibilities for us to understand how the musical experience of the Cultural Revolution impacted Chinese identity and views of the world. Studies of the visual dimensions of the Cultural Revolution tell us that the

period was a “colorful” era. By focusing on the *yangbanxi* and the larger musical culture, this book analyzes the sonic dimension of the Cultural Revolution, demonstrating that it was not only colorful but also noisy. The focus on the Cultural Revolution’s revolutionary music will help us to understand the connection between the inner and outer worlds of individuals, and, in turn, how they related their own private sensory experiences to their collective political lives. We believe that there are specific routes of memories constructed via audio experiences, and also unique ways for people to remember them and relate to history. The music of this era formed subjects by suturing both the musicians and listeners into the contemporary revolutionary spirit.

Unfortunately, discussion of the Cultural Revolution still requires academic caution in the People’s Republic of China (PRC), where an extensive censorship and self-censorship mechanism is in place in relation to the publication of Cultural Revolution studies. In the area of the *yangbanxi*, there is no lack of mainland scholars researching the era, but they often rely on online platforms or venues in Hong Kong and Taiwan to publish their research.³ In the English-speaking world, new scholarship is also continually being produced.⁴ But the two strands of scholarship tend to be driven by different emphases: the Chinese scholarship often stresses the importance of historical correction and accuracy, while the studies in English devote themselves primarily to careful textual analysis of the more famous works, which can be found and studied on celluloid, and there is a lack of scholarly exchange and debate between the two. Unfortunately, there are still relatively few works investigating the diversity and legacy of the musical culture of the era.⁵ We now have a historical opportunity to combine the strengths of various approaches to explore the real historical significance of this musical culture, which was actively constructed by using Chinese folk songs, local operas, instrumental music, and Western instrumental music. Referring to many individuals’ personal experiences and memories, we also realize more fully that the musical productions of the era were a part of people’s everyday life and had lasting effects on their relationships with the world—as that nighttime song in a car on a lost road outside Beijing indicated.

The chapters in this volume challenge readers to not only pay attention to the music of this noisy political era but also to be alert to catch any unexpected, discordant sounds in this highly political period. Listening mindfully to the rich soundscape will lead us to the heart of the Cultural Revolution and to an understanding of how “culture” played an essential part in this era. The individual chapters investigate, from a rich variety of perspectives, the tensions and interactions

between politics and aesthetics, the center and the periphery, and subjectivity and sensuality. This collection explores how the Cultural Revolution was experienced by ordinary people and artists, as well as by political leaders, and how the sensory was retranslated into political actions—or, we should acknowledge, often into indifference. By listening mindfully, we resist ignoring and forgetting; by listening carefully, we give the fleeting and lasting sounds the attention they deserve.

This collection brings together the most recent research in this topic by specialists from different parts of the world. These scholars come from the fields of musicology, ethnomusicology, history, cultural studies, and literary studies, demonstrating the interdisciplinary approach needed to engage in such a project. This ensemble shows how interdisciplinary collaboration is needed in the study of Cultural Revolution culture, and how historical depth has to be supported by rigorous theoretical and contextual studies to understand the rich meanings of this significant event in twentieth-century Chinese and global history. The chapters in this book combine to demonstrate that this vibrant subject has rich scholarly resonance for other studies and academic concerns. We will also demonstrate that it is no longer sufficient and desirable to study this important “political” event as simply a product of political maneuvering. The exceptionality of the Cultural Revolution is best approached from a diversity of cultural and social perspectives to understand the occurrence of historical changes then and since. Studies, like this one, of such a transformative historical era help us to grasp that the so-called end-of-history epoch in which we are caught is more constructed than natural. We need to rediscover the links between our allegedly “peaceful” time and the revolutionary era that marched to a different beat. History—especially that of the Cultural Revolution—is still a living presence in China and beyond.

THE CHAPTERS

This book is divided into three parts encompassing the music’s ideology, aesthetics and politics of dissemination, and its lasting impact to the present day. We begin with the question of revolution and explore why and how a new musical culture was constructed during that particular time. In chapter 1, Dai Jiafang introduces us to the development of the Peking opera *yangbanxi* music. Demonstrating its musical development in three different stages, the chapter provides sophisticated musical analysis based on the author’s very rich musical knowledge of the Peking opera, which incorporated many types of Chinese and Western music. It also explains how the music workers

strived for perfection. Tsan-Huang Tsai brings us to a different side of the musical culture in chapter 2, illustrating the fate of the seven-stringed zither as a traditional instrument in new, revolutionary times. The chapter demonstrates how the gentle and tender zither quietly survived the turbulent period celebrating loud and heroic music, and how it ended up being one of the instruments in the ensemble that created the favorite music of Mao in his last years of ill health.

The other three chapters in this part focus more directly on the political meanings of the operas, illustrating that politics and music are intimately connected. In chapter 3, Laurence Coderre shows how the music of the Cultural Revolution was internalized by most Chinese. She digs deep into the characterization of the villains in *yangbanxi* to show us how, for many audience members at the time, they were ironically the more attractive or engaging characters. She also demonstrates how important opera characterization was to the overall politics of the period. In chapter 4, Ban Wang offers an insightful and meticulous analysis of *On the Docks* to demonstrate the range of impact of the Cultural Revolution model operas. He shows the role of the opera in the international relations of the PRC at that time, which necessarily weaves back to the sensation and understanding of individual audience members. This chapter reminds us how internationalism was an important principle in the Cultural Revolution decade and that this ideology could actually be staged theatrically and musically. Cinema was one of the most important media to convey all kinds of new music to the people, and in chapter 5, Paul Clark reminds us that most of the population were introduced to the *yangbanxi* through films. He shows how films helped people to sing and remember the songs and demonstrates how the visual dimension of cinema reinforced the enduring power of the music.

The second part of the volume focuses on the transmission of the new Peking opera *yangbanxi* repertoire to the huge population of China. In order to introduce this highly selected and perfected repertoire to such a vast country, the original theatrical form of the *yangbanxi* had to be adapted and remediated in other forms. This part is devoted as much to the musical forms as it is to the means of transmission and distribution. The three chapters of part II complicate and challenge the assumption that China's musical culture was unified and singular. The adaptation, or "transplantation," of the *yangbanxi* was a central but poorly studied cultural policy of the time. In chapter 6, Laikwan Pang focuses on Cantonese opera, demonstrating the difficulties and efforts of Cantonese opera workers to present the rigidly defined Peking-opera *yangbanxi* in their own regional musical styles. Pang argues that

the aural dimension—that is, the local dialect and the local musical structure—was much more resilient to homogenization than the stage dimensions. In chapter 7, Chuen-Fung Wong provides a close study of the Uyghur adaptations of *The Red Lantern* in China's northwest, while in chapter 8, Rowan Pease brings us to a transplantation of *Song of the Dragon River* by the Korean minority people in the northeast of China. The two parallel studies demonstrate how a common policy led to two completely different outcomes. While the Xinjiang *Legend of the Red Lantern* is still considered a gem of the local musical tradition, the Korean *Song of the Dragon River* is no longer remembered, and many local people actually favored the original Peking opera over the Korean adaptation. As a whole, these three case studies, focusing on geographical areas at the margins of the country, combine to show the diversity of China and explain how difficult it was for the *yangbanxi* project to be “transplanted” across diverse communities.

Part III of the volume places Cultural Revolution music in its historical continuum, demonstrating how the revolutionary music continues to matter in classical and popular music culture today. This musical culture is rooted in bold experimentation and demonstrates a strong life and propensity for creativity, despite radical changes in China since the 1970s. In chapter 9, John Winzenburg traces the musical experimentations long before the Cultural Revolution that ultimately laid the ground for, and contributed to, *yangbanxi* musical innovation. The fusion of Western and Chinese music reflects the aspirations of a people trying to conceive something entirely new, yet the introduction of symphonic music to traditional Chinese operas can be traced to different origins, both inside and outside China.

Providing musical analysis of this music, the other two chapters also follow history and trace the afterlives of the music since the Cultural Revolution. In chapter 10, Nancy Yunhwa Rao illustrates how this music has influenced the classical music composition by internationally renowned Chinese artists during the decades since. She shows that *yangbanxi* music made a lasting impact on many Chinese musicians, however much they wanted to reject the Cultural Revolution. Finally, in chapter 11, Barbara Mittler analyzes how this revolutionary music continues to inspire new popular music even today. Precisely because the music was not simply a political tool, and as there was much to be enjoyed—aesthetically and sensationally—these artistic products were carved into the collective memory and taste at the popular level. The three chapters in this part combine to place the revolutionary music in a historical context, demonstrating that the Cultural Revolution musical culture was not just a result of the directives of a few leaders. It was also more than

a simple replacement of elite music with mass music, as the elitist music and the popular music intersected and interacted profoundly. The resultant harmony and disharmony deserve more of our attention.

NOTES

1. Yang Qingxiang 杨庆祥, “Bashi hou, zenmeiban?” 80后, 怎么办? (Post-1980 Generation: What Are We Going to Do with Them?)” *Jintian* 今天 (Today) 102 (Autumn 2013): 7.
2. See Yang Jian’s 杨健 pioneering *Wenhua dageming zhong de dixia wensue* 文化大革命中的地下文学 (Underground Literatures of the Cultural Revolution) (Beijing: Zhaohua chubanshe, 1993); Paul Clark *The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Paul Clark, *Youth Culture in China: From Red Guards to Netizens* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Chapter 2 (“Markng Out New Spaces: Red Guards, Educated Youth, and Opening Up”); and Barbara Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2012).
3. A notable set of recent publications in this regard are the two volumes of chronicles put together by Li Song 李松, titled “*Yangbanxi*” *biannian shi* “样板戏” 编年史 (A Chronicle of Model Opera of the Chinese Cultural Revolution) (Taipei: Xiuwei, 2011–2012). See also Dai Jiafang 戴嘉枋, *Zouxiang huimie: Yu Huiyong de fuchenlu* 走向毁灭: 于会咏的浮沉录 (Walking towards Destruction: The Ups and Downs of Yu Huiyong) (Beijing: Guangming ribao chubanshe, 1994); Liang Maochun 梁茂春, “Rang yinyueshi yanjiu shenru xiaqu: Qiantan ‘wenge’ yinyue yanjiu” (让音乐史研究深入下去: 浅谈“文革”音乐研究) (Let Music History Go Deep: Preliminary Studies of “Cultural Revolution” Music), *Yinyue yishu* 音乐艺术 (Music Arts), 4 of 2006: 19–27; Wei Jun 魏军, “Zhandi xing: ‘Wenge’ yinyue de lishi zhuanbian 战地新歌: “文革”音乐的历史转变 (New Songs from the Battlefield: Historical Changes of “Cultural Revolution” Music), *Huangzhong* 黄钟 (Yellow Bell), 3 of 2009, 111–117.
4. See Rosemary Roberts, *Maoist Model Theatre: The Semiotics of Gender and Sexuality in the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–1976)* (Boston: Brill, 2010). There is also a special issue of *The Opera Quarterly* 26(2–3) (2010) devoted to Chinese operas, with four articles concerning the *yangbanxi*.
5. Paul Clark’s and Barbara Mittler’s are the only recent books in English that include analyses of the musical culture of the time. Both authors of these wide-ranging monographs contribute their new research to our volume.

PART I

Temporality: Continuity and Change in
Cultural Revolution Music

A Diachronic Study of *Jingju Yangbanxi* Model Peking Opera Music

Dai Jiafang

Translated by Lau Sze Wing

In the musics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution period of the twentieth century, model Peking opera (*jingju yangbanxi* 京剧样板戏) is undoubtedly the centre of interest—and with good reason. First, model Peking opera is a prolific genre. Among the 19 officially recognized model performances, 11—that is, over half—are Peking operas (*jingju* 京剧).¹ Second, many musical innovations of model Peking opera were highly effective, achieving satisfying results. Well received by professionals, they have been adopted over and over again, even to the present day, creating a lasting legacy. Thus, for decades, scholars have diligently studied the music of model Peking opera. However, most existing writing focuses on the musical materials only synchronically and overlook the diachronic aspect—the process of artistic evolution of the genre in such a short timespan of just over ten years. This is the focus of this chapter.

Broadly speaking, model Peking opera was formed and developed as follows. Well before the Cultural Revolution, in the summer of 1964, the Modern Peking Opera Festival was held in Beijing. Several operas shown at the festival, namely, *The Red Lantern* presented by the China Peking Opera Company, *Shajiabang* by the Beijing Peking Opera Troupe, and *Raid on the White Tiger Regiment* by the Shandong Peking Opera Troupe, were fairly mature in shape. Their music received little revision after the occasion. Shortly before the Cultural Revolution began, the Shanghai Peking Opera Company made key revisions to two operas shown at the festival—*Taking Tiger*

Mountain by Strategy and *On the Docks*. Their vocal music (*changqiang* 唱腔) parts became largely fixed. In 1967, these five Peking operas were enlisted in the first batch of model performances, the “Eight Model Performances.” After 1968, the five model Peking operas were adapted into movies. *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* successfully experimented with a score for a Chinese–Western mixed orchestra. All subsequent model Peking operas took up the same form of orchestration. In 1970 came a second batch of newly created model performances, which included *The Red Detachment of Women* and *Fighting on the Plain* by the China Peking Opera Company, *Song of the Dragon River* and *Boulder Bay* by the Shanghai Peking Opera Company, *Azalea Mountain* by the Beijing Peking Opera Troupe, and *Red Cloud Ridge* by the Shandong Peking Opera Troupe.

The creation of model Peking opera music went through three stages, each of which inherited certain creative techniques from the previous period while developing its own distinctive artistic features.

THE EARLY STAGE OF MODEL PEKING OPERA: ARTISTIC FEATURES AND REPRESENTATIVE WORKS *THE RED LANTERN* AND *SHAJIABANG*

Before the Cultural Revolution, what became the kinds of model Peking operas were called modern Peking operas (*jingju xiandaixi* 京剧现代戏). They were modern in two aspects: first, the stories were modern and revolutionary and the characters were revolutionists; and second, to accustom audiences to the expressive requirements of modern themes and characters, the means of artistic expression—and the musical form in particular—were expanded. This instilled the operas with a modern flavor compared with traditional Peking operas.

Peking opera originated in the Hui and Han areas and came to its present shape during the Daoguang emperor’s reign (1820–1850) during the Qing dynasty. Thereafter, in just over a century, Peking opera flourished and spread all over China, producing a vast number of repertoires and performers. Peking opera is now one of the biggest Chinese theater genres, with its own musical conventions and fairly high artistic standards. However, the music of traditional Peking opera has numerous shortcomings in telling stories about contemporary life and people. First, in the past century, Peking opera master performers made advances in adapting melodic modes of singing (*xuanfa changfa* 旋法唱法) based on the types of roles in which they specialized. With much skill, they developed many distinct

performance schools (*liupai* 流派). Yet, these musical modes only contain stereotyped features of gender and role, and lack expressive capacity for individual characters. Next, Peking opera has a rigid, standardized formula of vocal music schema governing the transition between arias and choice of metrical types. These imposed restraints on musical creativity to a certain degree. Furthermore, the accompanying ensemble music of Peking opera has the shortcoming of being always high-pitched, loud, sharp in timbre, and rather monotonous in mood. It accompanies singing well but is not adequate for association with stage settings, or establishing atmosphere, conveying moods, and expressing feelings at a deeper level.

Due to the big gap between the conventional styles of Peking opera music and the spirit of contemporary life, the music of model Peking opera needed historic expansions and reforms based on the principle of “following a formula but not restricted to the formula.” The few mature works presented at the Modern Peking Opera Festival in 1964 were arranged for a Chinese–Western mixed orchestra, and brief revision of instrumental parts occurred later.² The vocal music set in the early 1970s did not differ much from the earlier, 1964 versions. Those few works may be categorized as early-stage model Peking operas. The most outstanding operas in that group are *The Red Lantern* and *Shajiabang*, both of which received national acclaim in 1964.

In the music of early-stage model Peking operas, creativity is mainly shown in the vocal music (*changqiang* 唱腔), as mentioned above. Conventionally, Peking opera librettos are written based on the vocal characteristics of some well-known performers of the particular opera—that is, “music before libretto.”³ In contrast, model Peking opera followed the new convention of “libretto before music.” The vocal music was written to serve the drama: it had to cater for the new themes and convey a contemporary spirit. The emphasis was on the embodiment of personal characters and the delivery of drama. Instead of assigning one single personality to every character, the music of each character changed in association with their differing mood and thinking. Those who participated in the vocal music design of early model Peking operas were mostly Peking opera performers and instrumentalists, who employed traditional Peking opera school elements and techniques as the foundation and carefully built up from there.

Yet, in determining performance school styles, whether or not a certain style could match the character’s personality in the drama was taken into careful consideration. For example, the bright, lively Xun (Huisheng) style was assigned to Li Tiemei in *The Red Lantern* and

Sister A Qing in *Shajiabang*.⁴ For Diao Deyi in *Shajiabang*—a person who is shadowy and cunning but pretends to be carefree—the forthright, eloquent Ma (Lianliang) style was utilized.⁵ In the same opera, Guo Jianguang was given the Tan (Xinpei) style not only because the performer at that time was a direct successor of the Tan (Xinpei) school, but also because Tan (Xinpei)’s sonorous, ringing tone matches with Guo Jianguang’s staunch and patient character.⁶ Li Yuhe’s music in *The Red Lantern* carries some features of the Li style of the role’s first performer, Li Shaochun.⁷ Nevertheless, compared with the old way of “tailoring” the music according to the vocal school style of the role’s most popular performer, the Li Yuhe vocal music design shows a number of innovations.

In early model Peking operas, vocal music was written with utmost care to portray characters’ personalities and their thinking through all scenes so that the drama might be presented accurately. Techniques used are discussed below.

The first technique, within the two fundamental modal systems of the lively, sonorous *xipi* 西皮 and the subtle and expressive *erhuang* 二黄, metrical types (*banshi* 板式), and school styles, were selected carefully according to the characters’ personalities and dramatic needs in every scene. For example, in the second scene of *The Red Lantern*, when Li Yuhe and the messenger are parting, Li Yuhe sings “No Difficulty can Daunt a Communist” (*tianxiashi nanbudao gongchandangyuan*) in *erhuang* fast-three-eyes meter (*kuaisanyan* 快三眼), which feels expressive but heavy. After receiving a dinner invitation from the Japanese officer Hatoyama, he says goodbye to Grandma Li and Tiemei in the aria “The Wine Fills Me with Courage and Strength” (*hunshen shi dan xiongjiujiu*). To depict his righteous, undaunted mentality in face of a deadly peril, and to highlight his heartfelt, meaningful last words to Grandma Li and Tiemei, the music is in the passionate, heroic *xipi* two-six meter (*erliu* 二六).

Music writers even constructed new metrical types to meet special dramatic demands. For instance, in *Raid on the White Tiger Regiment*, Yan Weicai’s “The Flowers of Chinese–Korean Friendship are Watered with Blood” (*ZhongChao youyi huaduo shi xianxue lai jiaoguan*) and Aunt Choi’s “A Colorful Rainbow Appears Over Anpyong Mountain” (*anpingshan shang caihong xian*), when she sees the Chinese People’s Voluntary Army, both contain North Korean musical features. They are in *xipi* one-clap-two-eyes meter (*yibaneryan* 一板二眼), forged after the three-four-dance meter, which suggests that the North Koreans are good at singing and dancing, and shows the friendly relationship between Chinese and the Korean people and armies, painting

a touching picture of their jubilant meeting. In *The Red Lantern*, when Li Yuhe affectionately bids farewell to Grandma Li on the execution ground, he sings “The Party Teaches Me to Be a Strong Man of Iron” (*Dang jiao er zuo yige gangqiang tiehan*). To adapt to the relatively high speed of speech, *erhuang* two-six meter is used, created by putting two-six meter, flowing-water meter (*liushui* 流水) and fast meter (*kuaiban* 快板) of the *xipi* modal system into *erhuang*.

The language used in modern Peking opera is vernacular. Song lyrics have diverse forms and are not limited to conventional seven-character and ten-character lines. Following this, in the second design technique, augmentation and diminution in vocal music in model Peking operas are much more frequent than in traditional Peking operas. Only rarely does a musical phrase fully conform to traditional codes. To articulate characters’ expression in specific scenes, instrumental interludes prepare and dramatize moods before leading to arias. Therefore, instruments and voices work in collaboration to strengthen the characters’ delivery in the drama. For instance, in Scene 5 of *The Red Lantern*, after listening to Grandma recounting their family history, Li Tiemei sinks into deep reflection and sings “They are Shining Examples for Us All” (*zuoren yao zuo zheyang di ren*). The music begins with a leisurely, supple instrumental introduction in *xipi* dispersed meter (*sanban* 散板), filled with Peking-opera violin (*jinghu* 京胡) vocabulary that builds a contemplative atmosphere. The music then transports through shaking meter (*yaoban* 摇板). When Tiemei sings the line “Why daddy and uncle were not afraid of taking risks” (*weishenme diedie biaoshu bupa dan fengxian*), the last half of the clause enters the measured, square-primary meter (*yuanban* 原板). After asking that deep, serious question from her heart, vocal augmentation is given to the word “risks” (*xian* 险) with a slow, long, winding melody, disclosing the query in Tiemei’s heart that has remained unanswered. The interlude that follows presents repetitive rhythms and two ascending, wobbling melodies accompanied by a gradual increase in speed and volume, depicting the rising thoughts in Tiemei’s mind. After sufficient time comes a brief pause followed by Tiemei’s forceful outcry, “It was all for saving China, saving the poor and defeating Japanese soldiers!” (*weide shi jiu Zhongguo, jiu qiongren, dabai guizibing*). The answer has finally dawned on her.

Besides designing personified vocal melodies and rhythmic figurations, there is a third vocal music design technique in the model operas. This captures the specific tones of the characters’ delivery in different scenarios and settings through music, further developing their personalities. Li Tiemei in *The Red Lantern* is a revolutionary

descendant. She is only 17 years old and brims with a lively, youthful spirit. Her first appearance in the opera comes with the narrative passage “They’re Men with Loyal, Crimson Hearts” (*douyou yike hongliang de xin*) in traditional flowing-water meter, and not without respective artistic treatment. The lyrics of the aria are at times square and dense, while at other times they are loose and sparse. Because of this arrangement of the lyrics and Tiemei’s unique disposition, “although” (*sui shuo shi* 虽说是) of “although they were relatives they did not acknowledge each other in the open” (*sui shuo shi qinjuan you bu xiangren*) is repeated. There are also brief augmentation and decorating notes on “subtle” (*miao* 妙), “can” (*neng* 能), and “guess” (*cai* 猜) of “I can guess part of the subtle secret behind this” (*zheli de aomiao wo yeneng cai chu jifen*). Treatment of these meticulous details in melody and rhythm actually causes a breakthrough from the elementary form of *xipi* flowing-water meter. It makes the music flow and sound fresh. It also sharply delineates the qualities shown by little Tiemei during her first appearance in the opera—good at observation and analysis, yet not very mature as she is young and lively.

It is particularly worth noting that the vocal music design of early model Peking operas did not just emphasize the depiction of the good characters’ personalities. The bad characters, likewise, received careful artistic treatment. In *Shajiabang*, Hu Chuankui’s “Thinking of the Past” (*xiangdangchu*), Diao Deyi’s “I Just Heard the Commander Describing You” (*shicai tingde siling jiang*), and his “Granny Sha, Don’t Take That to Heart” (*Shalaotai xiudexiao xiangbukai*) all possess strong personalities and tastes. In the scene of “A Battle of Wits” (*Douzhi*) in *Shajiabang*, Sister A Qing, Hu Chuankui, and Diao Deyi sing a trio. It adopts traditional *beigong* but at the same time breaks from the *beigong* custom of using one metrical type throughout.⁸ Instead, it alternates between shaking meter and flowing-water meter. Given that the trio “Red Flowers Need Green Leaves to Set Them Off” (*honghua hai xu lüye fu*) can vividly depict Sister A Qing’s mind game with her enemies in her pretense of relaxation while secretly guarding against them, the strong backup by Hu Chuankui’s and Diao Deyi’s singing is clearly indispensable.

In addition, the vocal music design of early model Peking operas took into consideration the development of characters’ thinking and personalities through the course of the story. The overall design was thus multidimensional and multilayered, and the style consistent, albeit with variety. All songs were carefully written with the aim of shaping all characters accurately. This is especially evident in *The Red Lantern*.

Li Yuhe, one of the three major figures in the opera, is a mature undercover agent in the story. His arias throughout the opera were mostly designed to indirectly sketch his strong revolutionary character. His opening aria, “The Poor Man’s Child Shares the Household Burden from an Early Age” (*qiongren de haizi zao dangjia*), reveals his parent-like love for Tiemei, the young revolutionary. His duet with the man who whets the knife, “Our People are Fuming with Discontent” (*you duoshao ku tongbao yuanshengzaidao*), manifests the care and empathy he feels for his countrymen who are suffering at the hands of the Japanese, triggering his fighting spirit. “No Difficulty Can Daunt a Communist” (*tianxiashi nanbudao Gongchandangyuan*), which he sings when waving good bye to the messenger, shows his love and care for his revolutionary comrades and his faith in final victory. After receiving Hatoyama’s dinner invitation, he bids farewell to Grandma Li and Tiemei by singing “The Wine Fills Me with Courage and Strength” (*hunshen shi dan xiongjinjin*). The aria displays his intelligence and shows how he is not disturbed when confronted by dangers, because of his fighting experience as well as his passionate love for his family. He sings “Facing the Enemy Easily, as Lofty as a Mountain” (*songrong duidi weiran ru shan*) at the dinner with Hatoyama. This shows his calmness, and sufficient mental preparation for tackling the enemy’s conspiracy and the cruel battle ahead. “My Courage Soars Sky High” (*xiongxin zhuanzhi chong yuntian*), and “The Party Teaches Me to be a Strong Man of Iron” (*Dang jiao er zuo yige gangqiang tiehan*), earlier sung to Grandma Li—both of which he sings on the execution ground—present him as a communist who, having survived cruel torture, looks forward to the revolution’s future and firmly believes in its final victory. The arias portray how he faces death with equanimity, righteousness, and steely willpower. His last words to Grandma Li and Tiemei express the deep connection they share, and his confidence that succeeding revolutionaries will emerge. Painting the Communists indirectly, all these arias create a vigorous image that is full of national hatred toward the enemy but full of love for his family and the proletariat. A courageous, intelligent Communist with steely willpower for the revolution is brought alive on stage for the audience.

Compared with Li Yuhe, the overall arrangement of Tiemei’s music focuses on her inner progress as she matures under cruel fighting circumstances. Her first aria, “They’re Men with Loyal, Crimson Hearts” (*douyou yike hongliang de xin*), depicts a young and clever girl with a hint of childishness. After Grandma Li recounts the origin of the red lantern and their family history (in which the three

characters formed a family without blood ties), she sings the thoughtful “They are Shining Examples for Us All” and the stirring, heroic “Never Leaving the Field until Victory is Won” (*da bu jin chailiang juebu xia zhanchang*). When the question in her heart is finally answered, she realizes the importance of the way of the revolution and feels a strong commitment. When she sees Li Yuhe on the execution ground, she sings “Hoping Day and Night” (*riye panwang*) and “Shining Gloriously Ahead for Evermore” (*guanghui zhao er yong xiangqian*). These arias are filled with gratitude and passionate love for Li Yuhe, the man who raised Tiemei, and reveal Tiemei’s resolution in following her adoptive father’s footsteps, assuming his revolutionary commitment, and taking up the revolutionary mission. After the Japanese kill Li Yuhe and Grandma Li, Hatoyama releases Tiemei in a strategic, long-term plan to get major returns. Tiemei sings “Biting my Hatred, Chewing My Rage” (*chouhen ruxin yao faya*), in which the valiant *xipi* children’s-tunes meter (*wawadiao* 娃娃调) for the *xiaosheng* (young male) role is inserted to demonstrate how Tiemei has become mentally mature and tough, putting hatred into action, firmly determined to work for the revolution. Step by step, those arias portray the logical development of Li Tiemei’s thinking and personality.

The music of the major figures began to be organized into core arias, primary arias and secondary arias in the music writing of the early model Peking operas. The core arias express the complicated, mixed feelings of characters at dramatic climaxes. They were composed with the suite structure conventions borrowed from traditional Peking opera, accommodating several metrical types in an aria. With large capacity, clear dynamic contrast, and rich layering, suite arias can comprehensively delineate the highs and lows of various characters’ inner emotions, including the turning points in their thinking. In other words, music writers substantially employed all means to craft the mental dimension of characters in the finest detail.

In the traditional vocal suite structure, rhythmic movement and change of speed in the transition among metrical types constitute the structure. Specified speed and rhythm are distinguishing features of suite formulae. Possible formulae include: (1) going from slow to fast speed and staying in one principle mode only; (2) beginning with a lead-in meter (*daoban* 导板) and undulating-dragon meter (*huilong* 回龙); (3) alternating between measured and dispersed metrical types or between fast and slow speeds; (4) an integration of the previous three types of arrangement; and (5) a principal mode of

a modal system and its inverse mode. In early model Peking operas, all core arias in a suite structure use combinations of various metrical types in the principal mode. Many begin with a lead-in meter and undulating-dragon meter or alternate between measured metrical types and dispersed metrical types, or between fast and slow speeds. For primary and secondary arias that are medium and small in scale there are usually only one or two metrical types, respectively. They, nonetheless, have adopted the suite structure's alternation between measured and dispersed metrical types, or between fast and slow speeds, to intensify expressiveness despite the limited variation in metrical types.

The design of instrumental music in the early model Peking operas also absorbed elements from traditional Peking opera and developed them. In model Peking operas, the traditional “Three Major Instruments” are not solely used for the purpose of accompaniment. Instrumental passages such as *hugin* fixed-melodies (*qupai* 曲牌) and action-strings (*xingxian* 行弦) were composed for these instruments.⁹ In Scene 6, “Music for Sister A Qing’s *Nianbai* Speech” of *Shajiabang*, the enemy forbids fishing at the lake, so Sister A Qing cannot reach the wounded warriors who are in hiding beside the lake. The music mimics the consuming worries in Sister A Qing’s heart. The melody and structure are idiosyncratic and innovative, but accurately grasp the essence of *hugin* fixed-melodies’ vocabulary to make a very charming ensemble piece for the “Three Major Instruments.”

In summary, the creation of the music in the early model Peking operas achieved success mainly through vocal music design. Different from traditional Peking operas, the early model Peking operas are modern dramas on contemporary themes. The first concern is the thinking and personalities of the characters—especially the major characters—and their development in the story. From elements as small as vocal phrase structure and melodic decoration to such large schemes as suite aria structures and the opera’s overall plan, music writers worked with all materials available to strive for artistic perfection in crafting the characters. The tactic was to continue conventions while introducing new developments. The music writers tried to retain traditional Peking opera elements and made skillful modifications when applying them in the new works. Therefore, the arias of the early model Peking operas offer both familiarity and novelty. They leap out of the conventional melodic frame but still contain a profound Peking opera feel. Audiences and professionals alike responded with overwhelming applause.

THE MIDDLE STAGE OF MODEL PEKING OPERA
MUSIC: ARTISTIC FEATURES AND REPRESENTATIVE
WORKS, *TAKING TIGER MOUNTAIN BY STRATEGY*
AND *ON THE DOCKS*

The most outstanding representatives of the middle-stage model Peking operas, *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* and *On the Docks*, first appeared in 1966 and underwent major revisions in 1968.

Compared with the early-stage model Peking operas, a lot of professional composers were involved in writing the middle-stage model Peking opera music as core contributors. The early-stage model Peking opera music writers focused on vocal music design and embraced changes to the legacy of traditional Peking opera. The music of the middle-stage model Peking operas built on the accomplishment of the early-stage model Peking operas and incorporated further innovations. New possibilities regarding songs, instrumental writing, and ways to empower the music with individual personality and the spirit of the age were explored with obviously greater determination. Highly notable new effects were attained.

New Breakthroughs in Vocal Music Design

The music design of the middle-stage model Peking operas continued the early-stage experience of selecting appropriate opera school styles to delineate the characters' personalities and deliver the drama. In addition, new techniques of music composition were applied.

To intensify tension and increase the levels of expression through rhythm, meter, and speed, a new array of metrical types not available in traditional Peking opera were devised. In *On the Docks*, *xipi* undulating-dragon meter in the central character. Fang Haizhen's "The Tempest Uplifts our Fighting Spirit" (*baofengyu geng zhengtian zhandou haoqing*), *xipi* broad meter (*kuanban* 宽板) in her "I have carefully read the Communiqué from the Plenum" (*xi du le quanhui gongbao*), and *xipi* row meter (*paiban* 排板) in Ma Hongliang's "The Great Leap Forward has Changed the Face of the Docks" (*Dayuejin ba matou di mianmao gai*) are all metrical types that the music writers conceived in the *xipi* modal system. In *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy*, *erhuang* two-six meter, coined in the early stage of model Peking opera musical development, is used in Yang Zirong's "I have the Morning Sun in My Heart" (*xiong you zhaoyang*) and the duet piece "Is This a Dream That I am Seeing, My Child?" (*nandao shuo yu haier xiangfeng zai mengjing*) between Li Yongqi and Mother Li.