

Orchestrating Diversity:
Tan Dun's Intercultural Composition in
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

by

Jacob Hui Litster

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Music and Culture

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

© 2022

Jacob Hui Litster

Abstract

This thesis analyzes Tan Dun's score for the film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000, dir. Ang Lee). First exploring the processes of intercultural exchange in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that brought Chinese music into contact with the music of Europe and America, I also review the music used in selected Chinese martial arts and drama films that predate *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. The transnational nature of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*'s production team is outlined, along with a discussion of the portrayal of gender roles in the film. A biographical profile of Tan Dun and his music sets the context for analyzing how his music is used in the film, including his orchestrations, leitmotifs, motivic gestures, diegetic music, and a close reading of the music featured in selected fight scenes and love scenes from the film.

Table of Contents

<i>Dedication and Acknowledgements</i>	iv
<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Part 1: Tan Dun, Interculturality, China and the West</i>	6
<i>Chapter 1 - Musical Relationships: China and Europe</i>	6
1.1 Hearing Cultures: Listening Positionality	7
1.2 China's Interests in European and American Music	10
1.3 Transactional Blends: Europe and the Music of the "Other"	17
1.4 Sustainable Fusions: Intercultural and Polycultural Composition	22
<i>Chapter 2 - Tan Dun: To a Borderless Language</i>	28
2.1 Early Years in Hunan	28
2.2 Training at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing	29
2.3 A Student and Avant-Garde Composer in New York	31
2.4 Tan Dun's Career as a Concert Composer	33
2.5 Tan Dun's Work as a Film Composer	37
2.6 Accolades and Academic Life	42
2.7 Tan Dun's "1+1=1" Philosophy of Music and Culture	43
<i>Chapter 3 - Survey of Music in Chinese Film: 1965-2000</i>	45
3.1 Development of Hong Kong and Chinese Cinema	45
3.2 Period Kung Fu and Wuxia Films	46
3.3 Kung Fu Films Set in Contemporary Times	52
3.4 Chinese Drama Films	55
<i>Part 2: Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000)</i>	58
<i>Chapter 4 - Film Overview</i>	58
4.1 A Transcultural Production	58
4.2 Narrative Structure	61
4.3 Portrayal of Gender Roles	67
<i>Chapter 5 - Music Summary</i>	72
5.1 Musical Approach and Orchestration	72
5.2 Leitmotifs	74

5.3 Diegetic Music _____	77
Chapter 6 - Score Analysis _____	80
6.1 Scoring Martial Arts Action Scenes _____	80
6.1.1 Percussion Ensemble _____	81
6.1.2 Full Orchestra _____	91
6.1.3 Tense Strings _____	94
6.2 Intercultural Romance for Strings _____	98
Chapter 7 - Conclusion _____	103
Bibliography _____	107
Filmography _____	122

<i>Appendix 1: Music in Selected Popular Chinese and Hong Kong Martial Arts and Drama Films 1965-2000 _____</i>	<i>125</i>
<i>Appendix 2: List of Compositions by Tan Dun _____</i>	<i>128</i>
<i>Appendix 3: Summary of Scenes in Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon _____</i>	<i>132</i>

Dedication and Acknowledgements

Above all, I wish to thank my family: Gloria, Fenton and Cora, John Litster, Trudy Medcalf, Mandy Cheng-Hui, David Hui, Peter Litster, Nikki Shotlander, Jonathan Hui, K.K. Miller, and all my elders, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, and nephews. My family is bicultural. I am a first-generation Canadian of British ancestry, and my wife is a first-generation Canadian of Chinese ancestry. Our two children are biracial, and as a family we are part of the Chinese community in Ottawa. When my mother's family moved to Canada from England in the 1950s, my Nan, Violet Ford, was a singer in Toronto clubs, and during that same decade my wife's grandmother Elsa Hui was an opera singer in Hong Kong. This thesis is dedicated, in loving memory, to Elsa Hui, James Wai Hing Hui, Violet Ford and Charles Ford, our elders who inspired us, taught us, and brought so much song into our family's lives.

A special thank you to my thesis supervisor Dr. James K. Wright, whose path as a composer, film music scholar and fan of Chinese music gave tremendous insight which he brought to this project. I thank my guzheng teacher and collaborator Zichan Yang who opened my mind to the nuances of Chinese music. Thanks as well to Dr. Ellen Waterman and Dr. Jesse Stewart for guiding me through the process of creating my thesis research proposal and for helping me to begin my study of various forms of interculturality. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to study with Dr. James Deaville for two seminar courses during my degree, during which time I benefited from his extensive expertise in music for media. Thanks also to Dr. Paul Théberge for helping me to explore the multiple interconnections between music, sound design and dialogue in the mix for television sound. Thanks to Mark Ferguson, John Higney and Petr Cancura for keeping me close to

real live music during this degree. To my pandemic virtual classmates, for bringing online school to life during these past two years – a special thanks to my friends Kirstin Bews, Sergio Emilio Parra, Emily Calongcagong and Meg LaRose. Also to my fellow students who touched my life and helped to uplift this period of music studies: Justine, Rebecca, Laura, Vicky, Negar, Kessler, Nathan, Parker, Brendan and Akash. I also want to thank Yao Cui, Eric Hung, Lei Ouyang, and Deborah Wong for the inspiration and encouragement that you gave me during my research. Also, a special thanks to my mentors in the film music industry with whom I worked closely while carrying out this research: Edmund Eagan, Robbie Teehan, and Gary Gray.

Introduction

My thesis, *Orchestrating Diversity: Tan Dun's Intercultural Composition in Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, blends biographical, theoretical, and technical research with film cue analysis and music transcription. While writing this thesis I have studied the music and biography of Tan Dun (family name: Tan) to better perceive his compositional career path, and the role that *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000, dir. Ang Lee) played in his musical journey. This film's plot pivots around two generations of unfulfilled love stories and a conflict over who will train a powerful young female fighter. By situating Tan's music in relation to the concepts of interculturality, Orientalism and exoticism, I bring Tan Dun's music into contextual conversation with other composers over the past one hundred and fifty years who have explored blending East Asian and Euro-American classical music. I analyze the work of selected composers from China, Europe and America whose music presents a hybridity of these styles. I also review a sample of Hong Kong and Chinese martial arts and drama films from the period 1965-2000 to understand how the music in these films set precedents which the score for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (hereafter referred to simply as *Crouching Tiger*) may or may not have followed. My secondary research is limited in some respects by my beginner level of reading Chinese text, and as a result, exclusively English-language written sources are referenced in this thesis.

I have been a musician, songwriter and composer for most of my life, with my earliest compositions being performed in 2002 while I was a high school student. Currently I am pursuing a career in composition for the screen and the stage. In recent

years I have completed two chamber operas commissioned by OperOttawa, and I have also composed music for podcasts and videos. I am a multi-instrumentalist, having studied and performed on drumset, percussion, piano, guitar, voice, French horn and guzheng. During one year of private study with master guzheng instructor Zichan Yang in 2021, including a lecture recital on guzheng which I gave in September 2021, I embarked on my own personal journey to understand Chinese music performance practices. Striving to follow the wisdom of Mantle Hood’s advice concerning the process of learning an instrument from a new musical culture, I have tried to first learn how to *hear* Chinese music on its own terms, then develop my own internal “tonal memory” of that music.¹ Based on the insight gained through my research, I have undertaken a detailed analysis of how Tan Dun’s music functions in *Crouching Tiger*.

This thesis is particularly focused on music in Chinese film, and therefore does not explore in detail the sound design or dialogue of Chinese film, though all three are closely intertwined elements of the film sound mix. Further, though this thesis does feature detailed analyses of musical accompaniment (or lack thereof) for many film fight scenes, it does not also provide an analysis of the action choreography of those same scenes, though in some cases I do examine the interplay between music, choreography and cinematography.

To analyze Tan’s film score, I first created a spreadsheet summarizing where music is featured in the film, which instruments are heard in the foreground of each musical cue, as well as how the music in each scene relates to the tracks released on the film’s official soundtrack (see Appendix 3, Summary of Scenes in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden*

¹ Mantle Hood, “The Challenge of ‘Bi-Musicality.’” *Ethnomusicology* 4, no. 2 (May 1960): 56.

Dragon). I determined that the music in this film is primarily used to enhance love scenes and fight scenes. I then chose which scenes would be informative to study in more detail (see Chapter 6). For several of those scenes, I created a detailed shot-by-shot analysis table showing, for each shot of the scene, its duration, location, action, camera shot type, orchestration, tempo, harmony, texture, as well as details of the sound design and dialogue. This allowed me to then analyze in detail how Tan Dun's music reflected, responded to, or flowed through the visuals, as well as how it interacted with the other elements of the sound mix. For several of these scene case studies I also imported a copy of the scene into my digital audio workstation (Ableton Live), synched the tempi and created a partial re-record of the musical elements in the cue, using virtual instruments from sample libraries as well as my own percussion instruments. From there, I created transcriptions of various elements of the score.

Tan Dun is a composer whom I admire for the clarity and emotive power of his compositions. Tan Dun's art navigates multiple cultures through his lived experience as an artist in America's Chinese diaspora. This connects with me on a personal level as it resonates with my family's experience in the Chinese diaspora in Canada. I have chosen to examine Tan Dun's score for Ang Lee's film *Crouching Tiger* as a case study in intercultural composition. I am not only interested in how to utilize East Asian musical aesthetics and instruments for films set in East Asia; I also seek to understand Tan Dun's model for how Chinese instruments, as well as Chinese playing techniques and compositional approaches, can be applied to storytelling in film broadly, not just in stories set in East Asia. I am inspired by Tan Dun's contributions to the process of bringing the instrumentation, aesthetics and playing techniques of East Asia into the film scoring

conversation as equal contributors alongside the European symphony orchestra and Hollywood scoring traditions.

I completed Carleton University's ethics review process in autumn 2021 and had intended to interview Tan Dun as part of my thesis research. However, at the time that I contacted him, his schedule and existing commitments did not permit an interview. Instead, I was able to gain much information from existing online interviews that Tan has given previously.

In the twenty-first century, the populations of many of the world's nations are becoming increasingly multicultural, and the global community continues to become more interconnected. We require more tools to better understand how to build creative collaborations across cultures in mutually beneficial ways that show both respect and a desire to pursue creative synergies. This will help us to avoid creating superficial, one-sided intercultural relationships that run the risk of causing harm.² It is my intent that this thesis will serve as a case study of an internationally successful and uplifting intercultural composition.

In this thesis I explore a few interrelated research questions, including: What does it mean to be an intercultural composer? How can composers navigate insider/outsider roles to ethically integrate musical elements from diverse cultures into their music? What is the cultural context in China from which the music for *Crouching Tiger* emerged? What is unique about Tan Dun's approach to film scoring? Are there unique semiotic elements at play in Tan Dun's work? What is the significance of Tan Dun's fusion of Chinese and

² Concerning examples of harmful one-sided intercultural interactions of the past and present, see Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music and its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000). See also Erich Hatala Matthes, "Cultural Appropriation Without Cultural Essentialism?" *Social Theory and Practice* 42, no. 2 (April 2016): 343-66.

Euro-American orchestration and playing techniques in his score for the film *Crouching Tiger*?

The following glossary defines several of the terms that I will be referencing often throughout this thesis:

Glossary	
Diegetic music	Music that is within the film’s narrative frame and can be heard by the characters on screen.
Euro-American orchestral music	Music written by composers from the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and modern periods for performance by orchestras which commonly include strings, woodwind, brass and percussion, led by a conductor.
Imperial China	The period from 2070 B.C.E. until 1911 during which time Chinese territory was under the rule of Emperors. Imperial Chinese history is organized into a consecutive series of eighteen Dynasties.
Interculturality	The interaction of various cultures and the mutually respectful creation of hybrid forms of cultural expression.
Kung fu film	Films featuring unarmed martial arts combat, set in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and originating from Hong Kong film studios. A few of the most prominent stars in the history of kung fu film are Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan, Jet Li, and Donnie Yen.
Leitmotif	A recurring melodic theme used in dramatic musical storytelling to draw the listener’s attention to particular characters (and their personae and character traits), situations, or plot elements.
Martial arts	An umbrella term used to refer to various unarmed fighting styles originating in East Asia. Examples include kung fu, karate, jiu-jitsu, and taekwondo.
Ostinato	A brief rhythmic or melodic idea that is repeated continuously for a period of time within a song.
Polyculturality	The ability to access and simultaneously hold multiple cultural identities.
Wuxia	Stories found in Chinese literature and film portraying supernatural sword-fighting adventures from Imperial China.

Part 1:

Tan Dun, Interculturality, China and the West

Chapter 1 - Musical Relationships: China and Europe

In the morning I always want to have cereal and milk, but at lunch time I always want to have sushi and sashimi. And dinner time, of course, spaghetti and steak or whatever I could have. And that's pretty much like my opera. You see, you have all kinds of theatrical experience, from Shakespeare to Confucius, from Lao Tzu to John Cage. But [with] all of those, you don't have to make boundaries.³

Tan Dun

I don't really have any great interest in the East and the West as a dialogue. What I am interested in is trying to find a single language and distinctive style that is made up of many, many cultures and that can reach from many different diverse cultures.⁴

Tan Dun

This chapter explores some of the ways in which Chinese music had been presented to global audiences in the years before *Crouching Tiger* (2000) was released and seeks to examine the musical frame of reference within which audiences may have interpreted Tan Dun's score for *Crouching Tiger*. This chapter also examines examples of musical exchange between China and Europe/America, from the perspectives of both Chinese and European/American musicians and explores the terrain of intercultural composition in the decades that preceded Tan Dun's score for *Crouching Tiger*. For our purposes, my

³ Wise Music Classical, "Composing Myself: Tan Dun," November 27, 2017.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiPWNQbwKxU>.

⁴ John O'Mahony, "Crossing Continents," September 9, 2000.

<https://www.theguardian.com/music/2000/sep/09/classicalmusicandopera>.

focus will be restricted to the interactions between Chinese instrumental music and Chinese opera, and the late nineteenth and twentieth-century orchestral musics of America and Europe. These eras and genres of music are of particular interest in this research since they are those within which Tan Dun has primarily worked as a composer.⁵

1.1 Hearing Cultures: Listening Positionality

Music elicits intricate connections and references to sociocultural identities, which in turn inform the ways in which it is presented by the performers, and the ways it is interpreted and processed by the listeners. Musical cultures can interact and intersect in manifold ways, and our identities, like our music, can be fluid and evolving. Cultures can meet and interact during the process of music creation, whether through intercultural performance collaborations or through intercultural composition. Cultural intersections can also take place at the moment a listener becomes exposed to a new musical culture, when her interpretation of a piece of music is filtered through the cultural frameworks and hierarchies she has absorbed through her socialization, education, experience, and critical reflection. Therefore, as we engage with music, we are simultaneously creating, enacting, reflecting, and redefining identities.⁶

For Simon Frith, identity “describes one’s place in a dramatized pattern of relationships.”⁷ Music provides resources for constructing and negotiating personal identities, and groups can use music to assign boundaries of cultural belonging.⁸ The ways

⁵ Tan Dun is also active as a composer of film music, and the music of Chinese film will be the focus of Chapter 3.

⁶ Born and Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music and its Others*, 31.

⁷ Simon Frith, “Music and Identity,” in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, eds. Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay (London: SAGE, 1996), 125.

⁸ Rolf Lidskog, “The Role of Music in Ethnic Identity Formation in Diaspora: A Research Review.” *International Social Science Journal* 66, no. 219-20 (2016): 25.

that each of us interpret cultures are influenced by the impact of generations of relationships between cultures. When we listen to a piece of music in a style with which we have a personal connection, our ability to interpret this music is stronger than when we are listening to a piece of music in a style with which we have no prior experience.

Our level of familiarity with various cultures is what forms our individual listening positionality. Stó:lō musicologist Dylan Robinson explains that to develop critical listening positionality, we need to reflect on our own subjectivity and biases when we listen to music, and we need to resist the tendency to categorize and label music when we listen.⁹ As Robinson describes:

Critical listening positionality thus seeks to prompt questions regarding how we might become better attuned to the particular filters of race, class, gender, and ability that actively select and frame the moment of contact between listening body and listened-to sound.¹⁰

Part of the process for listening to and engaging with music from cultures that are foreign to us, is to begin from a basis of respect and appreciation, and an acknowledgement that there is much we have yet to learn about the new music we are experiencing. Frequently throughout my musical career, and especially when I have lived outside of Canada (in Africa, the Caribbean, and Europe) and when I have studied with and performed with musicians from cultural backgrounds that are different from my own, I have reflected on the subject of critical listening positionality. In the two years prior to the time of writing this thesis I began studying Chinese music. My study of Chinese music has involved practicing and performing on the guzheng, listening to Chinese music, and learning from

⁹ Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), 11, 248.

¹⁰ Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, 11.

Chinese musicians and Asian musicologists. However, I remain fully aware that there is so much about Chinese music that I do not yet know.

When musical elements and concepts from one culture are borrowed by someone who stands outside that culture, it is important to acknowledge and understand inequalities of power and privilege that are inherent within that exchange.¹¹ The realm of intercultural music inevitably spans all the way from experiences of cultural outsiders experimenting with appropriation, to cultural insiders negotiating authenticity, and everything in between.¹² Throughout history, musical exchange between the cultures of East Asia and the cultures of Europe and America has been an experience of navigating and exploring a recognition of cultural difference, in ways that have varied from benign, to uplifting, to outright harmful. The term ‘East meets West’ has been popularly used as shorthand to describe music that blends traditions of East Asia with traditions of Europe and North America. However, as musicologist Frederick Lau suggests, we need to look deeper than the ‘East meets West’ descriptor to understand the diversity of cultures within the umbrellas ‘East’ and ‘West,’ clarify the historical periods of cultures that are interacting and describe the human interaction necessary for these meetings of cultures.¹³ These recommendations inform the approach that I have sought to adopt in this thesis

¹¹ Born and Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music and its Others*, 8.

¹² John Hutnyk, “Hybridity Saves? Authenticity and/or the Critique of Appropriation,” *Amerasia Journal* 25, no. 3 (1999): 41.

¹³ Frederick Lau, “Context, Agency and Chineseness: The Music of Law Wing Fai,” *Contemporary Music Review* 26, nos. 5-6 (October/December 2007): 585-603.

1.2 China's Interests in European and American Music

In the following pages I provide a selected overview of various forms of musical interaction between China and Europe/America, but the scope here is not comprehensive. Musical exchange between China and other cultures dates back millennia, including ongoing musical interaction between China and its neighbours, particularly Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Russia and also Central Asian, South Asian, and Middle Eastern countries connected to China historically through the Silk Roads,¹⁴ the land and sea trade networks that connect the Eurasian landmass.¹⁵ Well-established transcultural lineages link many of the instruments (including lutes, flutes, zithers, dulcimers, drums and cymbals) that have been used in the folk and traditional musics of countries along the Silk Road.¹⁶ Chinese musical instruments are often grouped into the following eight categories: silk, bamboo, wood, stone, metal, clay, gourd and hide (skin).¹⁷ Figure 1.1 describes several of the most common Chinese instruments, many of which will be referred to throughout this thesis.

After Marco Polo arrived in China in the late thirteenth century and spent seventeen years working in the court of Kublai Khan, a steady flow of European missionaries and adventurers began to travel to China.¹⁸ Not only did this bring European music and instruments to China, it also brought Chinese music and instruments to

¹⁴ For more on the organology of musical instruments in China, see Han Kuo-Huang and Judith Gray, "The Modern Chinese Orchestra," *Asian Music* 11, no. 1 (1979): 1-43.

¹⁵ Tim Winter, "The Geocultural Heritage of the Silk Roads," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 27, no. 7 (2021): 707.

¹⁶ See for example James A. Millward, "The Silk Road and the Sitar: Finding Centuries of Sociocultural Exchange in the History of an Instrument," *Journal of Social History* 52, no. 2 (2018): 206–33.

¹⁷ Nan Zhang, "Neo-Orientalism in the Operas of Tan Dun," (MA thesis, Dalhousie University, 2015), 92.

¹⁸ Frederick Lau, "When a Great Nation Emerges: Chinese Music in the World," in *China and the West: Music, Representation and Reception*, eds. Yang Hon-Lun and Michael Saffle (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 267.

<i>Instrument name</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Sound production</i>
Dizi	Transverse bamboo flute	Wind
Xiao	End-blown bamboo flute	Wind
Bawu	Free-reed flute	Wind
Sheng	Mouth-blown free reed pipes	Wind
Suona	Double-reed wooden horn with metal bowl	Wind
Erhu	Two-string bowed lute with snakeskin-covered resonance box	Bowed
Guzheng	Twenty-one-string zither	Plucked
Guqin	Seven-string zither	Plucked
Pipa	Four-string pear-shaped small lute	Plucked
Ruan	Four-string lute (various sizes)	Plucked
Sanxian	Three-string lute with snakeskin-covered resonance box	Plucked
Rawap	Seven-string long-necked lute	Plucked
Yangqin	Hammered dulcimer	Struck with hammers
Dagu	Large drum	Struck with sticks
Paigu	Multiple medium and small drums	Struck with sticks
Bangu	Small drum	Struck with sticks
Nanbangzi	Small rosewood woodblock	Struck with sticks
Bangzi	Pair of wooden clappers	Struck against each other
Luo	Gongs (various sizes)	Struck
Xiaobo	Pair of small brass plates	Struck against each other

Figure 1A. Selected Chinese instruments¹⁹

¹⁹ Xi Qiang, *Chinese Music and Musical Instruments* (Shanghai: Shanghai Press and Publishing Development Company, 2011), 16-65.

Europe.²⁰ The First Opium War between Britain and China (1839-1842), fought over a disagreement concerning the terms of trade between these nations, ended with the ceding of Hong Kong to the British Empire.²¹ This European imperial foothold on Chinese territory led to the influx of foreign merchants and Christian missionaries establishing themselves in Hong Kong, increasing the rate of intercultural connections in Hong Kong and throughout southern China.²² Thereafter European music became increasingly widespread in China in the form of “church hymns, military bands, organs, school songs and violins.”²³

As modern China began to be established after the fall of the Qing Dynasty in 1912, Western modern technology and educational models were widely promoted by Chinese leadership,²⁴ with a concomitant growth in the influence of Western music in China. During this period, Chinese intellectuals generally felt that Chinese music was not adequately refined and needed to be adapted to Western music norms.²⁵ Important new national music schools modeled on European music education systems were created, including the National Conservatory of Music of Shanghai, the Society for the Advancement of National Music of Beijing, and later, in 1949, the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing.²⁶

²⁰ When the Chinese sheng, a free reed Chinese mouth organ, was introduced to Europeans, it went on to inspire the invention of European pipe organs. See Yu Hao Chen, “Nesting, Swelling, Sounding: On the Birth of the Accordion in China” (paper, Society for Ethnomusicology 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting, October 29, 2021).

²¹ Immanuel C.Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 190.

²² Lau, *Music in China*, 62.

²³ Frederick Lau, “Great Nation Emerges,” 270.

²⁴ Mei Han, “The Emergence of the Chinese Zheng: Traditional Context, Contemporary Evolution, and Cultural Identity” (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2013).

²⁵ Eric Hung, “The Shanghai Quartet’s Chinasong: A Musical Counterpart to English-Language Cultural Revolution Memoirs?” in *China and the West: Music, Representation and Reception* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 234.

²⁶ Ming-yen Lee, “An Analysis of the Three Modern Chinese Orchestras in the Context of Cultural Interaction Across Greater China” (PhD diss., Kent State University, Kent, OH, 2015). Proquest 3671434,

After the introduction of European musical education systems into China, the role of composers became increasingly prominent. Early twentieth century Chinese composers such as Zhao Yuanren (1892-1982), He Luting (1903-99), Huang Zi (1904-38), Xian Xinghai (1905-45), Tan Xiao-Lin (1911-48), and Nie Er (1912-35) composed vocal pieces featuring Chinese folk melodies within the harmonic and structural framework of European Romantic music.²⁷ Prior to this turning point in Chinese music and music education, the individual performing musician's interpretation of a piece was considered more important than the composer who originally created the piece.²⁸

After the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) took power in 1949, there grew greater political collaboration and cultural integration between China and the Soviet Union,²⁹ and the ensuing period of Sino-Soviet cooperation had a significant impact on the trajectory of Chinese musical culture. During the 1950s study exchanges between Chinese and Soviet musicians were frequent, and Soviet music curricula were translated into Chinese and used in China's music conservatories.³⁰ One example of these exchanges would be orchestral ballet and opera composer Du Minxin (b.1928), who attended Moscow's Tchaikovsky Music Conservatory from 1954-58 before joining the faculty of the Beijing Central Conservatory.³¹ In addition, Soviet composer Alexander Tcherepnin (1899-1977)

17. See also Central Conservatory of Music, "About the Central Conservatory of Music," accessed December 17, 2021. <http://en.ccom.edu.cn/2020/aboutccom/>.

²⁷ Su Zheng, *Claiming Diaspora: Music, Transnationalism, and Cultural Politics in Asian/Chinese America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 141.

²⁸ Eric Hung, Interview *with the author*, video call. December 13, 2021.

²⁹ This political alignment was short-lived, however, as political factors led to a dissolution of Chinese-Soviet collaboration in the late 1950s. Both the Russians and the Chinese pursued expansionist policies and goals, and sought to be the central player in the Socialist bloc globally, and this led to tensions and even armed conflict along the Chinese-Soviet border. See Hsü, *Rise of Modern China*, 678-84.

³⁰ Yao Cui, "The Impact of Social and Political Change on Chinese Music: The Development of the Pipa from the 1950s to 1965" (paper, Society for Ethnomusicology 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting, October 28, 2021).

³¹ Du Minxin wrote the score for *Red Detachment of Women* (1964), arguably China's best-known ballet. In July 2018, while on a summer cultural tour of China hosted by the Beijing Central Conservatory of Music, Carleton University music professors and undergraduate students attended a lecture by Du Minxin

spent the years 1934-37 in China, where he taught at the National Conservatory and wrote a number of Chinese-inspired works for piano, including the ‘Études du piano sur la gamme pentatonique’ (Piano Studies on the Pentatonic Scale), Op. 51.³² Similar to the Socialist Realism art policy that was enforced in the Soviet Union at this time, Chinese musicians were expected to create art that conformed to the aesthetic ideology of socialist realism.³³ This meant that art should serve the ideology of the Communist Party, rather than art being created for art’s sake, an approach viewed as decadent and capitalist.³⁴

Beginning in the 1950s, violinists Chen Gang (b. 1935) and He Zhanhao (b. 1933) began to apply Chinese playing techniques to European instruments in their compositions. Chen Gang’s *Butterfly Lovers’ Violin Concerto* (1959) was an early successful example of this.³⁵ Several prominent Chinese composers who studied and lived abroad during this period introduced new concepts in their intercultural compositions. These included Chou Wen-chung (1923-2019) and Jiang Wen-Ye (1910-83). Raised and trained in China, Chou Wen-chung emigrated to the United States in 1946. He studied composition at New England Conservatory and Columbia University, where he was mentored by Edgard Varèse, and later taught, from 1954 to 1991. Following his studies in Japan, Jiang Wen-Ye merged traditional Chinese, Taiwanese, and Japanese musical idioms with modernist elements inspired by European composers including Stravinsky, Bartók and Debussy.³⁶

and noted that the legacy of his Soviet education was evident in his approach to composition and orchestration.

³² Frederick Lau, *Music in China: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 96-97.

³³ For an analysis of the impacts of Soviet socialist realism on Russian composers, see Stella Baty Landis, “The Soviet Operas of Sergei Prokofiev” (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2007). Proquest UMI 3255843.

³⁴ Robert Provine, Yosihiko Tokumaru, and Lawrence Witzleben, *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 7: East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 377.

³⁵ Provine et al, *Garland*, 385.

³⁶ Provine et al, *Garland*, 383-84.

In the early 1960s, some music from the Western classical tradition was still viewed by the Chinese Communist Party as acceptable for performance and study, including works created prior to the nineteenth century. Late-Romantic and twentieth century music, however, were viewed by the CCP as decadent and harmful.³⁷ From 1966 to 1976 Chairman Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution was a means to exert greater control over artistic practices and to discourage dissent from the intellectual and artistic members of Chinese society.³⁸ During the Cultural Revolution, both Western music and most Chinese folk and theatrical music genres were banned entirely.³⁹ As an attempt to promote his vision of the revolutionary spirit, Mao banned many elements of Chinese culture that were seen as traditional or bourgeois, including the use of many Chinese musical instruments.⁴⁰ For Mao, art and literature were seen as "powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy."⁴¹

Nevertheless, Mao saw some foreign musical elements as being consistent with his cultural vision for China. In the lead-up to and during the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese Communist Party oversaw the creation of several "model" performance works with contemporary themes that were intended to depict the glory of the CCP. These included eighteen model operas, as well as model ballets and a model symphony.⁴² Model operas were created by some of the most respected composers, directors and

³⁷ Provine et al, *Garland*, 378.

³⁸ Jiaqi Yan, Gao Gao and Daniel W.Y. Kwok, *Turbulent Decade: A History of the Cultural Revolution* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996), 7.

³⁹ Provine et al, *Garland*, 378.

⁴⁰ See Lau, *Music in China*, 43, 102. See also Mao Yu Run, "Music under Mao: Its Background and Aftermath," *Asian Music* 22 no. 2 (1991): 104, 116.

⁴¹ Mao Zedong, "Talks at the Yen'an Forum on Literature and Art (May 1942)," in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1965), 3.

⁴² Ralph Croizier, Shentian Zheng, and Scott Watson, *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966-76* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 168-70. See also Barbara Mittler, "'Eight Stage Works for 800 Million People': The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in Music—A View from Revolutionary Opera," *The Opera Quarterly* 26, no. 2-3 (2010): 378.

choreographers working in China at the time, and officially they became “the only music that was allowed to be performed during the Cultural Revolution.”⁴³ These model operas were promoted extensively, and during the decade of the Cultural Revolution they were heard everywhere from cinemas to theatres to community gatherings, as well as on loudspeakers in the streets and in the fields.⁴⁴ Notably, these model operas are examples of intercultural composition. They blend elements of Peking opera— a style of musical drama that had been cultivated and promoted by the Imperial household since 1790⁴⁵— with elements of European opera and symphonic traditions.⁴⁶ The model operas, while retaining some Chinese instrumentation such as the jinghu (bowed lute, smaller than an erhu, but with similar design), also integrate European strings and woodwinds, subdued percussion, and elements of bel canto vocal style (influenced by nineteenth-century Italian songs).⁴⁷

Mao’s health declined in the mid-1970s and he died in September 1976, bringing the Cultural Revolution to an end.⁴⁸ After the Cultural Revolution, Chinese composers were no longer forbidden to employ techniques that had been explored by Western modernist composers since the early twentieth century, such as the twelve-tone system. A period of catching up began in the 1980s, when “new wave” Chinese composers –

⁴³ Lau, *Music in China*, 135.

⁴⁴ Eric Hung, “Tan Dun Through the Lens of Western Media (Part I),” *Notes* 67, no. 3 (March 2011): 606.

⁴⁵ Peking opera emerged in 1790 as a style of drama promoted by the imperial household in Beijing, and for generations, regional groups of musicians were trained in this style and encouraged to perform it throughout China. Peking opera performers are noted for their combination of abilities that encompass singing, acrobatics and acting. Peking opera performances are traditionally accompanied by a musical ensemble led by the bowed two-string jinghu, several plucked string instruments and dizi flute, suona, and percussion including danpi (small drum) and ban (wooden clappers). See Colin Mackerras, *Images of Asia: Peking Opera* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 53-54.

⁴⁶ Liu Kang, “Popular Culture and the Culture of the Masses in Contemporary China,” *Boundary 2* 24, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 114.

⁴⁷ Lau, *Music in China*, 137.

⁴⁸ Hsü, *Rise of Modern China*, 766-67.

including Tan Dun – began to explore intercultural composition by creating musical interplay between the textures, timbres and techniques of Chinese music and the compositional approaches of twentieth-century European composers such as Bartók, Schoenberg and Stravinsky.⁴⁹

Throughout the twentieth century, Chinese culture saw a shift towards extensive (though selective, under Mao) adoption of Western musical concepts in education, performance and composition. Meanwhile, in Europe and America, a small subset of composers and musicians were reciprocally interested in the musics of East Asia, even if their understanding of East Asian music was often quite superficial.⁵⁰

1.3 Transactional Blends: Europe and the Music of the “Other”

An important element in any discussion of intercultural music is the role of “othering,” the creation and manipulation of a fear-induced remote stance from those whose cultural backgrounds are different than one’s own.⁵¹ Xenophobia, a fear of the other, has roots that stretch back to ancient times.⁵² Stuart Hall provides a compelling account of the ways in which the signifiers of our cultural differences have been used throughout colonial history to create opposition, as our differences become condensed, simplified, and polarized.⁵³ Palestinian-American postcolonial scholar Edward Said coined the term “Orientalism” to

⁴⁹ Zheng, *Claiming Diaspora*, 149.

⁵⁰ Chou Wen-Chung, “Asian Concepts and Twentieth-Century Western Composers,” *The Musical Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (1971): 211–29.

⁵¹ John A. Powell, “Us vs. Them: The Sinister Techniques of ‘Othering’ - And How to Avoid Them,” *The Guardian*, November 8, 2017. <https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/nov/08/us-vs-them-the-sinister-techniques-of-othering-and-how-to-avoid-them>.

⁵² Jonathan D. Bellman, “Musical Voyages and Their Baggage: Orientalism in Music and Critical Musicology,” *The Music Quarterly* 94, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 421.

⁵³ Stuart Hall, *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 131.

describe a European mindset that emerged in eighteenth-century Europe from British and French confrontations with Arab nations.⁵⁴ Orientalism is essentially the pernicious worldview that Europeans hold superior knowledge and power relative to non-European cultures and nationalities.⁵⁵ It was (and perhaps still is) the ideological pillar used by Europeans to support the rationale justifying their colonial conquests, by setting up a disturbing dichotomy of ruler and subject. To build this argument, Orientalism defines non-European cultures as everything that European cultures ostensibly are not. For example, an Orientalist view would claim that non-European cultures are childlike, unsophisticated, promiscuous, overtly violent, mystical, primitive and lacking in a nuanced history and evolution.⁵⁶

Orientalism can take musical form, for example, in operas by European composers where the libretto presents European characters as morally superior, and the essentialized “other” culture as eroticized, dangerous, and ultimately inferior and in need of domination.⁵⁷ Giacomo Puccini (1856-1924), the most celebrated composer of Italian opera after Verdi and a leading exponent of the new verismo operatic style in the twentieth century, infamously composed *Madama Butterfly* (1904), the story of European male bravado and conquest against a backdrop of ostensible (and essentialized) Asian inferiority. The story revolves around an American naval officer’s disposable approach to his arranged marriage to a young Japanese woman named Cho-Cho-San (*Madama Butterfly*). Through its ongoing popularity in the Western operatic canon, *Madama Butterfly* has helped to reinforce Eurocentric and Orientalist stereotypes. In 2021 Asian

⁵⁴ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 201.

⁵⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 32.

⁵⁶ James K. Wright, “Chinese Instruments and Music,” Public presentation, Carleton University, September 26, 2018.

⁵⁷ Born and Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music and its Others*, 8-9.

American composer Jungyoon Wie gave a moving account of how *Madama Butterfly* was a troubling and disturbing story for her, because it presents the abject failure of the title character, framed in such a way that she alone is responsible for her tragic fate.⁵⁸ A notable dramatic reaction to the Orientalism in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* is the 1986 play *M. Butterfly* by David Henry Hwang. *M. Butterfly*, set in Beijing during the Cultural Revolution, turns the tables on Puccini's libretto such that the white male protagonist in *M. Butterfly* is the one who is deceived by the 'Butterfly' heroine character, a Peking opera singer who is actually a male Chinese spy.⁵⁹

After painting stereotypes of Japan in *Madama Butterfly*, Puccini went on to explore Orientalist Chinese cultural references in his later opera *Turandot* (1926). The opera story presents the Chinese people as bloodthirsty and driven by ritual. Like in *Madama Butterfly*, it fixates on a desirable young East Asian heroine whose role is ostensibly to be "won" by a male suitor.⁶⁰ When writing *Turandot*, Puccini adapted the Chinese folk song "Jasmine Flower" into multiple choruses in Act II including "Popolo di Pekino" as well as "Gloria, gloria, o vincitore."⁶¹ Act II of *Turandot* opens with an extended trio, "Olà Pang, Olà Pong," for three Chinese government officials who are given diminutive and infantilized names: Ping, Pang and Pong. Their sung conversation at the beginning of this scene relies on repeated slight variations of a simple rhythmic motif that outlines notes from a D minor pentatonic scale. In short, Puccini uses Chinese musical

⁵⁸ Jungyoon Wie, "Artists Confronting Society - A Panel Discussion and Performance," *China Now Music Festival*, US-China Music Institute, October 14, 2021.

⁵⁹ David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly* (New York: Dramatists Play Service Inc., 1986). *M. Butterfly* was adapted into film in 1993, directed by David Cronenberg, and scored by Howard Shore.

⁶⁰ Maria Ng, "The Taming of the Oriental Shrew: The Two Asias in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot*," in *A Vision of the Orient: Texts, Intertexts, and Contexts of Madame Butterfly*, ed. Jonathan Wisenthal, Sherrill E. Grace and Melinda Boyd (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 178.

⁶¹ Puccini had heard the song "Jasmine Flower" in a music box and had seen it in European transcriptions of Chinese music in an 1884 book by J.A. Van-Aalst. See Angela Kang, "Musical Chinoiserie" (PhD diss., University of Nottingham, 2011). ProQuest (1798374995).

concepts as Orientalist decorations resulting from a superficial engagement with Chinese culture. This contrasts with the intensive and detailed immersion in the study of European music that was well underway in China by the 1920s.

Exoticism, like Orientalism, is a constructed depiction of foreign cultures. During the early sixteenth-century European colonial period, when European explorers began to share their impressions of culture shock upon their return from voyages to far continents, a plethora of exotic stories and depictions of foreign cultures began to circulate in Europe.⁶² These misrepresentations of foreign cultures tended to use the Orientalist formula of attributing to the “other” culture countless attributes that Europeans saw themselves as virtuously lacking. The exoticized reaction to foreign cultures was expressed as a blend of curiosity, fear and disdain, and prompted in Europeans a desire to destroy, subdue and assimilate.⁶³ Any culture that is outside one’s own home culture can be exoticized, and for Europeans, this meant cultures from outside as well as within Europe. For example, in France, one could interpret Jewish or Roma culture, or even the culture of neighbouring Spain, in exoticized terms.⁶⁴ While Orientalism involves an essentializing and degrading view of non-European cultures, exoticism can include a mix of reactions to foreign cultures. In fact, in many cases, cultural items and ideas that are regarded as exotic are also seen as desirable and pleasing.⁶⁵

During the height of European imperialism, particularly from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, European musicians and composers were

⁶² Timothy D. Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 20.

⁶³ Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism*, 22.

⁶⁴ Ralph P. Locke, *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 3.

⁶⁵ Benjamin Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 5.

increasingly exposed to small examples of non-European musical cultures. Initially, European composers would have only had access to limited examples of Asian music, and often this took the form of printed transcriptions prepared by European musicians, rather than interactions with Asian music and Asian musicians themselves. However, the Paris *Exposition Universelle* of May-October 1889 was a rare moment of global intercultural interaction, and this led to a growing interest in Asian music among French composers, perhaps most notably Claude Debussy (1862-1918), who reacted in awe and admiration to the Vietnamese theatre music and Javanese gamelan music he heard and saw performed at the exhibition. Reflecting on the experience in 1913, Debussy wrote:

Their traditions reside in old songs, combined with dances, built up throughout the centuries. Yet Javanese music is based on a type of counterpoint by comparison with which that of Palestrina is child's play. And if we listen without European prejudice to the charm of their percussion we must confess that our percussion is like primitive noises at a country fair.⁶⁶

Influenced by East Asian art, Debussy gave many of his compositions titles that refer to subjects such as nature, weather and animals (including, among others, *La Mer*).⁶⁷ Already adept at experimenting with non-traditional harmonies and scales, Debussy's exposure to Asian music led him to utilize variations of pentatonic and whole tone scales widely in his music. Debussy's fascination with the exotic also led him to create his own interpretations of other non-European cultures including African and African American musics.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Edward Lockspeiser, *Debussy, His Life and Mind* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 115.

⁶⁷ David Michael Schmitz, "Oriental Influences in the Piano Music of Claude Achille Debussy" (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 1995). ProQuest 9531137, 62.

⁶⁸ See James Deaville, "Debussy's Cakewalk. Race, Modernism and Music in Early Twentieth-Century Paris," *Revue musicale OICRM* 2, no. 1 (2014): 20-39.

Exoticism is mainly a set of imagined and constructed meanings and interpretations of aspects of foreign cultures. In cases where a foreign musical culture is not understood through long-term learning, apprenticeship and relationship-building, there is the potential for musical extractivism and cultural appropriation to occur. The extractivist mindset sees everything as a resource that can be taken and turned into profit. This takes place when musical ideas are extracted from a foreign culture without consent, and without understanding the impact that the extraction will have on the community from which it is being extracted.⁶⁹ Similarly, cultural appropriation takes place when an individual misrepresents a culture in relation to which they are an outsider.⁷⁰ The related concepts of Orientalism, exoticism, extractivism and cultural appropriation all involve some form of misrepresentation of foreign cultures, and reflect superficial, unconstructive levels of understanding and respect.

1.4 Sustainable Fusions: Intercultural and Polycultural Composition

UNESCO's 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions defines interculturality as "the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue

⁶⁹ This description of extractivism is based on Naomi Klein's interview with Leanne Betasamosake Simpson in "Dancing the World into Being: A Conversation with Idle No More's Leanne Simpson," *Yes! Magazine*. March 6, 2013. <https://www.yesmagazine.org/social-justice/2013/03/06/dancing-the-world-into-being-a-conversation-with-idle-no-more-leanne-simpson>. See also Dylan Robinson, *Hungry Listening*, and Kimberly Richards and Heather Davis-Fisch. "Extractivism and Performance," *Canadian Theatre Review* 182 (2020): 5-8.

⁷⁰ Matthes, "Cultural Appropriation," 343-66.

and mutual respect.”⁷¹ Asian American rapper/activist Jason Chu has described polyculturality – a concept related both to interculturality and intersectionality⁷² – as “the understanding that we can access and simultaneously hold multiple cultural identities.”⁷³ For Chu, a person can develop polyculturalism through relationship-building, and can progress through stages moving sequentially from the position of outsider to that of insider. In Chu’s conception, the move from a monocultural to a polycultural notion of self involves the following sequential stages: appropriation, appreciation, apprenticeship, and authenticity.⁷⁴

It is important to understand the cross-cultural approaches of musicians and composers in the context of the place and time they inhabited. In twentieth-century America the possibility of respectful and sustainable musical exchange across cultures became possible in more cosmopolitan, multicultural urban settings.⁷⁵ As one example, the American composer Henry Cowell (1897-1965) grew up near San Francisco’s Chinatown, where he was exposed to Chinese and Japanese folk songs as well as Cantonese opera throughout his childhood.⁷⁶ This instilled in Cowell an appreciation for the sliding tone melodic approaches used in Chinese vocal and instrumental music. Also

⁷¹ UNESCO. “Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.” Accessed October 26, 2021. <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/cultural-expressions/the-convention/convention-text>

⁷² Intersectionality is a term coined by civil rights advocate and professor Kimberlé Crenshaw to explain that individuals’ identities have multiple overlapping categories. See Kimberlé Crenshaw, “The Urgency of Intersectionality.” October 2016.

https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en. See also Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge. *Intersectionality* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2020).

⁷³ Jason Chu, “Appropriators or Originators: APIs, Hip-Hop and Authenticity,” *Music of Asian America Research Center*. November 16, 2019. <https://asianamericanmusic.org/events/jason-chu/>.

⁷⁴ Jason Chu, “Appropriators or Originators.”

⁷⁵ Notable American twentieth century composers whose music was deeply affected by musical and theoretical concepts with Asian roots include Lou Harrison, John Cage and Harry Partch.

⁷⁶ Nancy Yunhwa Rao, “Henry Cowell and His Chinese Music Heritage,” in *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*, eds. Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 120.

an educator and music theorist, Cowell taught about Chinese musical aesthetics in his world music classes at the New School of Social Research in New York.⁷⁷ He frequently featured slides between pitches in his compositions, and throughout his life he personally sought to counteract the marginalization that Chinese musical concepts ordinarily faced in America.⁷⁸

Indigenous Canadian Wolastoq composer and performer Jeremy Dutcher uses the term “bridge people” to refer to individuals whose upbringing involved a duality or multiplicity of cultures: “bridge people [are those] who sit in the middle and are the conduit through which those worlds can speak to each other.”⁷⁹ Postcolonial scholar Homi Bhabha has introduced the concept of a “third space”, a space located between constructed binary notions of identity,⁸⁰ the creation of Chinese-American identity as an alternative to Chinese or American identity, for example. In the experience of immigrants, this duality can sometimes be disorienting. The journey of creating one’s identity when one is living somewhere other than one’s homeland, can feel simultaneously like having two homes, yet also having no home.⁸¹ Grace Wang argues that “Asian American” identity carries with it “a hybrid subjectivity that imbues ethnic belonging with the privilege of international/American upbringing and understanding.”⁸²

As I discuss in Chapter 2, Tan Dun is an artist whose musical career path has enabled his music to flow seamlessly between Chinese and Euro-American traditions. However, there are many other examples of Asian American musicians and composers

⁷⁷ Rao, “Henry Cowell,” 125.

⁷⁸ Rao, “Henry Cowell,” 135-36.

⁷⁹ Jeremy Dutcher, *Interview with the author*, video call, December 21, 2020.

⁸⁰ Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 56.

⁸¹ Hung, “Shanghai Quartet’s,” 238.

⁸² Grace Wang, *Soundtracks of Asian America: Navigating Race Through Musical Performance* (London: Duke University Press, 2015), 157.

who, through their polycultural identity, also exist in a third space where they serve as bridge people creating intercultural music. Chinese guzheng virtuoso and composer Wu Fei (b. 1977) studied at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and then moved to the United States in 2002 in order to immerse herself in the New York City improvised music scene.⁸³ Currently based in Nashville, Wu Fei composes music for solo and chamber ensembles for a variety of Asian, European and American instruments.⁸⁴ Wu's first solo album *Yuan* provides a taste of the intercultural diversity in her writing. This album consists of a selection of her compositions performed by various ensembles including the Melody of China Ensemble (San Francisco) and Percussions Claviers de Lyon (France).⁸⁵

Violinist and composer Jiang Yiwen is another Asian American musician who has demonstrated the possibilities of intercultural composition, perhaps most notably in the twenty-four pieces that he arranged for the Shanghai Quartet, released on their 2002 album *Chinasong*.⁸⁶ For these pieces, Jiang, formerly the second violinist in the Shanghai Quartet, brings the melodies of Chinese folk songs and the playing techniques of Chinese instruments (the dizi and erhu, for example) into conversation with the European string quartet model, blending Chinese folk melodies with gestures and harmonies evocative of European composers from Beethoven to Bartók.⁸⁷ *Chinasong* has consistently been the Shanghai Quartet's most popular recording.⁸⁸

⁸³ Wu Fei, "Bio," accessed January 10, 2022. <http://www.wufeimusic.com/bio>.

⁸⁴ For a list of Wu Fei's compositions, see Wu Fei "Compositions," accessed January 10, 2022. <http://www.wufeimusic.com/compositions>.

⁸⁵ Wu Fei, "Yuan," accessed January 10, 2022. <http://www.wufeimusic.com/yuan/>.

⁸⁶ Hung, "Shanghai Quartet's," 224.

⁸⁷ Hung, "Shanghai Quartet's," 231.

⁸⁸ Hung, "Shanghai Quartet's," 230.

Another Chinese American musician whose work demonstrates her interculturality is Chen Yi (b. 1953). Chen's unique blending of Chinese and Euro-American classical musical traditions is evidenced throughout her career, including her powerful *Symphony No. 2*, whose elements include twelve-tone serial passages for modern symphony orchestra intertwined with Chinese opera percussion rhythms and sudden punctuations of gongs, woodblock and cymbals.⁸⁹

The concepts of interculturality, polyculturalism, bridge people and third space represent a deeper understanding and engagement between cultures, compared to the superficial extraction and/or appropriation of cultural content that characterizes artistic Orientalism. However, intercultural models nonetheless still rely on labeling and defining composers' and musicians' identities, an approach which, for Hilary Fincham-Sung, remains a Euro-American perspective.⁹⁰ For Frederick Lau, studies of intercultural composition tend to "emphasize formal and procedural aspects of musical synthesis while casting them in a convenient duality that juxtaposes the East and the West."⁹¹ Approaches to interculturality which begin from a binary of "us" and "them" can perpetuate the problematic dichotomy of colonizer and colonized, which is not a constructive starting point for mutually respectful intercultural dialogue.⁹² Moreover, academic analyses of intercultural composition must take into account political and power dynamics. The

⁸⁹ Nancy Yunhwa Rao, "Chen Yi, Symphony No. 2 (1993)," in *Analytical Essays on Music by Women Composers: Concert Music 1960-2000*, eds. Laurel Parsons and Brenda Ravenscroft (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 136-40.

⁹⁰ Hilary Vanessa Fincham-Sung, "Aesthetics of Interculturality in East Asian Contemporary Music," *The World of Music* 6, no. 1 (2017): 9.

⁹¹ Frederick Lau, "Fusion or Fission: The Paradox and Politics of Contemporary Chinese Avant-Garde Music," in *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*, eds. Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Press, 2004), 22.

⁹² Christian Utz, *Musical Composition in the Context of Globalization: New Perspectives on Music History of the 20th and 21st Century*, trans. Laurence Sinclair Willis (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2021), 39.

potential implications for a musician with a privileged background who is exploring intercultural composition (in the way a tourist might explore a foreign city) are not the same as the implications for a refugee who is navigating intercultural composition.⁹³ While prominent Chinese-American musicians have been widely praised and well received in the mainstream, they are still largely perceived by Euro-American audiences through a racial lens, which both essentializes and arguably aims to contain them.⁹⁴

By exploring examples of cross-cultural musical exchange between China, Europe and America in this chapter, I have sought to describe the context and trajectory of intercultural composition from which Tan Dun's music has emerged. Today, the East Asian music industry is exerting a powerful impact on global popular culture through the massive growth of genres such as K-Pop.⁹⁵ However, during most of Tan Dun's career, and certainly when *Crouching Tiger* was released in 2000, the musics of East Asia were not central to conversations surrounding mainstream music in North America.⁹⁶

While intercultural musical exchange between China and the West has a long history, it is primarily during the past one hundred and fifty years that the complexity of these intercultural collaborations and influences have matured. It is these two trajectories, of composers and musicians in both China and the West exploring intercultural composition over a period of a century and a half, that have set the process in motion for the intercultural composition that we see today in the music of Tan Dun.

⁹³ Utz, *Musical Composition*, 40-41.

⁹⁴ Lau, "Fusion or Fission," 24.

⁹⁵ As of the time of this writing (November 2021) eight of the top ten music videos that have gone viral (millions of views) on YouTube in the shortest period of time were created by K-Pop artists, specifically BTS and BLACKPINK, between the years 2019-2021. See Marian Liu, Youjin Shin and Shelly Tan, "How K-Pop Conquered the Universe," *Washington Post*, accessed November 19, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/interactive/2021/kpop-bts-youtube-twitter-blackpink/>. See also YouTube Culture and Trends, "All-Time Top 24 Hour Music Debuts," accessed November 19, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/trends/records/?record=top-24-hour-music-debuts>.

⁹⁶ Deborah Wong, *Speak it Louder: Asian Americans Making Music* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 239.

Chapter 2 - Tan Dun: To a Borderless Language

*That's the future: a different way of approaching color, boundary-less, a unity of the soul.*⁹⁷

Tan Dun

*We should understand every composer as an individual.*⁹⁸

Tan Dun

*In Europe and even Japan, everyone thinks I'm an American composer... But in America I'm a Chinese composer.*⁹⁹

Tan Dun

2.1 Early Years in Hunan

Tan Dun was born in 1957 in Si Mao Chung, a village located on the banks of the Liuyang River, within the boundaries of the present-day city of Changsha, in China's Hunan province.¹⁰⁰ Tan's father, Tan Xiang Qiu, was a military officer and his mother, Fan Qu Ying, was a doctor.¹⁰¹ As a child growing up in Hunan, Tan was inspired by witnessing rites performed by shamans for funerals which took place at the cemetery near his childhood home.¹⁰² These shamans would evoke the spirits of past and future while creating sound worlds that Tan found captivating.¹⁰³ These religious ceremonies were a

⁹⁷ Joshua Barone, "Asian Composers Reflect on Careers in Western Classical Music," *New York Times*, July 23, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/23/arts/music/asian-composers-classical-music.html>.

⁹⁸ Hee Sook Oh, "Threnody and the Aesthetics of Interculturality in Twenty-First-Century East Asian Composition," *Acta Musicologica* 89, no. 2 (2017): 212.

⁹⁹ Frederick Lau, "Great Nation Emerges," 272.

¹⁰⁰ UNESCO. "An Interview with the newest UNESCO's Goodwill Ambassador Tan Dun" Accessed October 5, 2021, <https://en.unesco.org/news/interview-newest-unesco's-goodwill-ambassador-tan-dun>; Huang, Ting-Yao. "Selected Pieces by Six Taiwanese and Chinese Composers of the Twentieth Century: Ty-Zen Hsiao, Shui- Long Ma, Fan-Ling Su, Kwang-I Yin, Chen Yi and Tan Dun" (DMA diss., University of Washington, 2015). ProQuest (3724008), 69.

¹⁰¹ John O'Mahony, "Crossing Continents."

¹⁰² Nan Zhang, "Neo-Orientalism," 54.

¹⁰³ Wise Music Classical, "Composing Myself." See also China Through a Lens, "Tan Dun: A Musical Journey from East to West," accessed October 7, 2021, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/NM-e/81062.htm>.

blend of Buddhist, Taoist, and nature-worship traditions.¹⁰⁴ In Changsha, Tan also grew up with the ghost opera tradition, a form of Chinese theatre which “has three acts: you welcome the ghost, you entertain the ghost, then leave with the ghost.”¹⁰⁵

Tan was raised in Changsha during the rule of Mao Zedong in China. As a teenager during the Cultural Revolution, he was required to spend two years planting rice in the village commune of Huangjin, about three hundred kilometres northeast of Hong Kong.¹⁰⁶ Living in this rural area gave Tan an appreciation of the role of music in the daily activities of Chinese peasants.¹⁰⁷ After a tragic boating accident that killed several members of the Changsha Peking Opera’s orchestra, Tan was recruited as a violinist for the troupe, which toured and performed regularly throughout the province.¹⁰⁸ Two musical contexts with which Tan had extensive experience during his formative years were the use of music in ritual ceremony, and the use of music in stage drama. The influence of both would manifest in Tan’s compositions throughout his career.¹⁰⁹

2.2 Training at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing

In 1978 Tan Dun was one of thirty composition students admitted to the newly reopened Central Conservatory of Music (CCM) in Beijing, where he was a member of the first class of students to commence their studies after the Cultural Revolution. This was a time of cultural revival in China, and a time of discovery for Tan; prior to his arrival in Beijing at

¹⁰⁴ Ian Buruma, “Of Musical Import: East Meets West in the Art of Tan Dun,” *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 6, no. 5 (May 2008): 2.

¹⁰⁵ Buruma, “Musical Import,” 2.

¹⁰⁶ Frank J. Oteri, “Explore Tan Dun’s Story,” accessed 1 November 2021, <http://tandun.com/about/explore-tan-duns-story/>; See also Lau, *Music in China*, 103.

¹⁰⁷ Hung, “Western Media (Part I),” 604.

¹⁰⁸ Oteri, “Tan Dun’s Story.”

¹⁰⁹ Hung, “Western Media (Part I),” 602.

the age of eighteen he had never heard the music of European composers.¹¹⁰ Tan studied at the CCM from 1978 to 1986. One of his first compositions while studying at the Central Conservatory is a set of eight pieces for piano. This composition, *Eight Memories in Watercolour*, was composed in 1978. At that time, Tan was “immersed in studying Western classical and modern music, but was also homesick,”¹¹¹ and consequently, several melodies he integrates into these piano pieces are based on folksongs from Hunan. While at the CCM, Tan would occasionally travel home to Hunan to spend time with musicians and collect folk songs. In 1981 he traveled to a village in the Wuling Mountains populated by the Tujia ethnic minority, to learn from a renowned percussionist who created traditional music using stones.¹¹²

While studying at the CCM, Tan explored the then-commonplace approach of imitating Russian composers, but soon found that it was more natural and authentic to compose with his own creative voice, explaining: “we really don’t understand or feel the same way (...) Shostakovich or Tchaikovsky did.”¹¹³ In the early 1980s, along with fellow Chinese composers including Chen Yi, Zhou Long, Bright Sheng, Ge Ganru, Chen Yuanlin, Han Yong, Bun-ching Lam, Luo Jingjing, and Qu Xiaosong, this group came to be known in China as the *xin chao* (“new wave”).¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Shawn Mativetsky. “Comments by Tan Dun on His Music,” *Circuit* 12, no. 3 (2002): 36.

¹¹¹ Tan Dun, “Tan Dun - Eight Memories in Watercolor (for piano) (1979),” accessed October 7, 2021. <https://www.wisemusicclassical.com/work/33556/>.

¹¹² Tan Dun, “The Map: Concerto for Cello, Video and Orchestra,” July 10, 2004. <http://tandun.com/composition/the-map-concerto-for-cello-video-and-orchestra/>.

¹¹³ DocsOnline, “Chinese Classical Music: Interview Tan Dun,” April 3, 2011. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqWBfn1DgDo>.

¹¹⁴ Lau, *Music in China*, 102; See also Zheng, *Claiming Diaspora*, 149.

2.3 A Student and Avant-Garde Composer in New York

After completing his master's degree in composition at CCM in 1986, Tan moved to New York City to pursue his postgraduate studies at Columbia University through the US-China Arts Exchange, following a period of new openness in US-China relations after President Richard Nixon's visit to China in 1972.¹¹⁵ At Columbia, Tan studied composition with Chou Wen-chung (1923-2019).¹¹⁶ Chou Wen-chung was a generation older than Tan and had lived in the US since 1946, and his music blended Eastern and Western musical approaches seamlessly. Many of Chou's students saw him as a model for how to connect these musical traditions through their own compositions.¹¹⁷

In his dissertation for his Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) degree at Columbia, Tan Dun explored connections between Chinese artistic aesthetics and the work of Swiss painter Paul Klee, who actively sought to reconcile the form and content of music and visual art in his work. His culminating composition for the DMA degree was a ten-movement piece for orchestra titled *Death and Fire: Dialogue with Paul Klee* (1993), a work structured around a series of seven notes that are manipulated in a variety of ways. In his description of the types of musical thinking at play in *Death and Fire*, Tan points to the musicality of the Chinese language, the musical traditions of Chinese classical music (Peking opera in particular), Western Romantic music, and twentieth century musical modernism.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Columbia University, "Chou Wen-Chung (1923-2019)," posted October 30, 2019, <https://music.columbia.edu/news/chou-wen-chung-1923-2019>.

¹¹⁶ Columbia University, "Chou Wen-Chung.;" See also Huang, "Selected Pieces," 70.

¹¹⁷ Columbia University, "Chou Wen-Chung."

¹¹⁸ Tan Dun, "'Death and Fire': Dialogue with Paul Klee. An Analysis (with Volume II: Original composition)" (DMA diss., Columbia University, New York, 1993). ProQuest (9412852), 7-8.

During his studies at Columbia, in 1988 Tan developed a friendship with composer John Cage (1912-92). Cage became an important mentor for Tan, in large part due to their mutual interest in Chinese philosophy. Beginning in the early 1950s, Cage had been inspired by the ancient Chinese book *I Ching* and had used its hexagrams as a compositional tool in his compositions such as *Music of Changes* (1951).¹¹⁹ Cage provided Tan with sage and formative advice:

To be a good composer, you don't just need a good imagination, good technique, and good experience. The most important thing is: you need *courage*. You need *encouragement* from yourself.¹²⁰

Tan became active in the New York City downtown avant-garde scene during his time at Columbia, and the music he created in this community became increasingly free and experimental, sometimes radically so.¹²¹ This free avant-garde compositional style would become one of the many important colours in Tan's creative palette through his career, though as his success in the mainstream classical and film world grew, an avant-garde approach became less central to his compositional style. As he explained in 2006:

I wanted to espouse avant-garde ideas by smashing traditional institutions and methods. I wanted to shock people and make them feel that what they were seeing was incredibly original. I later realized that this thought was a little bit too outrageous.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Au Sau Woon Rebecca, "*I Ching* in the Music of John Cage, Chou Wen Chung, and Zhao Xiao Sheng" (PhD diss., The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2013). ProQuest (UMI 3586854), 26.

¹²⁰ Wise Music Classical. "Composing Myself." See also Mativetsky. "Comments," 38-9.

¹²¹ Eric Hung, "Tan Dun Through the Lens of Western Media (Part II)," *Notes* 68, no. 3 (March 2012): 659.

¹²² F. Paul Driscoll, ed. "The First Emperor: An Empire Reborn," in *The Metropolitan Opera 2006-07 Season Book*. (New York: The Metropolitan Opera Guild, 2006), 52.

2.4 Tan Dun's Career as a Concert Composer

Since the mid-1980s, Tan Dun has been a prolific composer and conductor of concert music, taking on many commissions, and exploring innovative approaches to performance. Over the past forty years, he has composed five operas, fourteen concertos, and a total of over fifty compositions for various combinations of orchestra, chamber ensemble, soloists, chorus, organic instruments (including water, paper, stone and ceramics), multimedia and beyond.

Tan Dun's music was well received in New York City. After having lived in America for only two years, he became the first composer from China to present his music at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall, in a concert by the New York City Symphony Orchestra on February 7, 1988.¹²³ The concert featured many Chinese American musicians and was financially supported by numerous Chinese cultural organizations in the community.¹²⁴

Several of Tan Dun's operas explicitly explore his concept of blending Chinese and Euro-American musics. His first opera, *Nine Songs* (1989), is a non-narrative series of songs in Chinese ritual opera form, based on poems by Qu Yuan.¹²⁵ It is written for nine vocal soloists (among which Tan Dun himself was one), chorus, percussionists, contrabassoons, and Chinese instrumentation including suona and pipa. In his next opera, *Marco Polo* (1995, libretto by Paul Griffiths), commissioned by the Edinburgh International Festival, Tan presents an avant-garde musical collage of styles from Europe, the Middle East, India, Tibet, Mongolia and China.¹²⁶ The character of Marco Polo is

¹²³ Zheng, *Claiming Diaspora*, 153.

¹²⁴ Zheng, *Claiming Diaspora*, 153.

¹²⁵ Tan Dun, "Nine Songs: Composition," accessed October 23, 2021.

<http://tandun.com/composition/nine-songs/>.

¹²⁶ Hung, "Western Media (Part II)," 661.

divided into two characters in the opera, one named Marco and the other named Polo. During their travels, these two characters interact with representations of other Western and Asian historical characters, including Dante, Kublai Khan, Li Po, Mahler, Sheherazada, Shakespeare, and others.¹²⁷ *Marco Polo* is an exploration of topics that are of significant importance for Tan Dun, with its principle characters' experience of journeying to a new continent and interacting with new cultures echoing Tan's own experience of migration and discovery in his move from China to America.¹²⁸ The opera is scored for nine vocal soloists plus chorus, along with a 45-piece Euro-American orchestra in addition to eleven musicians performing on musical instruments from the Middle East and Asia.¹²⁹

Tan's subsequent opera, *Peony Pavillion* (1998), is a modern interpretation of the Chinese kunqu opera of the same name by Tang Xianzu written in 1598.¹³⁰ Tan's version of this opera is an experimental blend of his many influences, including kunqu opera, Italian baroque opera, and modern pop music. It is scored for three vocal soloists, chorus, electronics, pipa, suona, xun, dizi and two percussionists, including drumset.¹³¹ His next opera, *Tea: A Mirror of Soul* (2002) is set in ninth century Japan and China, and it centers on a quest by two rival brothers. *Tea: A Mirror of Soul* is scored for six vocal soloists, a bass-baritone chorus, a Western orchestral string section, two winds, four

¹²⁷ Tan Dun, "Marco Polo," accessed December 1, 2021. <http://tandun.com/composition/marco-polo/>.

¹²⁸ Hung, "Western Media (Part II)," 660.

¹²⁹ Tan Dun, "Marco Polo."

¹³⁰ Yu-Yin Cheng, "Tang Xianzu's (1550-1616) Peony Pavilion and Taizhou Philosophy: A Perspective from Intellectual History," *Ming Studies* 67 (May 2013), 4.

¹³¹ Tan Dun, "Peony Pavilion (1998): Compositions," accessed October 23, 2021. <http://tandun.com/composition/peony-pavilion-1998/>.

brass, two harps, and a percussion section performing on European, Chinese, and organic (paper, water, and ceramic) percussion instruments.¹³²

Tan's most recent opera, *The First Emperor* (2006), was commissioned by The Metropolitan Opera (New York City). This work, a collaboration with co-librettist Ha Jin and producer Zhang Yimou, depicts a story from the life of Qin Shi Huang, China's first Emperor, who brought together the seven warring states into a unified China. The story hinges on Emperor Qin's quest to have his friend, composer Gao Jianli, compose an anthem that will help to unite China. The score of *The First Emperor* presents another new blend of Chinese and Western styles. The opera, sung partly in English and partly in Mandarin, features the influences of Peking opera performance as well as avant-garde idioms.

Building connections between Chinese and Euro-American musics has also been a common thread running through Tan's non-operatic concert music, which includes an extensive compositional output of works for orchestra and chamber ensemble. In one of his early chamber pieces, *In Distance* (1987), for piccolo, harp and bass drum, for example, he explores writing for European instruments with the playing techniques of comparable Asian instruments. Tan explains that in this piece, his writing for piccolo is inspired by Chinese bamboo flutes, his writing for harp is inspired by the Japanese koto, and his writing for bass drum uses the playing techniques of Indian drums.¹³³

Moreover, since at least the mid-1990s Tan has experimented with the use of organic materials as instruments in his concert works. In 1998 he completed his *Water Concerto for Water Percussion and Orchestra*, commissioned by the New York

¹³² Tan Dun, "Tea (Opera in 3 Acts)," New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 2002. Accessed October 23, 2021. <https://www.wisemusicclassical.com/work/33592/Tea-A-Mirror-of-Soul--Tan-Dun/>.

¹³³ Tan Dun, "In Distance," accessed November 11, 2021. <http://tandun.com/composition/in-distance/>.

Philharmonic.¹³⁴ This piece features an orchestra accompanying multiple percussion soloists who use struck and bowed percussion instruments together with other objects that are played in conjunction with a large bowl of water in front of them. The water is poured and splashed, the instruments are at times submerged, and the percussion elements interact with the water to create a diversity of timbral colours. Tan further explored this concept of blending the orchestra with organic materials in two subsequent concertos: *Paper Concerto for Paper Percussion and Orchestra* (2003), commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, and the *Earth Concerto for Ceramic Percussion and Orchestra* (2009), commissioned by Musik-Festival Grafenegg, Austria. Besides his concerti for organic percussion, Tan has also composed concerti for guzheng, pipa, violin, guitar, cello with bianzhong, piano, percussion, contrabass, piano with Peking opera soprano, and pizzicato piano (plucking the strings inside the piano).

A conductor who is very much in demand internationally, Tan has frequently led tours of China with visiting orchestras, and has led Chinese orchestras on tours of Europe.¹³⁵ His orchestral conducting engagements have included working with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, Filarmonica della Scala, Guangzhou Symphony Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, Münchner Philharmoniker, Japan's NHK Symphony Orchestra, Orchestre National de France, Philadelphia Orchestra, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Shenzhen Symphony Orchestra, among many others.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ For video clips from a Bilbao Symphony Orchestra rehearsal of Tan Dun's *Water Concerto*, see BOS - Orquesta Sinfonica de Bilbao, "2009-11-18 Ensayos Tan Dun con la BOS," 6 June 2012.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_6NUo9grMo&t=106s

¹³⁵ Tan Dun. "Official Biography," accessed November 18, 2021. <http://tandun.com/about/official-biography/>.

¹³⁶ Tan Dun. "Official Biography."

2.5 Tan Dun's Work as a Film Composer

Tan sees many parallels between his operas and his film scores. "Opera is ancient film," he has stated, "and film is future opera."¹³⁷ In China, Tan had scored twenty films, mostly dramas and love stories, while still a student at the CCM in Beijing.¹³⁸ In America, his earliest film work involved films that depict the twentieth-century history of China, including the documentaries *China in Revolution: 1911-1949* (1989, dirs. Kathryn Pierce Dietz and Sue Williams) and *The Mao Years: 1949-1976* (1994, dir. Sue Williams); the feature film *Nanjing 1937*, also known as *Don't Cry Nanking* (1995, dir. Ziniu Wu); and *In the Name of the Emperor* (1998 dir. Christine Choy and Nancy Tong). Tan's score for *In The Name of the Emperor* features solo and small ensemble performances by a group of five performers including Tan Dun, with instrumentation including voice, percussion, flute, guzheng and strings.

Tan's work on *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* took place in the middle of the twelve-year period from 1994 to 2006, during which he was most active as a film composer in America. His first Hollywood scoring project was Gregory Hoblit's thriller *Fallen* (1997), which follows the story of Philadelphia police detective Hobbs (Denzel Washington) on the trail of a supernatural killer who has the ability to pass his soul from one body to another through touch. Tan's score for *Fallen* features strings, woodwinds, choir, percussion, piano, saxophone and didgeridoo. At the moments in the film where we are seeing the world from the perspective of the killer, the score features dissonant strings, didgeridoo, and sound design that enhances the saturated filter and off-kilter

¹³⁷ Tan Dun, "Tea: A Mirror of Soul (Opera in Three Acts)," accessed October 23, 2021.

<http://tandun.com/composition/tea-a-mirror-of-soul-opera-in-three-acts/>.

¹³⁸ Jeff Bond, "Crouching Composer, Hidden Cellist," *Film Score Monthly* 5, no. 9 (November/December 2000), 45-46.

camera's point of view. When Hobbs and his nephew are on the run, the score brings in heavy percussion, as well as eerie waterphone textures. At the moment of the death of Hobbs' younger brother, Tan's score features a poignant melody on cello that is reminiscent of Yo-Yo Ma's performance in the main title sequence of *Crouching Tiger*. This cello melody heard at this section of *Fallen* is also featured in Tan's score for the 1995 documentary *Nanjing 1937* and in his *Symphony 1997: Heaven Earth Mankind*.¹³⁹

After *Fallen*, *Crouching Tiger* was Tan's next feature film scoring project, which we will examine in detail in Chapters Five and Six. Tan scored two more martial arts films in close succession after this: *Hero* (2002) and *The Banquet* (2006). *Hero* involved another collaboration between director Zhang Yimou and Tan Dun, who were also creating their opera *The First Emperor* during the production of the film. *Hero*'s storyline is in some ways a companion to that of *The First Emperor*, since both stories revolve around Emperor Qin at the end of the Warring States Period (third century BCE). In *Hero*, the protagonist is a nameless warrior played by Jet Li, who manages to kill the three most notorious assassins who have threatened the Emperor's life. Tan's score for *Hero* continues the overall compositional texture and aesthetic of its precursor, with its heavy reliance on bowed strings and East Asian percussion. Like the score for *Crouching Tiger*, the score for *Hero* features prominent solos performed by an internationally renowned string player (violinist Itzhak Perlman in *Hero*, and cellist Yo-Yo Ma in *Crouching Tiger*). In *Hero*, the orchestral textures are recorded by the China Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus, along with the Ancient Rao Ensemble of Changsha Museum. Compared with the

¹³⁹ Hung, "Western Media (Part II)," 662. *Symphony 1997: Heaven Earth Mankind* was written to commemorate the reunification of Hong Kong with mainland China, scored for symphony orchestra, ancient Chinese Bianzhong bells, children's chorus and solo cello, and was recorded by Yo-Yo Ma and the Hong Kong Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Tan Dun.

score for *Crouching Tiger* where vocal performances are heard only during the end credits, there are several sections in the score for *Hero* where either a female vocal soloist or a male chorus are featured. Additionally, significant energy and power is added to the score for *Hero* through performances by the taiko drumming group Kodō. One of the film's fight scenes features a diegetic performance on guqin in a rainy chess court, as the characters played by Jet Li and Donnie Yen envision the potential outcomes of the fight that they are about to have, and then proceed with a spectacular sword and spear fight. Like *Crouching Tiger*, the score for *Hero* has a central recurrent leitmotif that is referenced frequently throughout the film. The prominent use of leitmotif technique is a notable feature in Tan's score for *The Banquet* (2006).

The Banquet (2006, directed by Feng Xiaogang) carries on the tradition of awe-inspiring martial arts choreography and sweeping cinematography found in both *Crouching Tiger*, and *Hero*. In *The Banquet* we find a story of power and revenge set during China's Five Dynasties and Ten States period (eighth century CE), revolving around an uncle and a nephew, in a plot loosely adapted from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.¹⁴⁰ Like in his opera *The First Emperor*, *The Banquet* features a subplot related to the freedom and agency of artists in the context of imperial absolute power. Again, a Chinese orchestra (the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra in this case) provides the backbone of the score for *The Banquet*, with prominent bowed strings and percussion, but in this case the featured celebrated soloist is pianist Lang Lang, who had previously collaborated with Tan Dun on several projects. The diversity of Lang Lang's virtuosity is amply displayed in this score, ranging from delicate and soaring accompaniment for a lyrical vocal ballad

¹⁴⁰ "The Banquet Tan Dun and Lang Lang," December 21, 2008.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iL1THJyq2Aw>.

heard in the end credits, to being used as a counterpoint to the percussion in several fight sequences, with powerful call and response interplay. Peking opera style vocals are also featured prominently in the opening scene and throughout the score. The score for *The Banquet* also features music for string quartet in the classical style, at the allegro cue titled “Desire” (1:34.18 to 1:35.30). This intercultural referencing of court music reinforces the lavish imperial palace where this scene takes place.

Tan Dun has worked on film scores throughout his compositional career, and by the time he had begun work on this trilogy of martial arts films, he had spent over two decades refining not only his compositional voice and vocabulary, but also his capacity to respond musically to cinematic mood, meaning and storytelling on-screen. Tan Dun is among the few internationally successful film composers who have lived the double life of composing for both film and concert. Compared with most film composers of earlier generations, Tan has in fact put much more of his career emphasis on his concert music (as of this writing, for example, Tan’s website did not include his film scores among his list of compositions). Some of the most prominent film composers in the Golden Age of Hollywood (1930-50), such Austrian emigrés Max Steiner (1888-1971) and Erich Korngold (1897-1957), had begun their compositional careers writing operettas and grand opera, respectively.¹⁴¹ When Korngold decided to focus his energies on the composition of film music, he did so over the protest of his father, the prominent Viennese music critic Julius Korngold, who felt that writing film work was beneath the dignity of his prodigiously talented son.¹⁴² Notable Hungarian-American composer Miklós Rózsa

¹⁴¹ Richard Davis, *Complete Guide to Film Scoring: The Art and Business of Writing Music for Movies and TV* (Boston: Berklee Press, 2010), 28-29.

¹⁴² Ben Winters, *Erich Wolfgang Korngold’s The Adventures of Robin Hood: A Film Score Guide* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2007), 159.

(1907-95) decided early in his career that rather than striving to eke out an existence as a composer of concert works in an unstable Europe on the brink of war, he should instead relocate to California for the financial stability he felt he could find there as a composer of film music.¹⁴³ The celebrated Italian film composer Ennio Morricone found it challenging to strike a balance between working on film music and his experimental concert music, and while his film music has won him countless awards, he has stated that he continuously felt constrained by commercial forces as a film composer and that “barely five percent of the films that I have done are ones for which I succeeded in applying the music of my aspirations.”¹⁴⁴

While concert music may offer a composer more creative freedom than film music, given that it necessitates neither synchronization with picture nor collaboration with a larger creative team, the world of commissioned concert music, where Tan has spent most of his career, also carries its share of compromise and negotiation. As Tan explains,

You can't avoid being commercialized. I don't want to be, but I cannot resist it. I am pushed that way. If my name is not a brand of Chinese culture in the avant-garde, Peter Gelb is not going to be behind me at the Metropolitan Opera.¹⁴⁵

Perhaps Tan Dun's signature sound, then, is an intentional facet of his branding as an artist. An undeniable uniqueness is heard in his successful blend of Chinese traditional classical music with avant-garde Euro-American orchestral music. Tan's music also

¹⁴³ Rózsa, Miklós. *Double Life* (New York: Wynwood Press, 1982), 71-4. Some of the best-known films scored by Rózsa were the noir films *Double Indemnity* (1944, dir. Billy Wilder), *Spellbound* (1945, dir. Alfred Hitchcock), and *The Killers* (1946, dir. Robert Siodmak), as well as religious epics such as *Quo Vadis* (1951, dir. Mervyn LeRoy) and *Ben-Hur* (1959, dir. William Wyler). Rózsa did continue to compose many concert pieces throughout his career.

¹⁴⁴ Ennio Morricone and Sergio Miceli, *Composing for the Cinema: The Theory and Praxis of Music in Film* (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2013), 250.

¹⁴⁵ Buruma, “Musical Import,” 7.

manages, more often than not, to remain accessible to the mainstream, through his keen attention to orchestrational clarity and his powerful use of melody.

2.6 Accolades and Academic Life

Tan Dun has been the recipient of numerous international accolades, including Grammy, BAFTA, and Academy Awards for his score for *Crouching Tiger*. His second prize award in 1983 at the Dresden International Weber Chamber Music Competition, for his *String Quartet: Feng Ya Song*, was his first international award as a composer.¹⁴⁶ He also received the prestigious Grawemeyer Award in 1998 for his opera *Marco Polo*,¹⁴⁷ and is the recipient of the Bach Prize, Shostakovich Award, and Italy's Golden Lion Award for Lifetime Achievement.¹⁴⁸ He has also been named as a UNESCO Global Goodwill Ambassador.

Tan has also been the Artistic Director of the Tanglewood Contemporary Festival, and is the Honorary Artistic Director of the China National Symphony Orchestra.¹⁴⁹ In July 2019, Tan took on the role of Dean of the Bard College Conservatory of Music, where the US-China Music Institute is also located.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Hung, "Western Media (Part I)," 601.

¹⁴⁷ Tong Cheng Blackburn, "In Search of Third Space: Composing the Transcultural Experience in the Operas of Bright Sheng, Tan Dun and Zhou Long" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2015). ProQuest UMI 3687326, 179.

¹⁴⁸ Bard College, "Bard Appoints World-Renowned Composer and Conductor Tan Dun as Dean of the Conservatory of Music," accessed October 8, 2021. <https://www.bard.edu/news/details/?id=11915>.

¹⁴⁹ Bard, "Appoints." See also Ang Lee and James Schamus, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: Portrait of the Ang Lee Film* (New York: Newmarket Press, 2000), 142.

¹⁵⁰ Bard, "Appoints."

2.7 Tan Dun's "1+1=1" Philosophy of Music and Culture

As seen from Tan Dun's compositions, the ways in which intercultural composition can be expressed spans a considerable spectrum. How much space is given to each of the cultures that are interacting or intersecting? Which elements of each culture are being included as influences? Do the multiple interacting musics still retain their essential core elements and co-exist side-by-side? These are issues that will be among the core preoccupations of Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis.

Tan Dun describes his blend of Chinese music and Euro-American classical music as a process of bringing two systems together. He articulates this approach through his formula "1+1=1."¹⁵¹ As someone whose musical and personal life forms a bridge between Chinese and American cultures, Tan brings both traditions fully to bear on his own compositions, creating a new musical aesthetic in the process. Tan's musical expression, and the intercultural composition of numerous Chinese musicians of the past half century, represents something new that has not been heard before. Part of the goal of this intercultural composition, for Tan, is to break down boundaries between genres and between cultures.¹⁵² As an Asian American man, this represents Tan's integration of these two aspects of his own identity, and it is Tan's expression of the Taoist concept of "how to be yourself with the environment surrounding you."¹⁵³ Tan sees counterpoint and balance as concepts that can be brought to bear on relationships between notes, but also the relationship between stylistic and cultural influences in a piece of music, the counterpoint of different eras of music that influence a piece, as well as the counterpoint of "styles,

¹⁵¹ Wise Music Classical. "Composing Myself."

¹⁵² Wise Music Classical. "Composing Myself."

¹⁵³ Flipse, Eline, dir., *De oogst van de stilte*; 1995, Scarabee Films.

tempos, timbres, dynamics, structures.”¹⁵⁴ For musicologist Eric Hung, Tan’s 1+1=1 concept is about “using traditional techniques and sounds to rediscover the oneness of human beings with nature.”¹⁵⁵

What makes Tan’s “1+1=1” approach worth examining, however, is his idea that there are many places where the different traditions he knows can meet “naturally.” This raises all sorts of important aesthetic and cultural questions. After all, what does meeting “naturally” mean? Can all traditions meet “naturally” with other traditions? If not, what does one do with elements that do not meet “naturally”? What does a composer do when he needs to write music, such as *The First Emperor*, that portrays irreconcilable differences? More generally, is there any value to keeping musical traditions (and cultures in general) distinct?¹⁵⁶

Tan’s musical language is more complex than a mere integration of East Asian traditions with Euro-American traditions. To his work as an American composer, he brings his understanding of Chinese music aesthetics, idioms and instrumentation, and as a Chinese composer, he brings his understanding of the global orchestral music industry. But further, to his work as a mainstream composer of classical concert music he brings the freedom he has cultivated as a student of avant-garde and experimental music. To his work as a film composer, he brings the sense of musical structure and thematic development that he has developed as a concert and opera composer. He brought all of these influences to bear on the award-winning score he wrote for *Crouching Tiger*.

¹⁵⁴ Tan Dun, “Yi: concerto for Orchestra,” accessed 7 October 2021.

<http://tandun.com/composition/yi-concerto-for-orchestra/>

¹⁵⁵ Hung, “Western Media (Part I),” 616.

¹⁵⁶ Hung, “Western Media (Part II),” 666.

Chapter 3 - Survey of Music in Chinese Film: 1965-2000

3.1 Development of Hong Kong and Chinese Cinema

In this chapter, I explore a selection of music featured in martial arts and drama films set in China from the period 1965-2000, before the release of *Crouching Tiger*. Most of these films were created by Chinese or Hong Kong directors and scored by East Asian composers. They are among the most internationally popular films that influenced global impressions of Chinese culture in the late twentieth century, and thereby formed part of the cultural frame within which the global reception of *Crouching Tiger* must be understood. I explore both Chinese martial arts films as well as Chinese dramas here given that *Crouching Tiger* straddles these two genres. Further, Ang Lee's background as a director encompasses both drama and action films.

Hong Kong martial arts cinema rose to global popularity in the 1960s and 1970s, while filmmaking in mainland China was at a standstill due to restrictions imposed during the Cultural Revolution.¹⁵⁷ In the same way that Chinese musicians since the early twentieth century have studied music of various foreign cultures, so too have Chinese martial arts filmmakers drawn inspiration from international action film genres, notably Sergio Leone's Westerns and Akira Kurosawa's *jidai-geki* (period drama) films.¹⁵⁸ The plots of Chinese martial arts films are usually (and formulaically) set in motion by the idea of vengeance, and they gradually build to a final showdown between the narrative's

¹⁵⁷ Michael Eng, "Reforming Vengeance: Kung Fu and the Racial Melancholia of Chinese Masculinity," in *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Cinema*, eds. Carlos Rojas and Eilina Cheng-Yin Chow (New York: Oxford University Press 2013), 282.

¹⁵⁸ David Bordwell, *Planet Hong Kong: Popular Cinema and the Art of Entertainment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 2000), 206.

central protagonist and villain.¹⁵⁹ An eclectic mix of music is featured in martial arts films. When they are set in modern times, these films are often scored using American popular music genres, including funk and big band jazz. When they are set during China's Imperial periods, they tend to blend symphony orchestras with Chinese orchestras. Further, for Chinese drama films, the scores often blend Chinese folk and dramatic musical genres with Hollywood orchestral and synthesizer-based scoring (for information on instrumentation and musical genres used in these films, see Appendix 1, Music in Selected Popular Chinese and Hong Kong Martial Arts and Drama Films: 1965-2000).

Narratives in the martial arts genre unfold according to the aesthetics of two primary styles of storytelling, wuxia and kung fu. Wuxia stories typically portray Chinese sword-fighting adventures from the Ming Dynasty period (fourteenth to seventeenth centuries) and have their origins in Northern China. Kung fu stories, by contrast, are usually set in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and are a product of southern China.¹⁶⁰

3.2 Period Kung Fu and Wuxia Films

Intercultural composition can be seen throughout the history of Chinese film, where Hollywood scoring traditions are blended with Chinese musical aesthetics. In wuxia films, the music, acrobatics, and performers of Peking opera and Cantonese opera were frequently engaged.¹⁶¹ In Hong Kong cinema, Chinese opera films were popular until the

¹⁵⁹ Eng, "Reforming Vengeance," 279.

¹⁶⁰ Eng, "Reforming Vengeance," 282.

¹⁶¹ Ho-Chak Law, "King Hu's *Cinema Opera* in his Early *Wuxia* Films," *Music and the Moving Image* 7, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 32

mid-1960s, after which point the aesthetics of Chinese opera, particularly the percussion patterns and acrobatic set pieces, began to be applied to wuxia films.¹⁶² This inheritance of aesthetics from earlier dramatic mediums is also seen in Hollywood film, which is often scored with music inspired by opera, ballet, symphonic and chamber works of European composers of the Romantic era.¹⁶³ Composer Chou Lan-Ping (1924-71) wrote a compelling score for Chinese orchestra for *Come Drink With Me* (1966), the wuxia film that launched the career of Beijing-born director King Hu.¹⁶⁴ *Come Drink With Me* has been referred to as the film that “marked the birth of modern martial arts cinema.”¹⁶⁵ Multiple action moments in the film feature Peking opera drum and clapper patterns scored to synchronize with the pacing of the on-screen action. Using the then-fashionable convention for scoring fight sequences, Chou generally provides tense music for the buildup to a fight, but the music ends once the fighting begins, sometimes to resume when the fighting stops. This is in marked contrast to Tan Dun’s approach to scoring *Crouching Tiger*, in which much of the film’s most prominent music is heard during the fight scenes (see Chapter 6). For an example of this earlier, traditional sonic model for martial arts fight scenes, see Figure 3A.

The Jade Bow (1966, dir. Fu Chi), a wuxia film created in Hong Kong, tells the story of a young fighter seeking vengeance against an evil tyrant. Scored by composer Tien Tsao for symphony orchestra and Chinese instruments,¹⁶⁶ the film opens with a flashback

¹⁶²Law, “King Hu’s *Cinema Opera*,” 24-25.

¹⁶³ Roger Hickman, *Reel Music: Exploring 100 Years of Film Music*, 2nd ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2017), 45-57.

¹⁶⁴ Law, “King Hu’s *Cinema Opera*,” 26.

¹⁶⁵ George Chun Han Wang, “King Hu and Run Run Shaw: The Clash of Two Cinema Legends,” *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 4, no. 2 (2010): 127.

¹⁶⁶ Though primarily scored for symphony orchestra, *The Jade Bow*’s score also includes moments of featured solo Chinese instruments, such as the guzheng cues at 13.20-13.55 and 16.22-17.02.

<i>Cue #</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Action on screen</i>	<i>Music</i>
2	3.01- 3.31	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jade Faced Tiger shoots a dart at Cheng's soldier • Soldiers surrounding Jade Faced Tiger are shot by arrows from bandits • Soldiers look to hills and realize they are surrounded by bandits • Jade Faced Tiger displays his fan, draws sword • Soldiers and bandits slowly walk towards each other • Battle begins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winds and strings play Asus4 fermata chord plus plucked tremolo on pipa • Solo sustained pipa plucked tremolo • Two ensemble fermata chords orchestrated as before, plus cymbal crash • Ensemble plays 1-bar accented unison rhythm, roll on nanbangzi • Roll and crescendo on large drum and nanbangzi, plus ensemble chord • Music out
3	4.16- 4.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bandits close in on Cheng's carriage and kill the last remaining soldier • Jade Faced Tiger says "Master Cheng, please come with us." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plucked pipa tremolo and ensemble fermata, with plucked double bass quarter note passage • Music out

Figure 3A. *Come Drink With Me* Cue Sheet Excerpt

fight sequence featuring a blend of percussion in Chinese opera style, blended with tense up-tempo brass and string runs and accents reminiscent of Hollywood Golden Era film scores such as Erich Korngold's impactful Oscar-winning score for *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938, dir. Michael Curtiz and William Keighley). Interestingly, compared to later films in the wuxia and kung fu genres, *The Jade Bow's* fight scenes are nearly all underscored (as they are in Tan Dun's score for *Crouching Tiger*). Tien Tsao's orchestrational approach here shows that it was not uncommon for a composer working within the Chinese film industry at this time to favour the use of symphony orchestra over Chinese orchestra instrumentation.

From the same period, Chang Cheh's 1967 Hong Kong wuxia film *The One-Armed Swordsman*, features minimal scoring and uses both Western and Chinese instruments. The composer for this film was Wang Fu-ling (1926-89), whose prolific career included scoring over 225 films and television series during the period from 1952-87.¹⁶⁷ His eclectic score for *The One-Armed Swordsman* frequently uses percussion ostinati in scene transitions, as well as grand Hollywood Western-style brass and string cues for moments of building tension. As I discuss in Chapter 6, percussion ostinati are a compositional device also employed by Tan Dun in his score for *Crouching Tiger* (see section 6.1.1). In *The One-Armed Swordsman*, music serves to create tension before each fight in this film, but as in Chou Lan-Ping's score for *Come Drink With Me*, most fight sequences here are not accompanied by music.

Following the end of the Cultural Revolution and mainland China's economic reopening, martial arts film collaborations between Hong Kong and Chinese film production companies began to be possible.¹⁶⁸ The first such collaboration was *The Shaolin Temple* (1982, dir. Chang Hsin Yen), Jet Li's film debut, set in seventh century China. The film features minimalist scoring by Wang Li Ping (b. 1941), primarily for Chinese instruments (orchestra and small ensemble). Many of the fighting and training scenes in *The Shaolin Temple* do not feature music.¹⁶⁹ One generation older than Tan Dun, Wang is a pre-Cultural Revolution graduate of the Central Conservatory of Music in

¹⁶⁷ IMDb. "Fu-Ling Wang," accessed January 15, 2021. <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0910891/>.

¹⁶⁸ Nicolas Atkin, "How Jet Li turned the Shaolin Temple into a kung fu cash cow for China," *South China Morning Post*, June 26, 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/sport/martial-arts/kung-fu/article/3016095/how-jet-li-turned-shaolin-temple-kung-fu-cash-cow-china>.

¹⁶⁹ Fight scenes in *The Shaolin Temple* do occasionally feature music when the fighting performance is in "drunken" style, such as from 39.02-40.03.

Beijing, and his background included writing popular vocal music and Chinese opera.¹⁷⁰ In *The Shaolin Temple*, his main leitmotif is featured as a vocal song during the main title sequence, and is then performed as an instrumental melody throughout the score. This melody is featured prominently at the beginning and ending of the film, where it is sung in harmony by two male singers in an upbeat Broadway style, accompanied by Chinese plucked and bowed strings and percussion, and demonstrates Wang Li Ping's fluency as an intercultural composer.

After waning public interest in wuxia during the 1980s, director Tsui Hark helped to usher in a new wave of wuxia fantasy films beginning in 1990.¹⁷¹ Music by composers James Wong (1941-2004) and George Lam (b. 1947) plays a key role in the first film of the *Once Upon a Time in China* saga (1991, dir. Tsui Hark), which opens with a proliferation of diegetic music, including percussion accompaniment to a lion dance, followed by a performance on sanxian, erhu and yangqin in a tea house. This presentation of traditional Chinese music performances helps to establish the distinctiveness of Chinese musical aesthetics for non-Chinese film audiences. Diegetic performances of Chinese music are also featured in several scenes of *Crouching Tiger* (see Section 5.3). Subsequent non-diegetic cues in *Once Upon a Time in China* feature creative blends of Chinese small ensemble, baroque and classical string ensemble, as well as melodies played by guzheng, suona and pipa.

The Hong Kong kung fu film *Iron Monkey* (1993, dir. Yuen Woo-Ping) engages intercultural composition, and its composers are as comfortable with Hollywood scoring conventions as they are with Chinese traditional music and Peking opera percussion.

¹⁷⁰ Chen Nan, "Maestro weaved his magic to convey spirit of novel," *China Daily*, August 5, 2017. https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/weekend/2017-08/05/content_30348902.htm.

¹⁷¹ Bordwell, *Planet Hong Kong*, 208.

There is even a diegetic erhu performance when the title character practices erhu in his courtyard at dawn one morning. IMDb credits a multicultural collaborative team of composers for this score, made up of Hong Kong composers Gam-wing Chow, Johnny Njo, and Wai Lap Wu (b. 1937), as well as American composer James K. Venable (b. 1967).

<i>Cue #</i>	<i>Timing</i>	<i>Action on screen</i>	<i>Music</i>
19	45.18-46.24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut to medium shot of bandits approaching on horseback across desert • Cut to Blind Swordsman sitting at a table in a stable • Cut to Girl with Mule sitting alone in the sand • Cut to close up of Blind Swordsman drinking, and realizing he is surrounded • Fight begins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4/4 Ostinato on low drum and staccato strings; high synth pad; guitar chords on & of 4 every second bar • As above, now without guitar, plus half notes on high drum • Music continues as above • Music continues as above • Music out
20	46.58-49.43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut to Girl with Mule standing alone in the desert • Cut to Blind Swordsman looking to the sky while surrounded in battle • Blind Swordsman continues looking at the fighters surrounding him, motionless, sword drawn • Blind Swordsman swings his sword and resumes battle as more bandits arrive • Cut to Blind Swordsman standing with horse in a forested river (representing moment of being killed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low synth drone, low plucked string tremolo, single chord on acoustic guitar, high synth pad • Low synth drone continues, subtle ostinato on medium drum and staccato strings • Music as above is suddenly altered so that only the frequencies of the low EQ band remain • High and mid range EQ return, synth, percussion and string ostinato continues, with high range melody/solo in suona/electric guitar • All music elements suddenly replaced by a cappella chord that quickly fades. Music out

Figure 3B. *Ashes of Time* Cue Sheet Excerpt

Hong Kong director Wong Kar-wai's ambitious wuxia film *Ashes of Time* (1994) follows several fighters and assassins in a slow and gradually building plot set in the Gobi

desert. The film's sweeping score, by Frankie Chan and Roel A. Garcia makes elegant use of string ensemble, xiao, dizi, suona, guzheng, pipa, erhu, Middle Eastern percussion, guitar and synthesizer. Figure 3B provides cue-by-cue scoring details of the first battle scene in the film. This analysis demonstrates that at the time of this film's release, in 1994, six years before the release of *Crouching Tiger*, it was still a common convention in martial arts films not to accompany fight sequences with music. We see this in how the opening of this fight scene is treated, with music ending before the start of the first fight sequence from 46.24-46.58. However, this approach is altered during the second and larger fight in this scene, when from 49.07 to 49.43 the fighting is accompanied with a powerful and simmering underscore. This is interesting to compare to the extensive underscoring of fight sequences in *Crouching Tiger*, examined in Chapter 6.

3.3 Kung Fu Films Set in Contemporary Times

Set in contemporary times (1960s-70s), the highly popular martial arts films starring Bruce Lee were generally scored with a blend of Western classical orchestration and American popular styles including jazz, funk and rock. In Lo Wei's *Fists of Fury* (1972), Joseph Koo (b. 1933) provides a score that pivots back and forth between 1970s funk featuring electric guitar, bass, and drumset grooves, and more traditional romantic and suspenseful orchestral scoring. Released one year after the classic and influential blaxploitation action film *Shaft* (1971, dir. Gordon Parks), which had been scored by soul music star Isaac Hayes,¹⁷² Joseph Koo's musical approach for *Fists of Fury* can be seen as a balance between the emerging trend of popular music for action film, and the

¹⁷² Hickman, *Reel Music*, 313.

conventional orchestral approach to action scoring. Based in Hong Kong, Joseph Koo is an accomplished composer who gained familiarity with American popular music genres while studying at Boston's Berklee College of Music in the 1960s.¹⁷³ Almost all the fight scenes in *Fists of Fury* are musically unaccompanied, with the focus placed firmly on the action visuals and sound design.

As martial arts films gained popularity and influence internationally during the 1960s, soon American directors were also involved, such as in Bruce Lee's last and most famous film, *Enter the Dragon* (1973, dir. Robert Clouse), which Lee co-produced.¹⁷⁴ The big band jazz music heard in *Enter the Dragon*, scored by Argentine American composer Lalo Schifrin (b. 1932), includes some funk cues together with a mix of brass-heavy suspense cues reminiscent of the music that Schifrin wrote for the *Mission Impossible* series of films. His approach to evoking Chinese culture for this film while staying within his Hollywood style of scoring is revealing. For a cue titled "The Monk," Schifrin wrote pentatonic tone clusters rhythmically traded between piano and trombones, while percussionists playing timpani, bongos, congas, temple blocks and drumset were instructed to improvise freely in 6/4 time.¹⁷⁵ In the final group battle scene, set on an island, prominent percussion underscoring is heard. However, rather than featuring Chinese percussion as was common in wuxia films of this period, a jazz drum solo style predominates. This is perhaps fitting since although *Enter The Dragon* features many Asian actors and is set in Asia, it is more about the perspective of the film's American and European characters who are dealing with East Asian organized crime organizations.

¹⁷³ Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, "Honorary Doctorate: Joseph Koo Ka-Fai," accessed January 16, 2022. <https://www.hkapa.edu/honorary-awardees/joseph-koo-ka-fai>.

¹⁷⁴ Peter Bradshaw, "Enter the Dragon," *The Guardian*, December 6, 2013.

<https://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2013/dec/06/top-10-martial-arts-movies>

¹⁷⁵ Lalo Schifrin, *Music Composition for Film and Television* (Boston: Berklee Press, 2011), 45-47.

Schifrin's score therefore aptly reflects the film's Euro-American cultural orientation, with the addition of superficial and exoticized references to the melodies and rhythms of Chinese music.

After the untimely death of Bruce Lee in 1973 (shortly following the filming of *Enter the Dragon*), and with charismatic and acrobatically gifted Jackie Chan's subsequent rise to prominence as a leading Chinese martial arts actor, martial arts films more and more frequently incorporated comedic elements, both on-screen and in the score.¹⁷⁶ An early example of this is *Drunken Master* (1978, directed by Yuen Woo-Ping), which introduced a new sense of "farce, satire, buffoonery and slapstick"¹⁷⁷ to martial arts cinema. Scored by Chou Fu-liang, the musical cues alternate between genres including comedic cartoon-esque jazz and polka, Euro-American orchestral, and suspenseful cues using Chinese instrumentation.¹⁷⁸ However, the score for *Drunken Master* does not seek to blend any of these musical styles together within single cues in the score. Without integrating these musical cultures, the score for *Drunken Master* is therefore not intercultural. To refer back to Tan Dun's concept of $1+1=1$, this score could instead be said to follow a formula of $1+1=2$, as the musical ideas remain distinct from each other.

¹⁷⁶ Jackie Chan, like many martial arts performers, was trained from a young age in martial arts and also in Peking opera, as a student at the famous Yu Jim Yuen's Opera School. See Bordwell, *Planet Hong Kong*, 202. See also Vivian Lee, "Virtual Bodies, Flying Objects: The Digital Imaginary in Contemporary Martial Arts Films," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 1, no. 1 (2007): 10.

¹⁷⁷ Mary Farquhar, "Jackie Chan: A New Dragon for a New Generation," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 2, no. 2 (2008): 140.

¹⁷⁸ Chou's versatility as a composer put him in high demand, as he scored an impressive 245 films between 1967-1992. See IMDb, "Fu-Liang Chou," accessed January 15, 2022. <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0159450/>.

3.4 Chinese Drama Films

Italian filmmaker Bernardo Bertolucci's film *The Last Emperor* (1987) tells the story of Puyi during his youthful years as the emperor of China from 1908-1912, and in the decades that followed. The score, a collaboration by Ryuichi Sakamoto (b. 1952), David Byrne (b. 1952) and Cong Su (b. 1957), pivots tastefully between film scoring genres. For example, in the opening sequence the music pivots from ambient cascading synthesizer textures with atmospheric percussion, to dramatic Romantic string and orchestral cues with erhu melody and pipa accents, to diegetic chanting by monks in the Forbidden City. Despite the film's Orientalist presentation of Chinese culture and implausible English language dialogue, this resourceful team of cross-cultural composers won an Oscar for their ground-breaking, intercultural and powerfully evocative score. This multicultural (Japanese, American and Chinese) composition team presents a powerful model of bringing composers from various cultural backgrounds together to contribute their own unique voices and to learn from each other while scoring. When Sakamoto, Byrne and Su won the Academy Award for Best Original Score, it was the first time that a non-American or European composer would receive that honour. To date, Tan Dun and A.R. Rahman are the only other two Asian composers to win an Oscar.¹⁷⁹

Zhang Yimou's Oscar-nominated *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991), set in 1920s China, tells the story of a young woman who becomes the fourth mistress of a wealthy lord during China's "Warlord" period (1916-28). The film's title refers to the Chen family custom of

¹⁷⁹ IMDb, "Academy Award for Best Original Score," accessed March 31, 2022. <https://www.imdb.com/list/ls069474240/>. A. R. Rahman won an Oscar for his score for *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008, dir. Danny Boyle).

lighting a red lantern in front of the mistress with whom the master will spend the night. Zhao Jiping's music features cues with a cappella vocals and other cues using exclusively Peking opera percussion, with occasional atmospheric synthesizer pads. Multiple characters are musicians in the story, and the film's diegetic music includes singing and dizi playing, as well as vinyl records of Peking opera excerpts played on a gramophone. Zhao Jiping (b. 1945) has scored over fifty films and television series in his career, and has also composed concert music including symphonies, concertos, chamber music and a Peking opera.¹⁸⁰ After *Raise the Red Lantern*, Zhao Jiping scored the acclaimed film *Farewell My Concubine* (1993, directed by Chen Kaige). Following the twentieth-century career of two male opera singers in Beijing, Duan Xiaolou and Cheng Dieyi, the film explores topics of collective trauma, homosexuality and the life of performing artists, and features the performance of diegetic Peking opera and Kunqu opera music as part of the storyline. The minimalist score also features creative blends of Chinese music with electronic music, including suspenseful moments of ominous synthesizer textures blended with Peking opera percussion and suona (such as from 8.10-9.45). Solo dizi is heard at several points in the score as well. The score for Zhang Yimou's tragic mid-twentieth century drama *To Live* (1994), also by Zhao Jiping, intertwines its music with the diegetic music performed on sanxian, Chinese percussion and voice for puppet theatre throughout the story. As in many of Zhao's scores, he uses synthesizer as a primary harmonic texture, with a melodic motif played on either erhu or synthesizer at various points throughout the story, to bind the narrative together.

¹⁸⁰ Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, "Zhao Jiping," accessed January 15, 2022. <http://www.hkco.org/en/Other-Members/Zhao-Jiping.html>.

To conclude this overview, through the late twentieth century, prior to the production of *Crouching Tiger*, Chinese and Hong Kong cinema saw the establishment and evolution of a number of new film scoring conventions, some of which drew their inspiration from global intercultural influences. In many cases, these conventions included the integration of symphony orchestras with Chinese orchestras. Also, the norm of leaving fight sequences unaccompanied by music was generally followed, though a variety of creative musical elements were frequently used just before and after (and occasionally during) these sequences. The influence of Chinese opera, the dramatic storytelling genre which is Chinese cinema's direct ancestor, lives on in the music of Chinese film, particularly in composers' approach to percussion. Also, while most composers for Chinese film discussed here are from China or Hong Kong, numerous foreign composers – from Japan, Europe, North America, and elsewhere – have also scored Chinese film either as solo composers, or as members of intercultural composing teams.

Part 2:

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000)

Chapter 4 - Film Overview

4.1 A Transcultural Production

In a global film industry dominated by American content, Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* changed the conversation, garnering ten Oscar nominations,¹⁸¹ and becoming North America's highest grossing foreign-language film to date.¹⁸² This success gave birth to a new era in Chinese martial arts films and the academic and popular discourses surrounding them.¹⁸³ The film's score, composed by Tan Dun, won a Grammy Award for Best Soundtrack, a BAFTA Anthony Asquith Award for film music, and an Oscar for Best Original Score, among other international accolades.¹⁸⁴ *Crouching Tiger*, is based on a 1940s wuxia novel by Hong Kong novelist Wang Du Lu. It is the first in a series of five films released between 2000 and 2016 that share many of the same cast and crew members: *Crouching Tiger* (2000, dir. Ang Lee); *Hero* (2002, dir. Zhang Yimou); *House of Flying Daggers* (2004, dir. Zhang Yimou); *The Banquet* (2006, dir. Feng Xiaogang); and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: Sword of Destiny* (2016, dir. Yuen

¹⁸¹ In the March 2001 Academy Awards, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* won in the categories of Best Foreign Language Film, Best Art Direction, Best Cinematography, and Best Original Score.

¹⁸² Wu, Huaiting and Joseph Man Chan. "Globalizing Chinese Martial Arts Cinema: The Global-Local Alliance and the Production of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*." *Media, Culture & Society* 29, no. 2 (2007): 196.

¹⁸³ Vivian Lee, "Virtual Bodies, Flying Objects: The Digital Imaginary in Contemporary Martial Arts Films," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 1, no. 1 (2007): 9.

¹⁸⁴ IMDb, "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: Awards," Accessed March 1, 2022. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0190332/awards/>.

Woo-Ping). These films blend the martial arts action genre with fantasy in a way that portrays “even the most violent battles as beautiful ballets,” according to Eric Hung.¹⁸⁵

In part, *Crouching Tiger* was created with an international audience in mind. In terms of the many artists and companies who collaborated on its creation, *Crouching Tiger* is a transnational endeavour, as the list of the production companies involved reveals: China Film Co-Production Corporation (China), EDKO Film (Hong Kong), Zoom Hunt International Production Companies, Ltd. (Taiwan), Sony Pictures Classics (US), Good Machine International (US) and Columbia Pictures Film Production Asia (US),¹⁸⁶ Additionally, the five principal characters in the story are portrayed by actors from multiple regions of East Asia: Zhang Ziyi, who plays Jiaolong (Beijing), Michelle Yeoh, who plays Shu Lien (Malaysia), Cheng Pei-pei, who plays Jade Fox (Shanghai), Chow Yun Fat, who plays Li Mu Bai (Hong Kong), and Chang Chen, who plays Lo (Taiwan).¹⁸⁷ Additionally, the two creators on whose work I am particularly focused in this thesis, composer Tan Dun and director Ang Lee, identify themselves as part of the Chinese diaspora in America. Prior to *Crouching Tiger*, both Tan and Lee had both worked on Hollywood films that had no explicit Chinese connection. Tan Dun had scored Gregory Hoblit’s thriller *Fallen* (1997),¹⁸⁸ and Lee had directed several critically acclaimed films in the US including *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), *The Ice Storm* (1996) and *Ride with the Devil* (1999). Lee has subsequently directed a number of successful Hollywood films in a variety of genres, including *Hulk* (2003), *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), *Lust, Caution* (2007), and *Life of Pi* (2012).

¹⁸⁵ Hung, “Western Media (Part II),” 662.

¹⁸⁶ Lee and Schamus, *Portrait of the Ang Lee Film*, 140-44.

¹⁸⁷ Lee and Schamus, *Portrait of the Ang Lee Film*, 18.

¹⁸⁸ See Appendix 2 for Tan Dun’s filmography.

Intercultural collaboration is also characteristic of the screenwriting team for *Crouching Tiger*, which involved James Schamus (America), Wang Hui Ling (Taiwan), Tsai Kuo Jung (Taiwan), and director Ang Lee (Taiwan). At the beginning of their international careers, Lee and Schamus had collaborated on a series of three films in which the characters navigate the multiple and intersecting cultural and family expectations that characterize East Asian and American society: *Pushing Hands* (1991), *The Wedding Banquet* (1993), and *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994).¹⁸⁹

Clearly the creative crew that collaborated on *Crouching Tiger* was experienced in the cinematic traditions of both China and North America. As a result, they were able to create a film that is not only rooted in the East Asian cultural heritage of many of the artists involved in the film's creation, but which is also highly attuned to the tastes of the global film market. As they did so, the filmmaking team was required to work within the parameters of the Hollywood system, as Ang Lee describes: "Hollywood financed it, Hollywood was responsible for the aesthetics. I use a lot of language that's not spoken in the [Q]ing Dynasty. Is that good or bad? Is it Westernization or modernization? (...) In some ways modernization is Westernization"¹⁹⁰

Interestingly, the film's international success was not matched in the box offices of mainland China, where *Crouching Tiger's* story and martial arts cinematography were not seen as particularly innovative, but rather a modern interpretation of familiar action

¹⁸⁹ These three Ang Lee films include *Pushing Hands* (1991), *The Wedding Banquet* (1993), and *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994). See Wei Ming Dariotis and Eileen Fung, "Breaking the Soy Sauce Jar: Diaspora and Displacement in the Films of Ang Lee," in *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*, eds. Sheldon Hsiao-Peng Lu, 187-220 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997).

¹⁹⁰ Kenneth Chan, *Remade in Hollywood: The Global Chinese Presence in Transnational Cinema*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009, 79.

sequences seen in Chinese film for at least three decades prior.¹⁹¹ Moreover, the accents of several of the principal actors –Michelle Yeoh and Chow Yun-Fat's Cantonese accents and Chang Chen's Taiwanese accent–were seen by Chinese audiences as inaccurate in portraying the intended regions of origin of their characters.¹⁹² The transnational collaboration that produced *Crouching Tiger* brought a story of Qing Dynasty China that had first been told in a Hong Kong novel in the 1940s and was presented as a wuxia film using action choreography techniques that had evolved over many preceding decades of Chinese martial arts cinema. Yet, to global audiences, *Crouching Tiger* was received as fresh, innovative, exotic, and a transcultural triumph.

4.2 Narrative Structure

The following section summarizes the actions of the main characters during the story of *Crouching Tiger*, which is organized into three acts.¹⁹³ Act 1 (0.00-53.00) is set mostly in Beijing. At the outset of the film, we meet several of the principal characters. Li Mu Bai, a renowned martial arts master, visits Shu Lien at her home and it is clear that they may hold an unfulfilled love for each other. Mu Bai tells Shu Lien that he has chosen to end his martial arts training. He gives Shu Lien his sword, the Green Destiny, an ancient and powerful weapon, and asks her to deliver it to their mutual friend, Sir Te, in Beijing. Shu

¹⁹¹ Sheldon H. Lu, "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, Bouncing Angels: Hollywood, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Transnational Cinema," in *Chinese Language Film: Historiography, Poetics, Politics*, eds. Sheldon H. Lu and Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), 227.

¹⁹² Lu, "Crouching Tiger," 227.

¹⁹³ As a cursory overview of the film's story, this section, of necessity, misses much of the nuance and beauty of this film. It is strongly recommended to watch the film in its entirety.

Lien makes the delivery in Beijing, and while there she is introduced to Jiaolong,¹⁹⁴ an aristocrat's daughter who has recently moved to Beijing and is about to be married. That night, the Green Destiny sword is stolen from Sir Te's house by a masked thief. Shu Lien, awakened by the commotion, pursues the thief across the rooftops of Beijing (this sequence, and its accompanying musical cue, 'Night Fight,' are discussed in detail in Chapter 6). The thief, whose martial arts skills and training prove to be an even match for Shu Lien, escapes with the sword. In the ensuing days, Shu Lien realizes that the masked thief is in fact Jiaolong, and that Jiaolong's governess is the renowned criminal Jade Fox. Mu Bai arrives in Beijing and is eager to seek revenge against Jade Fox, who had murdered Mu Bai's master years before.

After Jade Fox kills a police inspector who had also traveled to Beijing to seek revenge against her, Jiaolong decides to return the Green Destiny sword to Sir Te's house. At this point, Jiaolong's identity as the masked thief is still being kept secret from the authorities by Shu Lien and Mu Bai, in order to protect Jiaolong's honour. When Jiaolong returns the sword, Mu Bai pursues her, and offers to help her complete her martial arts training, a gesture that Jiaolong nonetheless refuses. Both Mu Bai and Shu Lien are drawn to Jiaolong, whose youthful energy "reminds them of the romance and freedom that neither of them has experienced."¹⁹⁵ The next morning at dawn, as Mu Bai is practicing with the Green Destiny sword in the courtyard, Shu Lien speaks with him. It is clear that they both wish to settle down and build a quiet life together. However, concerned that Jiaolong will become a master criminal if not given proper guidance and training, Mu Bai

¹⁹⁴ Jiaolong has the same pronunciation as the Mandarin word for dragon, 小龍 (xiǎolóng). See Mary Farquhar, "Jackie Chan: A New Dragon for a New Generation," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 2, no. 2 (2008): 139.

¹⁹⁵ Chan, *Remade in Hollywood*, 82.

asks Shu Lien to be patient with him as he tries to steer Jiaolong toward the proper path (this scene is accompanied by the cue ‘Yearning of the Sword,’ discussed in Chapter 6). Act 1 ends as Jiaolong’s former lover, Lo, sneaks into her room and asks her to run away with him.

Act 2 (53.00-1:12.30) unfolds as a flashback to Jiaolong’s memory from four years earlier, in the Gobi Desert and Mongolia. As Jiaolong’s family’s convoy travels through the desert, they are attacked by bandits led by Lo, who steals Jiaolong’s jade comb from her hand. Like the theft of the Green Destiny sword in Act 1, it is the theft of this comb that sets Act 2 in motion. After an extensive chase and a fight between Jiaolong and Lo, they both collapse from exhaustion. Awakening to her astonishment in Lo’s home, a well-furnished mountain cavern, Jiaolong tries to escape, but to no avail. Lo cares for her and in time they embark on a passionate love affair. After a period of seemingly blissful life together in the mountains, Jiaolong decides to return to her family, promising Lo that they will be reunited again in the future. In turn, Lo pledges to live an honest life that will earn her parents’ respect. The corresponding musical cue in Tan Dun’s score, ‘The Eternal Vow’ (discussed in Chapter 6), is featured prominently to accompany a sequence of scenes of their love affair.

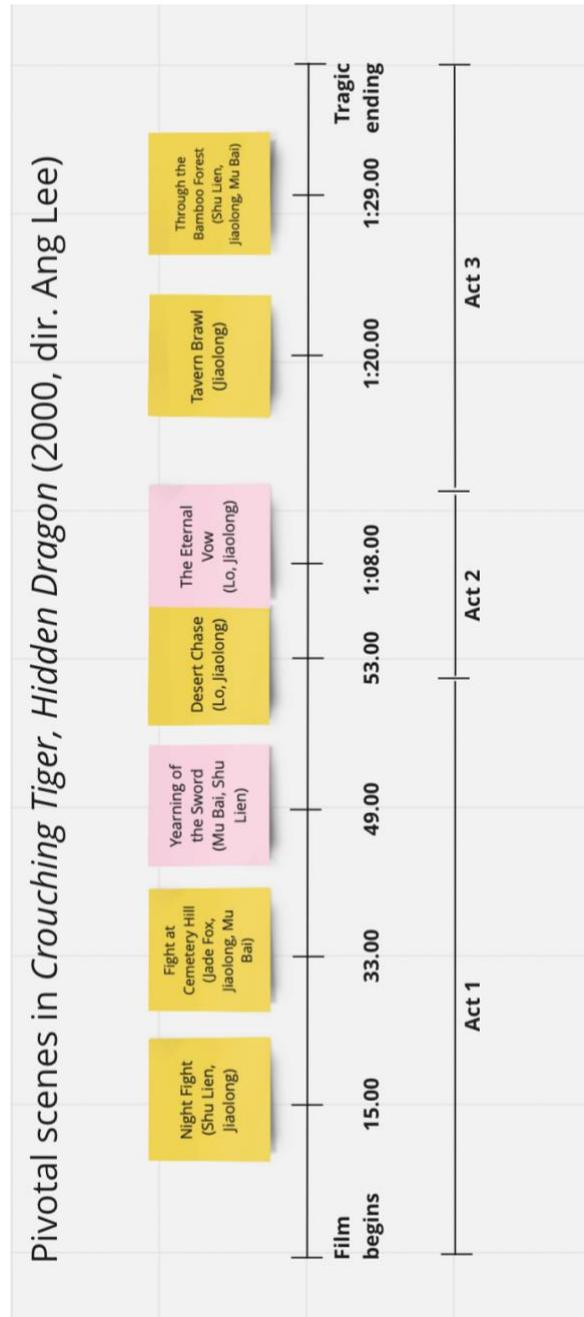
Act 3 (1:12.30-1:55.10), returns to the same timeline as Act 1, following Jiaolong’s prolonged flashback. Picking up in the same scene where Act 1 ended, in Jiaolong’s chamber, she tells Lo to leave and never return. The next scene takes us to Jiaolong’s wedding parade in Beijing, in celebration of her arranged marriage to Gou Jun Pei. Lo attacks the parade, shouting for Jiaolong to return to the desert with him. Lo is stopped by Shu Lien and Mu Bai, who instruct him to go to Wudan Mountain. That night, Jiaolong once again steals the Green Destiny sword and leaves Beijing alone. Upon discovering the

theft of the Green Destiny and Jiaolong's disappearance, Shu Lien and Mu Bai leave Beijing to search for her. Meanwhile in a tavern, Jiaolong humorously pummels a large crowd of male fighters, who are no match for her superior fighting skills. Shu Lien returns home to her village compound and Jiaolong arrives there, first seeking consolation and support. When Shu Lien tells Jiaolong that Lo is waiting for her at Wudan Mountain, Jiaolong is furious, believing that Shu Lien and Mu Bai are trying to control her. Jiaolong and Shu Lien duel, and when Shu Lien has her blade at Jiaolong's neck, she hesitates, and Jiaolong slices Shu Lien's arm. At this moment Mu Bai arrives and pursues Jiaolong into a bamboo forest.

Mu Bai and Jiaolong duel in the bamboo forest, and when Mu Bai retrieves the Green Destiny sword from Jiaolong, he requests once again that she become his student. When she again refuses, Mu Bai throws the Green Destiny sword over a waterfall. Jiaolong dives to retrieve it, and after almost drowning, her unconscious body is taken away by Jade Fox, who had been watching and waiting nearby. Mu Bai is unable to pursue the pair immediately, and by the time he finds them, Fox has left Jiaolong drugged in an abandoned factory. While Mu Bai revives Jiaolong, Shu Lien arrives, having tracked Fox, who emerges from the shadows of the abandoned factory, firing poison darts. Fox is killed, but only after one of her darts has pierced Mu Bai's neck. Jiaolong tells them that she knows how to prepare an antidote for the poison, and rushes to find the ingredients, leaving Shu Lien and Mu Bai to wait for her return with the antidote. Mu Bai and Shu Lien at last profess their deep and eternal love for each other, and Mu Bai dies in his beloved's arms. Jiaolong arrives with the antidote, but too late to save Mu Bai. As an epilogue, Jiaolong travels to Wudan mountain to reunite with Lo. Soon after, she jumps off the

mountain, living out a myth that Lo had once shared with her, that those who jump from the mountain will have their wish granted.

Figure 4A. Pivotal scenes in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, all of which feature music. Yellow cards (15.00, 33.00, 53.00, 1:20.00 and 1:29.00) are fight scenes and pink cards (49.00 and 1:08.00) are love scenes. These scenes and their corresponding musical cues are discussed in detail in Chapter 6.



4.3 Portrayal of Gender Roles

A central theme in *Crouching Tiger*, and a source of tension within the plot, are the gender constraints imposed on women during the Imperial period of China's history. Prior to implementing social reforms in the twentieth century, women and girls in China had no economic independence or property rights, and were expected to submit to the complete authority of their father or husband.¹⁹⁶ This cultural enforcement of submission had physical implications in Imperial China as well, such as forcefully binding the feet of young women, a practice associated with ideals of beauty, which was increasingly common throughout China from the thirteenth century until the early twentieth century.¹⁹⁷ In traditionally patriarchal Chinese society, women were expected to demonstrate sexual chastity and fidelity, while men were at liberty to pursue promiscuous and polygamous relationships at will, including integrating multiple concubines into their households.¹⁹⁸ Despite this enforced submission of women, there were rare examples of women holding significant power in Imperial China, including the notable examples of Empress Wu Zetian, who ruled China from 690-705 A.D., as well as Empress Dowager Cixi, who was in power from 1860-1908.¹⁹⁹

During the Tang Dynasty (618 A.D. – 907 A.D.), a new genre of martial arts literature emerged featuring stories of female knight-errants, or woman warriors, known in Mandarin as *nüxia* (swordswomen).²⁰⁰ These stories, while often written by male

¹⁹⁶ Hsü, *Rise of Modern China*, 69.

¹⁹⁷ Wang Ping, *Aching for Beauty: Footbinding in China* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 29-33.

¹⁹⁸ Rey Chow, *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography and Contemporary Chinese Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 68.

¹⁹⁹ X.L. Woo, *Empress Dowager Cixi: China's Last Dynasty and the Reign of a Formidable Concubine* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2002), 5.

²⁰⁰ Ngo Sheau-Shi, "Nüxia: Historical Depiction and Modern Visuality," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 20, no. 3 (2014): 7–26. See also Stephen Teo, "The 'Missing' Female Knight-errant in Hong Kong Action Cinema 1965-1971: Back in Critical Action," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 4, no. 2 (2010): 143-54.

scholars, told of female action heroes who were “portrayed as saviors of the imperial nation who were capable of resolving military conflict with their physical strength and intelligence.”²⁰¹ Often in nüxia stories, a female character receives special martial arts training from a young age and develops supernatural abilities, such as being able to fly or effortlessly scale trees, similar to Jiaolong’s character in *Crouching Tiger*.²⁰² The ongoing popularity of these fantastical nüxia stories is in part due to the fact that they subvert China’s dominant patriarchal ideology, by portraying women as powerful independent agents possessing physical strength superior to their male opponents. As Chinese cinema developed, nüxia characters were introduced successfully in film, for example in many of the roles played by Cheng Pei-Pei in films such as *Come Drink With Me* (see section 3.2 above), *The Golden Swallow* (1968, dir. Chang Cheh), *The Flying Dagger* (1969, dir. Chang Cheh), and *The Shadow Whip* (1971, dir. Lo Wei), among others.²⁰³ This came at a time when, in line with socialist objectives of collective work, Chinese Communist Party messaging was promoting the concept that “women can do anything that men can do.”²⁰⁴

In *Crouching Tiger*, women fighters feature prominently in eight of the film’s ten fight sequences, and three of the four martial arts masters in the story are women (Jiaolong, Shu Lien, and Jade Fox). I turn now to an analysis of how each of these three characters subvert patriarchy within the film. Shu Lien is a martial arts master who runs a security company, a role deemed culturally appropriate for her gender in Imperial China only because she has taken over her father’s business following his death, and since no

²⁰¹ Ngo, “Nüxia,” 10.

²⁰² Ngo, “Nüxia,” 10.

²⁰³ Arthur Tam, “Cheng Pei-pei on Ang Lee and Her Iconic Roles with Shaw Studios,” March 31, 2015. <https://www.timeout.com/hong-kong/film/cheng-pei-pei-on-ang-lee-and-her-iconic-roles-with-shaw-studios>.

²⁰⁴ Kimberley Ens Manning, “Embodied Activisms: The Case of the Mu Guiying Brigade,” *The China quarterly* 204, no. 204 (2010): 851.

other male relative was able to fulfill these family and business obligations.²⁰⁵ Jiaolong, the daughter of a high-ranking official, is expected to remain cloistered in her home, watched over by her governess and practicing activities such as calligraphy while awaiting an arranged marriage to a suitably appropriate husband.²⁰⁶ However, this patriarchal order is subverted throughout the film's plot: Jiaolong's governess is a criminal who secretly trains her in martial arts; Jiaolong abandons her family's convoy to pursue a love affair with a notorious bandit; Jiaolong abandons her husband on her wedding day, to roam the countryside, dressed as a man, fighting anyone who gets in her way. Additionally, gender norms are subverted by the film's antagonist, Jade Fox, who uses violent and destructive means in her pursuit of gender justice. When Mu Bai tells Fox that he is seeking revenge for her murder of his master, Fox responds:

Your master underestimated us women. Sure, he'd sleep with me, but he would never teach me. He deserved to die by a woman's hand!²⁰⁷

The gender roles seen in this modern Chinese film must also be interpreted in the context of current gender equality struggles in China. Despite Beijing hosting the landmark UN World Conference on Women in September 1995,²⁰⁸ at the time of the release of *Crouching Tiger* in 2000, women in China still faced discrimination and violence. Women who face violence in China have limited legal protections due to the persistence of a traditional view that domestic violence is an internal family affair not

²⁰⁵ Rosemary Roberts, *Maoist Model Theatre: The Semiotics of Gender and Sexuality in the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 192.

²⁰⁶ Susan L. Mann, *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 10.

²⁰⁷ Lee and Schamus, *Portrait of the Ang Lee Film*, 67.

²⁰⁸ UN Women, "Fourth World Conference on Women," accessed April 2, 2022. <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html>.

requiring government interference.²⁰⁹ Women in rural regions of China today continue to have less access to education than their male counterparts,²¹⁰ and young women in China at the turn of the twentieth century were widely treated as disposable labour for China's export industries.²¹¹

Other prominent heroines in Chinese martial arts film plots involving incredibly powerful (if also typically underestimated) female or queer fighters include Golden Swallow in *Come Drink With Me* (1966, dir. King Hu), Yang Hui-zhen in *A Touch of Zen* (1971, dir. King Hu), and Murong Yang/Murong Yin in *Ashes of Time* (1994, dir. Wong Kar-wai). However, *Crouching Tiger*, takes this idea farther than other martial arts films, in that it contains no fight scenes *without* women fighters, and the most intense fight scenes are those between women. This centering of women as action heroines in an Oscar-winning Hollywood film can be considered a sign of things to come in Hollywood action films generally. Released in close proximity to films such as *Charlie's Angels* (2000, dir. McG) and *Kill Bill* (2003, dir. Quentin Tarantino), it was also a precursor to modern Hollywood action films featuring women not just as side characters but as the featured action protagonists, such as *Salt* (2010, dir. Phillip Noyce), *Haywire* (2011, dir. Steven Soderbergh), *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015, dir. George Miller), *Wonder Woman* (2017, dir. Patty Jenkins), *Captain Marvel* (2019, dir. Anna Boden and Ryan Fleck), and *Black Widow* (2021, dir. Cate Shortland), among others.²¹²

²⁰⁹ Fei Qi, Yuqi Wu and Qi Wang, "Anti-Domestic Violence Law: The Fight for Legal Rights in China," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 26, no. 3 (2020): 383.

²¹⁰ Jingjun Hao, Peng Zhang and Wei Yu, "Gender Differences in Rural Education in China," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 27, no. 1 (2021): 67-68.

²¹¹ Melissa Wright, *Disposable Women and Other Myths of Global Capitalism* (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 35.

²¹² It is important to note that female action heroines were not entirely unknown in pre-2000 Hong Kong films such as *Yes, Madam* (1985, dir. Corey Yuen), nor in pre-2000 Hollywood films such as *Alien* (1979, dir. Ridley Scott) and *The Fifth Element* (1997, dir. Luc Besson), for example. See Gladys L. Knight,

In summary, *Crouching Tiger* is set during a period in China's history when women faced physical and legal repression and were expected to be subservient to male family members. The film was released in 2000, at a time when many forms of gender inequality were still part of the daily reality for women in China. However, *Crouching Tiger* expands on the *nüxia* storytelling genre, by placing three supernaturally strong women at the centre of the action. By projecting an imagined level of power and agency onto Chinese women historically, this film is part of an ongoing cinematic movement of bringing women into more prominent roles as action heroes.

Female Action Heroes: A Guide to Women in Comics, Video Games, Film and Television (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2010).

Chapter 5 - Music Summary

5.1 Musical Approach and Orchestration

Tan Dun's score for *Crouching Tiger* was recorded by the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, the Shanghai National Orchestra and the Shanghai Percussion Ensemble, with featured soloists Yo-Yo-Ma (cello), Ma Xiao Hui (erhu), Tang Jun Qiao (bawu, dizi), David Cossin (percussion), Alim Jan (rawap), and Coco Lee (voice).²¹³ This score explores intercultural composition by intertwining the aesthetics, structure and instruments of Chinese, European and Hollywood orchestral traditions.²¹⁴ Tan uses the symphonic string section to provide a harmonic foundation for many of the film's cues, and he foregrounds bawu, cello, dizi, erhu, nanbangzi and pipa (as well as English horn and rawap, to a lesser extent), as shown in Figure 5A.²¹⁵ The bawu and cello are featured extensively as melody instruments: over half of the cues in the film feature melody by one or both of these instruments.

This two-hour film involves nearly seventy minutes of music (i.e., almost two-thirds of the film), and the longest musical cues in the film are those heard in either fight scenes or love scenes. Of the eight cues listed in Figure 5A that are longer than three minutes in duration, five are fight scenes and three are love scenes. Chapter 6 offers a close reading of Tan's scoring of these scenes. Tan composed all the music in the film, with two exceptions. First, when Jiaolong meets Lo in the desert and chases him to

²¹³ Lee and Schamus, *Portrait of the Ang Lee Film*, 144. Unfortunately, not all instrumental soloists are named in this source. See also China Daily, "Uygur Music Lives," July 20, 2004. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/culture/101658.htm>.

²¹⁴ Finchum-Sung, "Aesthetics of Interculturality," 8.

²¹⁵ See also Yu Xiaohang, "Crouching Tiger Cello Concerto – A Melding of Form and Content for the Concert Stage," DMA diss, University of Kentucky, 2021.

Cue #	Timing	Melody Instrument(s)	Leitmotif(s) Used
1	0.11-2.00	cello, bawu	
2	2.24-4.49	bawu	Green Destiny theme
3	4.50-6.19	pipa	Green Destiny theme
4	11.05-11.33	bawu	Green Destiny theme
5	14.51-20.55	bawu, nanbangzi, paigu, dagu	Green Destiny theme
6	23.25-23.40	serial bells	Green Destiny theme
7	27.27-28.56	bawu, cello	Green Destiny theme
8	33.13-38.50	full orchestra	Green Destiny theme
9	42.07-42.53	pipa	
10	43.17-46.48	bawu, string section, pipa	Green Destiny theme
11	48.40-52.02	erhu, cello	
12	52.48-56.08	English horn, string section, pipa	Lo's theme
13	57.21-59.32	pipa, rawap	
14	1:01.54-1:02.32	cello, pipa	Love Before Time theme
15	1:07.38-1:09.16	cello, erhu,	Love Before Time theme
16	1:09.30-1:12.25	rawap, erhu, cello	Love Before Time theme
17	1:13.08-1:13.54	suona	
18	1:13.59-1:16.27	full orchestra, pipa, dizi	
19	1:17.54-1:18.28	dizi	
20	1:23.11-1:24.55	dizi	
21	1:25.57-1:27.38	bawu	Green Destiny theme
22	1:30.10-1:34.34	paigu	
23	1:35.10-1:39.04	bawu, string section,	Green Destiny theme
24	1:43.37-1:44.04	full orchestra	
25	1:44.04-1:47.22	string section, bawu	Green Destiny theme
26	1:48.51-1:56.27	cello	Love Before Time theme
27	1:56.28-1:59.56	voice	Love Before Time theme

Figure 5A. Cue-by-cue melody instruments and leitmotifs used in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

retrieve her comb, we hear a recording of Ning Yony's arrangement of the traditional Xinjiang folk song 'Caravan Bells on the Silk Road,' performed by Liu Bo on the ruan, accompanied by tar drum.²¹⁶ In the second instance, the pop ballad 'A Love Before Time,' sung by Coco Lee (composed by Jorge Calandrelli in collaboration with Tan Dun), is heard during the end credits.

5.2 Leitmotifs

Leitmotifs are recurring melodic themes that are used in dramatic musical storytelling to draw the listener's attention to particular characters (and their personae and character traits), situations, or plot elements.²¹⁷ Film music inherited the concept of the leitmotif from the nineteenth-century opera tradition (that of Wagner, in particular),²¹⁸ and film composers often develop their leitmotifs in subtle ways over the course of a film score with a kind of "developing variations" technique,²¹⁹ such that "the material is transposed, fragmented, and reorchestrated to fit the specific dynamics of the new scene ...[yet] remains recognizable to the audience as stemming from the initial idea."²²⁰ Indeed the use of the leitmotif was extremely common among film composers of Hollywood's Golden Age (ca. 1930-60), as Claudia Gorbman explains:

The major unifying force in Hollywood scoring is the use of musical themes (...) The thematic score provides a built-in unity of statement and variation, as well as a semiotic subsystem. The repetition, interaction and variation of musical themes throughout a film contributes much to the clarity of its dramaturgy and to the clarity of its formal structures.²²¹

²¹⁶ Lee and Schamus. *Portrait of the Ang Lee Film*, 144. Liu Bo is the Principal of Ruan in the Shanghai National Orchestra. See Shanghai Chinese Orchestra, "Liu Bo: Ruan," accessed March 13, 2022. <https://www.shchineseorchestra.com/en/musician/liu-bo/>.

²¹⁷ Martin Geck, *Richard Wagner: A Life in Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 57.

²¹⁸ Matthew Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif* (Cambridge University Press, 2015).

²¹⁹ Martin Scherzinger, "Wagner Redux: Badiou on Music for the Future," *Contemporary Music Review* 31, nos. 5-6 (2012): 461-85.

²²⁰ Ben Newhouse, *Creative Strategies in Film Scoring* (Boston: Berklee Press, 2020), 69-70.

²²¹ Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music* (London: British Film Institute, 1987), 90-91.

There are two principal leitmotifs that Tan Dun uses in his score for *Crouching Tiger*: one is associated with the Green Destiny sword (see Figure 5B), and the second represents the love between Jiaolong and Lo, which I refer to as the ‘Love Before Time’ theme (see Figure 5C). The Green Destiny theme is heard (either in its entirety or referenced as melodic fragments) in eleven of the twenty-seven cues in the film. The Love Before Time theme is used less frequently, but it is heard in five cues as well as in the end credits. Both leitmotifs begin with an ascending perfect fifth, an attention-grabbing opening interval found frequently in well-known themes from the film music canon, including the opening notes of John Williams’ main theme for *Star Wars* (1977, dir. George Lucas).

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
Green Destiny Theme

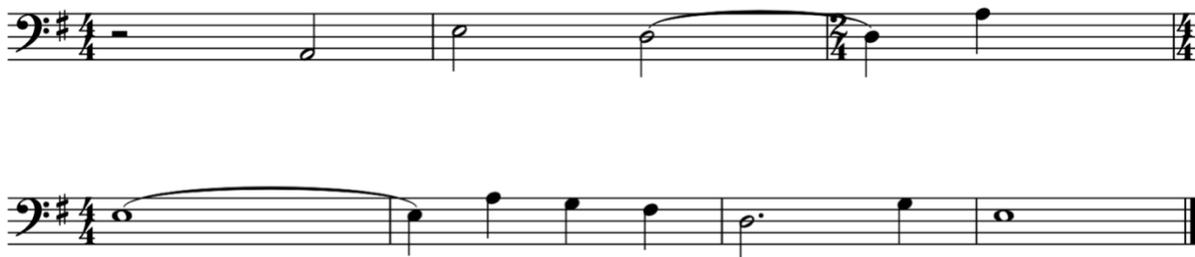


Figure 5B. Green Destiny Theme

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
Love Before Time Theme



Figure 5C. Love Before Time Theme

Following in the path of James Horner's score for the film *Titanic* (1997, dir. James Cameron), and comparable to innumerable films that have featured theme-based scores since the earliest days of sound cinema,²²² the Love Before Time theme, heard in four earlier cues in the film, develops into the vocal ballad 'A Love Before Time,' heard during the end credits of *Crouching Tiger*. This song, co-composed by Jorge Calandrelli and Tan Dun, is sung by Coco Lee. This is comparable to James Horner's transformation of his 'Rose' leitmotif into Celine Dion's immensely popular – if also much maligned²²³ – performance of 'My Heart Will Go On,' featured in the end credits of *Titanic*.²²⁴ The *Titanic* soundtrack was the overall highest-selling album of 1998.²²⁵ Hopes of similar success were likely a consideration for decision-makers at Sony when enlisting Jorge Calandrelli to enhance an already star-studded soundtrack, aware as they would have

²²² Kathryn Marie Kalinak, *Settling the Score Music and the Classical Hollywood Film* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 185-86.

²²³ See for example Carl Wilson, *Let's Talk about Love: Why Other People Have Such Bad Taste* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).

²²⁴ James Horner, *Titanic: Music from the Motion Picture*. Sony Classical. Released November 18, 1997, Spotify.

²²⁵ Davis, *Complete Guide*, 196.

been of the film soundtrack's potential as a profitable marketing tool.²²⁶ By 2000, Calandrelli, an Argentine American arranger, composer, and producer, had 12 Grammy nominations to his credit, and had worked with artists such as Celine Dion, Madonna, Quincy Jones, and Sting.²²⁷ 'A Love Before Time' was so well received that Coco Lee was invited to perform it at the Academy Awards show.²²⁸ The song was released as two separate tracks on the soundtrack album, an English and a Mandarin version, both performed by Coco Lee. Opening with solo cello melody, the song soon establishes a sultry ballad groove, with guitar and percussion elements reminiscent of Calandrelli's work with Latin stars such as Gloria Estefan, Enrique Iglesias and Marc Anthony. Coco Lee's vocals are accompanied by strings, backup singers, and rhythm section.

5.3 Diegetic Music

Diegetic music – heard *within* the film's narrative frame; i.e., music that can be heard by the characters on screen – can be found near the beginning of each of the film's three acts. In Act 1, upon arrival in Beijing, Shu Lien rides her horse through the streets of the city on her way to the home of Sir Te. As she passes through a busy city square, she sees and hears the percussion accompaniment for a sword fight scene in a Peking opera performance (5.30-5.51). This diegetic percussion is double tracked (heard simultaneously) with, and quickly replaced by, Tan's non-diegetic underscore from the string and brass sections playing the Green Destiny theme. Peking opera music is heard again sixteen minutes later (22.32-22.53), as Bo passes through the city streets while

²²⁶ Rob Davis. "The Sounds of Commerce." *Film Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (2000): 55.

²²⁷ Jorge Calandrelli, "About," accessed April 2, 2022. <https://www.jorgecalandrelli.com/about>.

²²⁸ Arar Han and John Hsu, eds. *Asian American X: An Intersection of Twenty-First Century Asian American Voices* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 187.

investigating the theft of the Green Destiny sword. Here, we hear and see a jinghu (small bowed lute) on screen, as well as percussion, including a jingluo (small hand-held gong).

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon

Lo's Theme



Figure 5D. Lo's Theme

In Act 2, during Jiaolong's flashback to the period when she lived in the Mongolian desert with her lover Lo, a leitmotivic theme associated with Lo's character is heard (see Figure 5D). A sweeping statement of this theme is first played by the bowed strings in octaves (55.18-56.06), performed against a plucked countermelody on rawap, as Jiaolong chases Lo on horseback to retrieve the comb that he has just stolen. Lo's theme is then heard again, diegetically, hummed by Lo as he roasts meat over a spit (1:01.04-1:01.21), just before Jiaolong strikes him on the head with a rock, knocking him out. Undeterred, Lo also sings an extended version of this melody later in the second act (1:04.49-1:05.40), this time with lyrics, and here the song becomes an important element of the plot. Lo has prepared a bath for Jiaolong in his cavern. Since they still do not yet trust one another, Lo promises that he will sing while she bathes, so that she will know where he is. This interplay between diegetic and non-diegetic music is interesting, since Lo's theme is initially presented in the underscore, and then emerges later in the diegetic narrative.

In Act 3, immediately following the end of Jiaolong's flashback to the desert, we arrive at the subsequent scene, Jiaolong's wedding parade (1:13.08-1:14.00). The wedding

parade features diegetic suona and drums, similar to parades portrayed in Chinese film in the past, including the opening scene of the wuxia film *One-Armed Swordsman* (discussed in Chapter 3). Finally, diegetic music is heard as Jiaolong enters a tavern where musicians are performing on dizi and erhu, and with vocal music (1:20.01-1:21.58). Following this overview of Tan's orchestration, leitmotifs, and the use of diegetic music in the film, we will now proceed to an analysis of specific cues in the film score.

Chapter 6 - Score Analysis

6.1 Scoring Martial Arts Action Scenes

Crouching Tiger blends the film genres of martial arts and drama. Choreographer Yuen Woo-Ping, who had honed his craft as a director and action choreographer of dozens of Chinese martial arts films beginning in 1972, throughout his career working on high-profile Hollywood film series including *The Matrix* (1999, dir. Lana Wachowski and Lilly Wachowski) and *Kill Bill* (2003, dir. Quentin Tarantino), was a key member of the film's creative team.²²⁹ Yuen's sensitivity to creating graceful and powerful martial arts sequences on screen were combined with director Ang Lee's expertise in crafting dramatic narrative, demonstrated in his Oscar-winning period drama *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), as well as in his 'Father Knows Best' film trilogy (1991, 1993, 1994).²³⁰ As a result, *Crouching Tiger* features both powerful action scenes and tragic and evocatively dramatic love scenes. Since these are also the scenes in which music is featured most prominently in the film, they therefore serve as the basis of my analysis in this chapter. The following pages provide a close analysis of Tan Dun's scoring and intercultural composition in eight action scenes and two dramatic love scenes.

There are ten fight scenes in *Crouching Tiger*, and music is featured in all of them. It is in these scenes that many of the most extended and continuous musical cues of the film are found. In this chapter I explore Tan Dun's three primary orchestrational approaches in these fight scenes: scoring primarily for Chinese percussion (Act 1, Scene 8

²²⁹ IMDb. "Woo-Ping Yuen." Accessed February 17, 2022. <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0950759/>. See also Vivian Lee, "Virtual Bodies, Flying Objects: The Digital Imaginary in Contemporary Martial Arts Films," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 1, no. 1 (2007): 12.

²³⁰ Informally known as his 'Father Knows Best' trilogy, these three films explore the conflicts between modern society and traditional values: *Pushing Hands* (1991), *The Wedding Banquet* (1993), and *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994).

and Act 3, Scenes 7 and 13); full orchestral scoring (Act 1, Scene 16; Act 2, Scene 1; Act 3, Scene 2; and Act 3, Scene 18); and scoring primarily for the bowed string section of the symphony orchestra (Act 1, Scene 20 and Act 3, Scene 14). Tan's music matches the emotion, intensity and scope of each fight scene, an approach to scoring that film music scholar and composer Michel Chion terms "empathetic music."²³¹

The music featured in the film's ten fight scenes constitute seven of the fourteen tracks featured on its official soundtrack.²³² (For a full summary of scenes and music cues in *Crouching Tiger*, see Appendix 3.) This is in notable contrast to earlier Chinese martial arts films, where the convention was often to present fight scenes without underscoring. (For examples, see Appendix 1: Music in Selected Popular Hong Kong and Chinese Martial Arts and Drama Films 1965-2000.)

6.1.1 Percussion Ensemble

Arguably the most aggressive and rhythmically powerful scoring for the film is heard in three of the fight scenes involving Jiaolong. These include her fight with Shu Lien (Act 1, Scene 8), her tavern brawl (Act 3, Scene 7), and her duel with Shu Lien (Act 3, Scene 13). Two of these scenes feature only women, and the fight scene which also features men (Act 3, Scene 7) depicts Jiaolong massively outnumbered by a crowd of male fighters whom she nonetheless defeats forcefully, as none of them can match her fighting skills. Appropriately then, in the cues for the fight scenes between Jiaolong and Shu Lien, the

²³¹ Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, trans. and ed. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 8.

²³² Tan, Dun, *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon - Original Motion Picture Soundtrack* with Yo-Yo-Ma (cello), Coco Lee (voice), David Cossin (percussion), Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Chen Xie-Yang, Shanghai National Orchestra & Shanghai Percussion Ensemble. Sony Classical SK 89347, released November 14, 2000, iTunes.

music is performed almost entirely by the predominantly female Shanghai Percussion Ensemble.

Intro to 'Night Fight' Cue

The first fight scene of the film (Act 1, Scene 8)²³³ is scored primarily for percussion, except for its introduction, which is scored for bawu and the string section of the symphony orchestra. Over the next several pages I will analyze the introduction to this cue and will subsequently describe the parts of this cue and other action cues which feature percussion. This first fight scene and the associated cue (heard from 14.51-20.55 and titled 'Night Fight' in the soundtrack),²³⁴ takes place on the night after Shu Lien and Jiaolong's first meeting. In this scene, a masked thief (Jiaolong) steals the Green Destiny sword and is pursued across the rooftops and through the hutongs (narrow streets) of Beijing by Shu Lien, before escaping. It should be noted that the filmic pursuit of chase sequences across tiled city rooftops had been explored previously in several martial arts films (*Come Drink With Me* and *Iron Monkey*, for example).

The music of the 'Night Fight' cue enters as we see Jiaolong preparing for bed in her chamber (14.51). This shot is accompanied by a slow rubato solo melody played on bawu, a Chinese free reed flute. Solo cello, and then string ensemble, provide support for the bawu melody. Tan has explained that his use of the bawu in this score is intended to provide leitmotif-like signification for the primary villain of this story, Jade Fox.²³⁵ The

²³³ The music and sound design used in the scene 'Night Fight' is also discussed in detail in James Buhler and David Neumeier, *Hearing the Movies: Music and Sound in Film History*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 480-82.

²³⁴ All timecodes for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* noted in this thesis refer to the YouTube timecodes for the film, which can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUfMIGK_s9s&t=5906s.

²³⁵ Bond, "Crouching Composer," 47.

tone and timbre of the bawu is somewhere between the sound of a bamboo flute and that of a clarinet. For Tan, it is an instrument that symbolizes secrecy, mystery and opium.²³⁶ Jade Fox was present in this scene immediately prior to the beginning of this cue, as she is Jiaolong's governess, and has just left Jiaolong for the night. The audience does not yet know that Jiaolong's governess is in fact the notorious criminal Jade Fox, nor that Fox has been training Jiaolong in the secrets of Wudan martial arts.²³⁷

Following the shot of Jiaolong preparing for bed, the scene pivots to a quiet and serene aerial shot of the rooftops of Beijing at night. At this point the cue progresses to an A dominant-seventh chord to build tension, orchestrated for solo bawu melody with string orchestral accompaniment. This point in the cue provides a good example of Tan Dun's intercultural compositional style. With its sliding tones and glissandi, the bawu's D minor melody evokes the subtle aesthetic colours of Chinese music and instrumentation for the listener. The string section, with celli and double basses featured prominently, provides expressive support for the bawu's melody. These low strings add an ominous feeling to the cue, perhaps akin to the way in which the shark motif in *Jaws* (1975, dir. Steven Spielberg), also played on low strings, sends a foreboding chill down the spine.²³⁸ These low-register instruments also bring a colour palette of the European symphony orchestra to the score, one that has historically differentiated it, sonically and expressively, from Chinese orchestras. Prior to the twentieth century Chinese ensembles rarely included harmonic or melody instruments in the bass register. It was only with the

²³⁶ Bond, "Crouching Composer," 47.

²³⁷ Wudan is a school of martial arts in which Li Mu Bai has trained, but this school does not allow women to be trained. In this scene, several of the moves used by the masked thief (Jiaolong) make it clear to Shu Lien that the thief has been trained in Wudan martial arts (by Jade Fox, who stole the Wudan manual after killing Mu Bai's master).

²³⁸ Mervyn Cooke, *A History of Film Music* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 461.

invention of instruments such as the *laruan* and *bass laruan* (bowed stringed instruments) that Chinese orchestras began to fill out their lower registers, perhaps due in part to the incursion of European aesthetic tastes that favored a lower and broader pitch range.²³⁹

Returning to the ‘Night Fight’ scene, as the musical tension begins to slowly build, the next shots at street level show Bo, Sir Te’s head of security, as he greets a night patrol and then notices a rustling sound on the rooftops behind him. At this point in the cue, the low strings sustain a D pedal (resolving the A7 chord), and the *bawu* melody ends, replaced at first by accents on *guzheng* (21-string zither) and rhythms on *nanbangzi* (woodblock). These dramatic gestures and changes in orchestration correspond directly to developments on-screen, as at 15.23 we transition from a serene evening of routine night patrols to a tilt-and-follow shot of the thief hanging from rafters and sneaking into Sir Te’s study through an upper window, to steal the Green Destiny sword.

Musical Motivic Gesture in Scoring

In his use of the *guzheng* and *nanbangzi* here, we see Tan’s concept of musical motivic gesture at play. Tan defines motivic gesture as:

a short phrase in which various musical parameters cooperate to create a distinctive emotive effect ... It is thus more powerful and more interesting than an ornament. It is usually smaller, and more free, than a ‘theme.’²⁴⁰

The celebrated Italian film composer Ennio Morricone (1928-2020)²⁴¹ has referred to the importance of employing such motivic gestures in film music, using the helpful terms

²³⁹ Xi, *Chinese Music*, 66-7.

²⁴⁰ Tan Dun, “Death and Fire,” 13

²⁴¹ Morricone’s over 500 film scores include, notably, *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly* (1966, dir. Sergio Leone), *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968, dir. Sergio Leone), *Cinema Paradiso* (1988, dir. Giuseppe Tornatore), *The Mission* (1986, dir. Roland Joffé), and *The Hateful Eight* (2015, dir. Quentin Tarantino).

“reduction of thematic materials,” “extreme autoreduction,” and “small, incisive melodies.”²⁴² A compositional concept used in film scoring, motivic gestures of this kind are also common in Peking opera performance where each character’s choreographed movements are organized into precise gestures.²⁴³

We hear prominent gestures from 15.23-15.36, in the ‘Night Fight’ cue, where Tan has written a series of C4 (middle C) notes for the guzheng player, each time pitch-bending the note upward and then muting it. At this point in the score there are no other melody instruments present, and this motivic gesture on guzheng is therefore heard in the musical foreground. This specific gesture is particularly evocative of Chinese culture for several reasons. Plucked stringed instruments are a large and diverse family of instruments in Chinese music, and they are featured in the substantial plucked string section of the Chinese orchestra.²⁴⁴ This section is one of the main differentiating tonal features of the Chinese orchestra relative to the European symphony orchestra, whose stringed instruments are much more frequently bowed than plucked, with the exception of the harp (and pizzicato moments or passages in the string section). Therefore, in this cue, using the guzheng as a featured instrument following the bawu shows Tan’s continuous use of Chinese instruments in the musical foreground, with European instruments in the background. Further, the guzheng’s pitch-bending “sliding tone” is common in both Chinese music and in the tonal inflections of Chinese speech. As Nancy Yunhwa Rao explains:

[the sliding tone] is ubiquitous in Chinese folk songs, other vocal traditions, and in ... instrumental music. In fact, elegant or graceful slides are often of

²⁴² Morricone and Miceli, *Composing for the Cinema*, 192-93.

²⁴³ Bordwell, *Planet Hong Kong*, 202.

²⁴⁴ Some of the plucked string instruments that are often included in a Chinese folk orchestra include: pipa, liuqin, zhongruan, daruan, yangqin (hammered), guzheng, konghou, and sanxian. See Xi, *Chinese Music*, 5, 15.

great relevance to musical expressions, and as indications of a musician's artistic control they frequently distinguish a good performer from an ordinary one.²⁴⁵

In addition to the guzheng's gesture at this point in the cue, we also hear the nanbangzi present a rhythmic theme and variation in the tempo of the ensuing chase and fight sequence. This rhythmic motif is subsequently featured from 15.23 until the rhythmic tag cadence and transition at 19.08. The nanbangzi, a high-pitched wooden percussion instrument, also evokes a characteristic sonority commonly found in Chinese music styles. For example, the ban, a high-pitched wooden clapper with a comparable tone to that of the nanbangzi, is a percussion instrument featured prominently in various forms of Chinese opera.²⁴⁶

These two motivic gestures on guzheng and nanbangzi are accompanied by sustained low strings, and they establish a sense of increasing momentum and tension, while on screen the masked thief crosses Sir Te's study to where the Green Destiny sword is on display, wraps it in cloth, ties it on her back and rushes to the door to exit. When the door to Sir Te's study suddenly opens from the outside and Bo enters, a cluster chord in the upper strings swells, providing a dissonant foreshadowing of an imminent confrontation.

Rhythmic Motif for Paigu and Dagu

At the moment of confrontation between Bo and the masked thief, the musical cue transitions again, and all instruments that had previously been playing are replaced by

²⁴⁵ Rao, "Henry Cowell," 124.

²⁴⁶ Po-wei Weng, "If You Can Recite it You Can Play It: the Transmission and Transcription of Jingju (Peking Opera) Percussion Music," *Journal of Chinese Oral and Performing Literature* 35, no. 2 (December 2016): 96.

drummers performing on paigu (multiple medium and small Chinese drums) and dagu (large Chinese drum). From here until the end of the scene the orchestration for the cue consists exclusively of these drums, performed by the Shanghai Percussion Ensemble.²⁴⁷ This driving mid-tempo pulsing rhythmic music follows a scoring approach commonly heard accompanying Hollywood action scenes since at least the 1990s. For Hollywood composers, whether using percussion or synthesizers, the use of steady driving rhythms at medium or fast tempos enables the music to reinforce the action sound effects (i.e. hits, heavy breathing, shouting, explosions, etc.) while also having an orchestrational simplicity and transparency that avoids interfering with any dialogue.²⁴⁸ This musical restraint allows for the sound effects and dialogue to provide clear sonic cues which guide the viewer's interpretation of often fast-paced action on screen. As Michel Chion explains, without the sound effects that mark each physical blow in an action scene, the audience would easily lose track of the visual images of the violence inflicted: "What we hear is what we haven't had time to see."²⁴⁹

Tan opts to introduce the drums into this scene at the precise moment of confrontation between Bo and Jiaolong, using a layered, imitative, and interlocking pattern with staggered entrances akin to a canon. As seen in Figure 5.1, the four drummers enter one at a time, one bar after each other, with all but the dagu player playing an adapted version of the same rhythm. This layering of instrumentation serves to gradually thicken and strengthen the texture of the groove. Jiaolong easily overcomes Bo in their brief duel, and then flees to the rooftops to escape. Bo raises the alarm, waking those

²⁴⁷ For a glimpse of the Shanghai Percussion Ensemble in performance, see: "Standing Dragons and Leaping Tigers," December 12, 2010. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9XXO2IHqGjM>.

²⁴⁸ Buhler and Neumeyer, *Hearing the Movies*, 424-25.

²⁴⁹ Chion, *Audio-Vision*, 61.

within earshot, including Shu Lien. This leads to Shu Lien’s rooftop pursuit of Jiaolong, which continues for the rest of this scene until their final fight in a large courtyard. Throughout the scene, the four drummers perform various ornamentations embellishing this primary rhythmic motif, enhancing the momentum and energy of the on-screen action.

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon
 'Night Fight' - Drum entrance

Music by Tan Dun
 Performed by Shanghai Percussion Ensemble

♩=130 15.50

Figure 6A. The entrance of the drums as the first fight of ‘Night Fight’ begins (15:50: Jiaolong and Bo in the doorway of Sir Te’s study).

At just over six minutes in length, the ‘Night Fight’ cue is long. To break it up, there is a pause in intensity halfway through the scene, as Bo abandons his fruitless pursuit of Jiaolong (unlike Jiaolong and Shu Lien, Bo is incapable of supernaturally flying across Beijing’s rooftops). At this moment there is a ten-second break in the drumming, from 17:35 to 17:45, during which time the nanbangzi solo returns, executes an expressive ritardando, then begins a single stroke roll that crescendos to the downbeat of the drums’

re-entry, now heard at a faster tempo of 141 bpm). As the scene reaches its climax with Jiaolong and Shu Lien beginning their courtyard fight, a military-style rhythmic cadence is heard from 19.07 to 19.11, after which point the drummers begin a series of five new ornamented rhythmic motifs, which gradually accelerate until a tempo of 164 bpm is reached at the end of the scene.

'Night Fight' Cue Summary

In summary, Tan Dun's 'Night Fight' cue can be broken down into five parts: establishing the setting of Beijing at night (14.51 to 15.23, scored for bawu and string section); theft of the sword (15.23 to 15.49, scored for nanbangzi, guzheng and string section); fight between Jiaolong and Bo (15.49 to 17.05, scored for paigu and dagu); Shu Lien's pursuit of Jiaolong (17.05 to 19.17, scored for paigu and dagu); and Jiaolong and Shu Lien's courtyard fight (19.17 to 20.55, scored for paigu and dagu). Here, Tan has followed Hollywood scoring conventions of accompanying suspense with dissonant strings, and accompanying action with rhythmic percussion. As we have seen, however, his orchestration of these Hollywood conventions uses Chinese instruments in the foreground throughout the 'Night Fight' cue.

Playful Dizi and Percussion for a Tavern Brawl

Later in the film, Tan employs a similar percussion-based scoring approach in two other fight scenes: Act 3, Scene 7 and Act 3, Scene 13. In Act 3, Scene 7, Jiaolong has run away from her family and is traveling through the countryside. When she stops at a tavern for lunch and is accosted by a large group of fighters who ask her to instruct them in the

martial arts, but the scene spirals into a brawl.²⁵⁰ In most other fight scenes in the film, the fighters' skills are nearly evenly matched, but here, Jiaolong's crowd of opponents are no match for her skills. The brawl is accompanied by a cue scored for drums and dizi, heard from 1:23.11 to 1:24.54. The choice of bamboo flute and drums is Tan's nod to an orchestrational convention that is commonplace accompaniment for similar scenes in Chinese theatre.²⁵¹ This cue is titled 'To the South' on the film soundtrack. At one minute and forty-three seconds in length, it is significantly shorter than 'Night Fight,' but it features several of the same elements.' A double-time version of 'Night Fight's' primary rhythmic motif is reprised on paigu and dagu here, with fewer embellishments, and the tempo gradually increases from 90 to 112 bpm. Here, however, the percussion accompanies a melody played on dizi. The dizi melody deftly provides continuity with the diegetic dizi heard in the tavern as this scene opens (described above in section 4.5: Diegetic Music). It also makes this scene feel more playful and lighthearted than 'Night Fight.'

The second fight scene between Jiaolong and Shu Lien takes place in Act 3, Scene 13, in Shu Lien's home (1:30.10-1:34.49). In this duel, Shu Lien gradually exhausts her armoury, using one weapon after another in an attempt to overcome Jiaolong, who is armed with the Green Destiny. The musical cue for this scene is not featured in the commercially released soundtrack for the film. Like 'Night Fight,' apart from four brass chords as the fight begins, this cue is scored exclusively for drums and nanbangzi. This cue initially references the primary rhythmic motif from 'Night Fight,' but also introduces

²⁵⁰ A similar scene is found multiple times in *The One-Armed Swordsman*, including at 16.30-24.00 and at 35.40-44.54. Also, Cheng Pei-Pei plays a similar role to Jiaolong in a tavern brawl in *Come Drink With Me* from 10.00-19.58.

²⁵¹ Bond, "Crouching Composer," 47.

many rhythmic variations of this motif, as well as alternate motifs. As Shu Lien works her way through various weapons there are several pauses in the fighting, including an striking moment where the pulse of the cue is replaced by a rubato single stroke roll on nanbangzi (1:32.49-1:33.00), and another where the pulse is replaced by a rubato press roll on paigu, as well as a brass stab and an ominous reverberant gesture in the sound design (1:33.17-1:34.02). This cue uses the momentum of an allegro tempo that gradually accelerates, beginning at 119 bpm and climaxing at 162 bpm when Shu Lien holds her blade next to Jiaolong's neck, moments before the arrival of Li Mu Bai.

These three scenes display some of the most fierce and sustained fighting in *Crouching Tiger*, and are accompanied by powerfully aggressive percussion. In contrast to these scenes, another of Tan's preferred approaches to the orchestration of action scenes is to employ a full symphony orchestra, very specifically and intentionally using the string, percussion and brass sections to each contribute interlocking rhythmic parts.

6.1.2 Full Orchestra

We turn now to four of Tan's action cues that make use of the full symphony orchestra, heard at length in Act 1, Scene 16 and Act 2, Scene 1, and also briefly in Act 3, Scene 2; and Act 3, Scene 18. Each of these scenes involves a large group of people in the fighting, often including crowds of bystanders, and all except Act 3, Scene 18 are in large outdoor settings. Tan's choice to orchestrate these scenes using a larger instrumental and tonal palette is a film scoring approach that matches the size and scope of a cue's orchestration to the size and scope of the scene's setting. Film composer Tom Holkenborg succinctly

describes this approach with the following maxim: “Never record more players than can fit in the room where the scene takes place.”²⁵²

Act 1, Scene 16, the second fight scene of the film, comes twelve minutes after ‘Night Fight.’ In this scene, Jade Fox’s identity is fully revealed, as she is no longer disguised as Jiaolong’s governess. Fox has arranged a midnight duel on Cemetery Hill where she fights Bo, Tsai and May. Mu Bai and Jiaolong soon arrive separately and join in the fight. In this scene, Mu Bai meets Jiaolong (still masked) who wields the stolen Green Destiny. Jade Fox sees Jiaolong display skills that are far beyond any of the martial arts training she had received from Fox, and Tsai is killed by Fox. This cue extends from 33.13 to 38.50, making it almost as long as the ‘Night Fight’ cue.

This scene is orchestrated with staccato strings playing steady repeated sixteenth notes, the brass section playing accented stabs and occasional swells, and the paigu drums and nanbangzi doubling some of the strings’ sixteenth note lines, adding additional crescendos that lead to brass accents.²⁵³ Additionally, at several points the woodwind section plays fragments of the Green Destiny leitmotif in the upper register. As in the fight scenes between Shu Lien and Jiaolong described above, the intensity of this cue ebbs and flows, and there are several moments of pause in the fighting when the characters have important exchanges of dialogue. During this break in the action of the scene, the orchestration thins, leaving only long tones in the low strings, and subtle rhythmic gestures on low paigu and nanbangzi. As this scene ends, Jade Fox and Jiaolong flee after

²⁵² Tom Holkenborg, “The Early Writing Process,” July 21, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qfw1DQ9v5WE&t=10s>. Tom Holkenborg, aka Junkie XL, has scored over 50 films and is currently in demand as a composer for action films.

²⁵³ This same orchestrational pattern and harmonic motifs are reprised in Act 3, Scene 2, from 1:13.59 to 1:14.50, a cue which is included on the film soundtrack as ‘A Wedding Interrupted.’

Tsai's death (38.32-38.50), and the full orchestra is replaced by two pipas performing a slow and mournful rendition of the beginning of the Green Destiny theme.

The next time a full orchestral action cue is heard in the film is at the start of Act 2 (52.47-56.09), as we enter Jiaolong's flashback to her time in the desert with Lo. The music in this sequence is structured in three parts that correspond to the following three parts of the action: (1) the establishment of the Gobi desert setting (52.47-53.43); (2) Lo's caravan attacks Jiaolong's convoy; and (3) Jiaolong chases Lo into the desert. In the first cue, in 3/4 time at an allegro tempo, the English horn plays a variation of Lo's theme (described in section 5.3, above), accompanied by a D pedal in the low strings, with sparse rhythmic accompaniment on hand drum (a tar or similar drum found in Middle Eastern music). During this first part of the sequence, the camera pans across a wide shot of Jiaolong's family's convoy passing through a desert valley, and we then see a medium shot of Jiaolong and her mother resting in their carriage. As the camera tilts upward to show Lo and his bandits waiting on a ridge above the convoy, there are three accented chords played on pipa, as well as a slowly accelerating gesture from Bb to A played in the low brass. This low semitonal gesture again references the ominous sonority and mood that had been iconically inscribed into film scoring vocabulary by John Williams, in his Oscar-winning score for *Jaws* (1975, dir. Steven Spielberg).²⁵⁴

Once Lo's bandits begin to ride down the hill to attack the convoy, the cue maintains the same allegro tempo as before, but pivots to 4/4 time, with the strings and woodwinds playing a tutti repeating sixteenth note motif in D minor, with accompanying rawap and tar. Since this is the film's largest battle scene, with dozens of fighters on

²⁵⁴ Cooke, *A History*, 461.

horseback, there is extensive intricate sound design in this section of the sequence, but insufficient space in the sound mix for orchestral complexity of the kind employed in cues such as the Cemetery Hill fight. In the final section of this cue (55.18-56.06), the string section plays Lo's theme with rawap counterpoint. The prominent use of plucked Chinese stringed instruments here sets up that scoring texture as a prominent feature that will be heard throughout Act 2.

In the following scenes, Jiaolong continues to chase Lo through the desert. Since the two are alone at this point, instead of full orchestra, the remainder of this chase and fight is accompanied by the sole piece of licensed music heard in this film: Liu Bo's 1994 performance of Ning Yony's arrangement of the Xinjian folk song "Caravan Bells on the Silk Road," for ruan and hand drum.²⁵⁵

The final brief example of full orchestral action scoring in the film is heard in Act 3, Scene 18 (1:43:37-1:44:04). As a prelude to the fight that follows, the cue opens with a slowly swelling cluster chord in the high strings, followed by rhythmic staccato strings and brass and percussion stabs and swells. Following this brief full orchestral cue, once this scene's fight sequence is complete, the underscore transitions directly to a reprise of Tan's third method of scoring action scenes, using tense string textures, an approach described in detail in the following section.

6.1.3 Tense Strings

Apart from the first duel between Mu Bai and Jiaolong in the Cemetery Hill scene described in the previous section, two more duels involve these two characters: Act 1, Scene 20, and Act 3, Scene 14. This section examines the latter scene as a case study. Both

²⁵⁵ Lee and Schamus. *Portrait of the Ang Lee Film*, 144.

of these scenes feature an orchestrational palette that significantly differs from the orchestrational models described above. This third strategy for scoring action scenes uses the symphony orchestra's string section playing overlapping motivic gestures, occasionally also featuring instruments such as the bawu and nanbangzi. Act 1, Scene 20, for example, features a cue titled 'In the Old Temple' (43.17-46.48), with orchestration using the following elements: plucked arpeggios on harp, long tones in the low strings, a staccato string gesture (see Figure 6B), and the Green Destiny leitmotif played on bawu.



Figure 6B. Tense staccato string gesture

Act 3, Scene 14 is scored with a cue titled 'Through the Bamboo Forest,' and is the penultimate fight scene of the film, shot using aerial wires to enable Jiaolong and Mu Bai to appear to defy gravity, an ostensibly supernatural skill. Cinematic tricks that make actors appear weightless and capable of flight have a long history in Hong Kong wuxia film, dating back at least as far as *Burning of the Red Lotus Monastery* (1928, dir. Zhang Shichuan).²⁵⁶ Inspired by similar fight scenes in King Hu's classic martial arts film *A Touch of Zen* (1971), in which a group of male and female fighters battle in a bamboo forest,²⁵⁷ the bamboo forest fight scene in *Crouching Tiger* is a tour de force. It elevates

²⁵⁶ Bordwell, *Planet Hong Kong*, 203.

²⁵⁷ See 1:36.59 to 1:41.01 in *A Touch of Zen*.

the concept, taking nearly the entire scene off the ground as Mu Bai and Jiaolong fly among, walk along, and hang from tall bamboo plants. Shooting this scene was a herculean effort, with dozens of crew on the ground beneath the actors, and months of post-production work to remove the wires, replace the sky and edit the moving leaves in the picture in order to enhance the realism of the characters' flight.²⁵⁸ In an interview describing his scoring intentions for this scene, Tan Dun explained that he was seeking to blend the sound of air and the bamboo foliage with the psychological tension and passion seen in the performances of actors Zhang Ziyi and Chow Yun Fat.²⁵⁹

Throughout this cue, a steady but subtle eighth-note pattern (at approximately 61 bpm) is played on the harp to propel the music forward. At the beginning of this scene, there are two independent and overlapping musical gestures: a staccato gesture played by the strings (see Figure 6B), and a descending two-note gesture in the violins. On top of this, in the foreground, the bawu plays the Green Destiny theme. This melody fades out at 1:36.06, when Jiaolong and Mu Bai begin to fight for the second time, and a close shot of Mu Bai's face shows his anger as he twists his sword, making Jiaolong fly backward. At this point, two new motivic gestures are added to this cue: a two-note ascending gesture in the low strings, and short melodic phrases played on bowed waterphone.

Pause-Burst-Pause

This scene, like other fight scenes in the film, makes powerful use of the Chinese martial arts cinematic rhythm of pause-burst-pause, perfected by earlier generations of martial

²⁵⁸ Lee and Schamus, *Portrait of the Ang Lee Film*, 122.

²⁵⁹ Musicatis. "Hans Zimmer - Takemitsu - Tan Dun (Interview)," September 9, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGnOqMYThLc>.

artists in film, including Bruce Lee.²⁶⁰ This style of movement, inherited from Peking opera choreography, involves short staccato bursts of action followed by short pauses, allowing the moments of action to create powerful sudden punctuation, and building suspense through the pauses.²⁶¹ The pauses between action in this scene are such that, within this four minute and fifteen second armed chase and fight scene, sword fighting takes place during a mere nineteen seconds.²⁶² For Tan Dun, this rhythm of choreographing a martial arts fight scene is typical, but the approach is commonly misunderstood outside China:

To many westerners, they're thinking martial arts is just fighting. Actually, it's not fighting, it's contact. It's mind contact.²⁶³

The tension in this scene is created through chase sequences, moments of standoff, and the pause-burst-pause rhythm of fighting, particularly from 1:35.49 to 1:37.30. Of necessity, since both Jiaolong and Mu Bai are balancing on swinging bamboo plants, they are incapable of continuous fighting here, and are required to wait until their bamboo branches swing back into close enough proximity that they can spar. At the start of one such sequence (1:36.08-1:36.43), for example, Jiaolong is on the left of the screen as the bamboo plant she hangs from swings slowly towards the centre of the screen, while Mu Bai swings in from the right. They swing towards each other for three seconds, and then are close enough to swipe at each other for one second before swinging away and slowly back for another five seconds. When their bamboo supports swing them back into contact, they then swing sideways and in the same direction downwards together, such that they

²⁶⁰ Bordwell, *Planet Hong Kong*, 221.

²⁶¹ Bordwell, *Planet Hong Kong*, 221.

²⁶² These hand-to-hand combat moments in this scene are the following: 1:35.50, 1:36.03-07, 1:36.11, 1:36.16-23, 1:36.49, 1:38.23-25.

²⁶³ Musicatis. "Tan Dun (Interview)."

can spar in another burst of action that lasts a full six seconds. This is followed by another pause in the action during which they are out of range from each other for a full thirteen seconds, and we see a series of four shots: two close shots of Jiaolong, followed by one close shot of Mu Bai, and another close shot of Jiaolong. During this thirteen second sequence we hear echoes of their sword blades clanging and scraping, and the sounds of blowing wind, along with the staccato string sixteenth-note gesture and the descending two-note violin gesture, as well as bowed waterphone. These resonating metal and string timbres blend well within the sonic environment of powerful sword sounds and wind-blown bamboo.

Of Tan's three distinct approaches to action scoring employed in this film, this tense strings approach is the most spacious and meditative, and it therefore blends well with the two settings in which it is used: a temple at night (Act 1, Scene 20), and a bamboo forest on an overcast afternoon (Act 3, Scene 14). Together, these three approaches to action scoring display Tan Dun's capability to provide a diversity of orchestral palettes for various scenes, depending on the energy, pacing and setting of the action on-screen. We turn now to Tan Dun's approach to scoring love scenes in *Crouching Tiger*.

6.2 Intercultural Romance for Strings

Throughout human history and culture, love has been such a primary emotion and narrative driver that it has been rendered into music countless times and in countless ways, both lyrically and instrumentally. The scenes of romance in *Crouching Tiger*, *Hidden Dragon* are passionate, but burdened with a sense of inevitable tragedy.

Act 1, Scene 22 is one of five scenes in the film during which the romance between Mu Bai and Shu Lien is developed, and is accompanied by Tan's cue 'Yearning of the Sword.' The scene takes place the morning after Mu Bai has retrieved the Green Destiny sword from Jiaolong. He is practicing with the sword in a courtyard at dawn when Shu Lien approaches, watches Mu Bai, and then comes to speak with him. Though their conversation here is mostly about Jiaolong and Mu Bai's desire to train her, this scene ends with another subtle indication that Shu Lien and Mu Bai yearn to settle down and build a life together, when Shu Lien states "I wish there were something more I could do to help you," to which Mu Bai replies "Just be patient with me, Shu Lien."²⁶⁴ Their unspoken love for each other is clear from both their body language and the cinematography of this scene, and it is enhanced by Tan's musical accompaniment.

The tone of this cue is plaintive, heavy with the weight of responsibility. It is an expressive slow duet between cello soloist Yo-Yo Ma²⁶⁵ and erhu soloist Ma Xiaohui,²⁶⁶ both internationally renowned string players of Chinese ancestry. Yo-Yo Ma is also featured in five other cues in this film, and Ma Xiaohui is also featured in three other cues. Before working on this film, Yo-Yo Ma had already appeared as the featured soloist in John Williams' score for *Seven Years in Tibet* (1997, dir. Jean-Jacques Annaud).²⁶⁷

²⁶⁴ Lee and Schamus, *Portrait of the Ang Lee Film*, 86.

²⁶⁵ Yo-Yo Ma was raised in Paris and New York City and studied at Juilliard and Harvard. He has recorded over 100 albums in diverse genres of music, and has won 18 Grammy Awards, among many other honours. See Silkroad, "Yo-Yo Ma," accessed March 6, 2022. <https://www.silkroad.org/artists-yo-yo-ma>.

²⁶⁶ Ma Xiaohui is a graduate of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and was concert master and lead soloist for the Shanghai National Orchestra at the time when they were hired for the *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* recording. She has recorded over 20 albums, has toured internationally and is active as a music professor in universities throughout China. See Rainfeather Records, "Ma Xiaohui," accessed March 6, 2022. <https://www.rainfeatherrecords.com/ma-xiaohui>.

²⁶⁷ Yo-Yo Ma, "Seven Years in Tibet," accessed March 6, 2022. <https://www.yo-yoma.com/sounds-symphonies-archive/seven-years-in-tibet/>.

Notably, in 1998, Yo-Yo Ma had also established the Silk Road Ensemble, a collective of artists from around the world who perform and commission intercultural music.²⁶⁸

This cue enters at 48.40, after the last line of dialogue of the preceding scene,²⁶⁹ just fifteen seconds before we cut to the next scene with a close shot of Mu Bai admiring the Green Destiny sword. This strategy of allowing a significant emotional musical cue to slowly grow in volume and complexity at the beginning, is an approach advocated by Ennio Morricone, who describes the process of slowly introducing musical elements over a period of seconds in order to “prepare the listener to be interested in that which the music will signify better further on.”²⁷⁰ The cue begins with long tones in the string section, and the opening notes of the Green Destiny theme are played in half time on harp, with the opening cello gestures first heard during the film's main title played here on bawu.²⁷¹ As Scene 22 is established, the melody is first heard on erhu, accompanied by sound design signifying the sweeping and thrusting motions of the Green Destiny sword. As the erhu melody is heard, we see a panning medium shot of Mu Bai practicing with the sword in the courtyard, then a wide aerial shot of the scene. This first erhu passage lasts for five bars, and on its last sustained note we cut to an over-the-shoulder shot of Shu Lien watching Mu Bai practice. At this point the melody passes from erhu to cello. The cello holds the melody for seven bars, before passing it once again to the erhu as Shu Lien approaches Mu Bai and their dialogue begins. Over the course of this scene, the melody is passed back and forth between the two instruments eight times. Richard Davis,

²⁶⁸ Silkroad, “Yo-Yo Ma,” accessed March 6, 2022. <https://www.silkroad.org/artists-yo-yo-ma>.

²⁶⁹ Act 1, Scene 21, immediately prior to the ‘Yearning of the Sword’ cue, is an argument between Jade Fox and Jiaolong, in which Jade Fox encourages Jiaolong to run away with her to live a life of crime, and Jiaolong refuses, lamenting that Jade Fox had been an inadequate martial arts mentor for her.

²⁷⁰ Morricone and Miceli, *Composing for the Cinema*, 191.

²⁷¹ This bawu melody is synched with an on-screen shot of Jade Fox leaving Jiaolong. Tan Dun has explained he associates the bawu with Jade Fox’s character. See Bond, “Crouching Composer,” 47.

Professor of Film Scoring at Berklee College of Music, explains the purpose of this type of scoring as revealing a character's unspoken thoughts or feelings.²⁷²

Tan's classical training is in evidence in the form of this piece, as he has chosen to use an ABAB form, plus introduction and coda. Each A and B section involves a statement by erhu, echoed in response by the cello. The melodic gestures used in each A and B section begin on a low note, climbing upward to a higher note in a yearning gesture. The erhu and cello solos are accompanied by long tones in the string section and slow and deliberate arpeggios on the harp.

This same orchestration is repeated for Act 2, Scene 8, at the outset of Jiaolong and Lo's love affair. This sequence's montage begins with the couple making love, transitions to a shot in which they ride across the desert together, and closes with another in which they romantically stargaze, side by side. Its accompanying cue (1:07.38-1:09.17) features cello playing the Love Before Time theme, accompanied by contrapuntal lines on erhu. Unlike the call and response duet in 'Yearning of the Sword,' where the cello and erhu trade musical ideas back and forth but do not accompany each other, here the two instruments play at the same time. These overlapping musical lines surely represent the uninhibited passion of Jiaolong and Lo's love, as compared to the reserved distance of Mu Bai and Shu Lien's love. Immediately following this cue there is another cello and erhu duet, based on the Love Before Time theme (1:09.34 to 1:12.26). This scene concludes Act 2, and its cue begins with rawap and tar as Lo and Jiaolong ride out of the desert and into the plains and mountains of Mongolia. This orchestration links back to their earlier

²⁷² Davis, *Complete Guide*, 142.

horseback chase, but it soon gives way to another erhu and cello duet, which sits under dialogue for most of the scene, as it does in ‘Yearning of the Sword.’

These three scenes featuring erhu and cello duets each depict romance, accompanied by one female and one male string soloist. The ranges of their instruments also correspond approximately to those of the adult male (cello) and female (erhu) voices (though of course these instruments have wider ranges than the human voice). Sonically, then, these scenes feature spoken conversation in Mandarin between a couple, simultaneous conversation between a cello and an erhu, mediated by the performances of Yo-Yo Ma and Ma Xiaohui. The intercultural orchestration also features bowed stringed instruments representing Chinese music and European music. All of these levels of symmetry allow for a scene in which the actors’ performances are mirrored emotionally and aesthetically in the accompanying score, in an elegant demonstration of Tan Dun’s “1+1=1” philosophy.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

From the mid-nineteenth century to the present day, there has been a gradual increase and deepening of cultural exchange between musicians in China and those of Europe and America. In China, the study of music from the West was taken on wholesale by music education systems, producing several generations of musicians who are fluent in the musical vocabulary of Chinese, Russian, and Euro-American genres and instruments. Tan Dun, who has lived approximately half of his life in China and half in America, is one of these polycultural bridge figures. His approach to intercultural composition has evolved throughout his career from a collage approach to an integrated approach in which two musical systems seamlessly merge into a new style, in a process that he describes as “1+1=1.” A similarly hybrid model of Chinese classical music merged with Hollywood scoring tradition has also been heard in the scores of multiple Chinese and Hong Kong martial arts and drama films created throughout the past half-century. The creative team that produced *Crouching Tiger*, particularly director Ang Lee, composer Tan Dun, and action choreographer Yuen Woo-Ping, brought decades of experience in both Chinese and Hollywood cinematic traditions and were therefore able to create a film aligned with the tastes of the global film market. Ang Lee’s adaptation of this film touches on many elements of the Chinese martial arts film tradition developed by legendary filmmakers who came before him, as George Chun Han Wang explains:

The showdown in the tavern, the rooftop chase, the ambush of the convoy, the flying poison needles, the quest for the Green Destiny Sword and the bamboo forest fights can all be attributed to the iconographic influences of King Hu.²⁷³

²⁷³ George Chun Han Wang, “King Hu and Run Run Shaw: The Clash of Two Cinema Legends,” *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 4, no. 2 (2010): 140.

Tan Dun's score for *Crouching Tiger*, is a continuation of over a century of cross-cultural interactions between Chinese music and European-American contemporary classical music. Tan's DMA thesis at Columbia University explored the concept of dialogue between European and Chinese art aesthetics, and during the decade preceding his work on the film *Crouching Tiger*, Tan explored various approaches to intercultural composition, from an avant-garde cultural collage approach seen in his 1995 opera *Marco Polo*, to his Hollywood-style score for the 1997 film *Fallen*. Having scored over two dozen films in the decades prior to *Crouching Tiger*, Tan was prepared to work quickly and efficiently when hired by Ang Lee. The nuances in this score demonstrate Tan's ability to work within – and expand upon – the conventions of martial arts cinema and Chinese period-drama storytelling. Himself a violinist, Tan consistently scores in a way that makes ample use of the symphony orchestra's string section to create a foundation to which he adds powerful melodies, written for a range of traditional Chinese instruments and European instruments. With his background and experience with a variety of concert music genres such as opera, Tan knows how to employ leitmotifs such that they are memorable for the listener and help to build cohesion in the plot. His two main leitmotifs in *Crouching Tiger*, the Green Destiny theme and the Love Before Time theme, are used extensively, and his secondary leitmotif, Lo's theme, is interwoven elegantly into both the score and the diegetic music. These three leitmotifs are melodies between six to eight measures in length, and Tan also uses multiple shorter melodic or rhythmic motivic gestures, often one or two bars in length, which are repeated in various cues throughout the score. This use of leitmotif and motivic gesture helps to make the score compact and

coherent, as Tan is able to efficiently re-use these motivic materials in various combinations throughout the film.

Breaking from a long-established Chinese film tradition of leaving martial arts fight sequences unaccompanied by music, in this film many of Tan's most extensive cues accompany fight scenes. In an approach that complements the action on screen, Tan has crafted three distinct approaches to scoring fight scenes, depending on the emotional energy, intensity, number of characters, and setting. Tan's music also plays an important role in the love scenes of *Crouching Tiger*, where several memorable ballads feature duets between cello and erhu. This score traces its lineage in equal parts to the music of modern and Golden Era Hollywood, and to the traditions of Peking opera and Chinese classical music. After completing work on *Crouching Tiger*, Tan Dun went on to score two subsequent martial arts films, and his prestige as a composer and conductor of concert music continued to grow. The music from *Crouching Tiger*, lives on in the concert hall, through performances of Tan Dun's multiple concerto adaptations of the score.

The bodies of literature from which this thesis drew include Chinese film, Chinese history, Chinese music, cultural theory, ethnomusicology, film musicology and intercultural composition. However, the key focus of this thesis is on one specialized topic which brings these literatures together: music in Chinese film. Available English-language research on this topic is scant, and the sources that I found which focus specifically on this topic were few; they included Bond (2000), Hung (2011, 2012), and Law (2014), as well as many of the online interviews with Tan Dun that I have cited in this thesis. Music in Chinese film is also dealt with (though to a lesser extent) in Bordwell (2000) and Buhler and Neumeier (2016). Further English-language research on

intercultural music in film, as well as music in Chinese film, will be important areas of research for music scholars to explore in the years to come.

Bibliography

- Atkin, Nicolas. "How Jet Li turned the Shaolin Temple into a kung fu cash cow for China." *South China Morning Post*, June 26, 2019.
<https://www.scmp.com/sport/martial-arts/kung-fu/article/3016095/how-jet-li-turned-shaolin-temple-kung-fu-cash-cow-china>.
- Au, Sau Woon Rebecca. "*I Ching* in the Music of John Cage, Chou Wen Chung, and Zhao Xiao Sheng." PhD diss., The Chinese University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong), 2013. ProQuest (UMI 3586854).
- Bard College. "Bard Appoints World-Renowned Composer and Conductor Tan Dun as Dean of the Conservatory of Music." Accessed October 8, 2021.
<https://www.bard.edu/news/details/?id=11915>.
- Barone, Joshua. "Asian Composers Reflect on Careers in Western Classical Music." *New York Times*, July 23, 2021.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/23/arts/music/asian-composers-classical-music.html>.
- Bellman, Jonathan D. "Musical Voyages and Their Baggage: Orientalism in Music and Critical Musicology." *The Music Quarterly* 94, no. 3 (Fall 2011): 417-38.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Blackburn, Tong Cheng. "In Search of Third Space: Composing the Transcultural Experience in the Operas of Bright Sheng, Tan Dun and Zhou Long." PhD diss., Indiana University, 2015. ProQuest (UMI 3687326).
- Bond, Jeff. "Crouching Composer, Hidden Cellist." *Film Score Monthly* 5, no. 9/10 (November/December 2000): 45-48.
- Bordwell, David. *Planet Hong Kong: Popular Cinema and the Art of Entertainment*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press: 2000.
- Born, Georgina and David Hesmondhalgh, eds. *Western Music and its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000.

- BOS - Orquesta Sinfonica de Bilbao. "2009-11-18 Ensayos Tan Dun con la BOS." 6 June 2012. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_6NUo9grMo&t=106s.
- Bradshaw, Peter. "Enter the Dragon." *The Guardian*, December 6, 2013. <https://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2013/dec/06/top-10-martial-arts-movies>
- Bribitzer-Stull, Matthew. *Understanding the Leitmotif*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Buhler, James and David Neumeyer. *Hearing the Movies: Music and Sound in Film History*, 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Buruma, Ian. "Of Musical Import: East Meets West in the Art of Tan Dun." *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 6, no. 5 (May 2008): 1-9.
- Calandrelli, Jorge. "About." Accessed April 2, 2022. <https://www.jorgecalandrelli.com/about>.
- Central Conservatory of Music. "About the Central Conservatory of Music." Accessed December 17, 2021. <http://en.ccom.edu.cn/2020/aboutccom/>.
- Chan, Kenneth. *Remade in Hollywood: The Global Chinese Presence in Transnational Cinema*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009.
- Chen, Yu Hao. "Nesting, Swelling, Sounding: On the Birth of the Accordion in China." Paper presented at the Society for Ethnomusicology 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting, October 29, 2021.
- Cheng, Yu-Yin. "Tang Xianzu's (1550-1616) Peony Pavilion and Taizhou Philosophy: A Perspective from Intellectual History." *Ming Studies* 67 (May 2013), 3-29.
- China Daily. "Uygur Music Lives." July 20, 2004. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/culture/101658.htm>.
- China Through a Lens "Tan Dun: A Musical Journey from East to West." Accessed October 7, 2021. <http://www.china.org.cn/english/NM-e/81062.htm>.
- Chion, Michel, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*. Translated and edited by Claudia Gorbman. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.

- Chou, Wen-Chung. "Asian Concepts and Twentieth-Century Western Composers." *The Musical Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (1971): 211–29.
- Chow, Rey. *Primitive Passions: Visuality, Sexuality, Ethnography and Contemporary Chinese Cinema*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.
- Chu, Jason. "Appropriators or Originators: APIs, Hip-Hop and Authenticity." *Music of Asian America Research Center*. November 16, 2019.
<https://asianamericanmusic.org/events/jason-chu/>.
- Columbia University. "Chou Wen-Chung (1923-2019)." Posted October 30, 2019.
<https://music.columbia.edu/news/chou-wen-chung-1923-2019>.
- Cooke, Mervyn. *A History of Film Music*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Coulthard, Lisa. "Fist to Face: Corporeal Listening and the Cinematic Punch." In *The Oxford Handbook of Cinematic Listening*, edited by Carlo Cenciarelli, 355-64. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé. "The Urgency of Intersectionality." October 2016.
https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en
- Croizier, Ralph, Shentian Zheng, and Scott Watson. *Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966-76*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010.
- Cui, Yao. "The Impact of Social and Political Change on Chinese Music: The Development of the Pipa from the 1950s to 1965." Paper presented at the Society for Ethnomusicology 2021 Virtual Annual Meeting, October 28, 2021.
- Dariotis, Wei Ming and Eileen Fung. "Breaking the Soy Sauce Jar: Diaspora and Displacement in the Films of Ang Lee." In *Transnational Chinese Cinemas: Identity, Nationhood, Gender*, edited by Sheldon Hsiao-Peng Lu, 187-220. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1997.
- Davis, Richard. *Complete Guide to Film Scoring: The Art and Business of Writing Music for Movies and TV*. Boston: Berklee Press, 2010.

- Davis, Rob. "The Sounds of Commerce." *Film Quarterly* 53, no. 3 (2000): 55-56.
- Deaville, James. "Debussy's Cakewalk. Race, Modernism and Music in Early Twentieth-Century Paris." *Revue musicale OICRM* 2, no. 1 (2014): 20-39.
- DocsOnline. "Chinese Classical Music: Interview Tan Dun," April 3, 2011.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9WBfn1DgDo>.
- Driscoll, F. Paul, ed. "The First Emperor: An Empire Reborn," in *The Metropolitan Opera 2006–07 Season Book*. New York: The Metropolitan Opera Guild, 2006.
- Dutcher, Jeremy. *Interview with the author*. Video call. December 21, 2020.
- Eng, Michael "Reforming Vengeance: Kung Fu and the Racial Melancholia of Chinese Masculinity." In *The Oxford Handbook of Chinese Cinema*, edited by Carlos Rojas and Eilina Cheng-Yin Chow, 281-300. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Farquhar, Mary. "Jackie Chan: A New Dragon for a New Generation." *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 2, no. 2 (2008): 137-46.
- Finchum-Sung, Hilary Vanessa. "Aesthetics of Interculturality in East Asian Contemporary Music." *The World of Music* 6, no. 1 (2017): 7-20.
- Frith, Simon. "Music and Identity." In *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Edited by Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, 108-27. London: SAGE, 1996.
- Geck, Martin. *Richard Wagner: A Life in Music*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.
- Gorbman, Claudia. *Unheard Melodies: Narrative Film Music*. London: British Film Institute, 1987.
- Greene, Margaret C. "The Sound of Ghosts: Ghost Opera, Reformed Drama and the Staging of a New China, 1949-1979." PhD diss., University of California, San Diego, 2013. Proquest (3590482).
- Hall, Stuart. *The Fateful Triangle: Race, Ethnicity, Nation*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017.

- Han, Arar and John Hsu, eds. *Asian American X: An Intersection of Twenty-First Century Asian American Voices*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004.
- Han, Kuo-Huang and Judith Gray, "The Modern Chinese Orchestra," *Asian Music* 11, no. 1 (1979): 1-43.
- Han, Mei. "The Emergence of the Chinese Zheng: Traditional Context, Contemporary Evolution, and Cultural Identity." PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 2013.
- Hao, Jingjun, Peng Zhang and Wei Yu, "Gender Differences in Rural Education in China," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 27, no. 1 (2021): 66-86.
- Hickman, Roger. *Reel Music: Exploring 100 Years of Film Music*, 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2017.
- Hill Collins, Patricia and Sirma Bilge. *Intersectionality*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2020.
- Holkenborg, Tom. "The Early Writing Process." July 21, 2021.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qfw1DQ9v5WE&t=10s>.
- Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. "Honorary Doctorate: Joseph Koo Ka-Fai." Accessed January 16, 2022. <https://www.hkapa.edu/honorary-awardees/joseph-koo-ka-fai>.
- Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra. "Zhao Jiping." Accessed January 15, 2022.
<http://www.hkco.org/en/Other-Members/Zhao-Jiping.html>.
- Hood, Mantle. "The Challenge of 'Bi-Musicality.'" *Ethnomusicology* 4, no. 2 (May 1960): 55-59.
- Horner, James. *Titanic: Music from the Motion Picture*. Sony Classical. Released November 18, 1997, Spotify.
- Hsü, Immanuel C.Y. *The Rise of Modern China*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Huang, Ting-Yao. "Selected Pieces by Six Taiwanese and Chinese Composers of the Twentieth Century: Ty-Zen Hsiao, Shui- Long Ma, Fan-Ling Su, Kwang-I Yin,

- Chen Yi and Tan Dun." DMA diss., University of Washington, 2015. ProQuest (3724008).
- Hung, Eric. "Tan Dun Through the Lens of Western Media (Part I)." *Notes* 67, no. 3 (March 2011): 601-18.
- . "Tan Dun Through the Lens of Western Media (Part II)." *Notes* 68, no. 3 (March 2012): 659-66.
- . "The Shanghai Quartet's Chinasong: A Musical Counterpart to English-Language Cultural Revolution Memoirs?" In *China and the West: Music, Representation and Reception*, 223-42. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017.
- . *Interview with the author*. Video call. December 13, 2021.
- Hutnyk, John. "Hybridity Saves? Authenticity and/or the Critique of Appropriation." *Amerasia Journal* 25, no. 3 (1999): 39-58.
- Hwang, David Henry. *M. Butterfly*. New York: Dramatists Play Service Inc., 1986.
- IMDb. "Academy Award for Best Original Score." Accessed March 31, 2022. <https://www.imdb.com/list/ls069474240/>.
- . "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: Awards." Accessed March 1, 2022. <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0190332/awards/>
- . "Fu-Liang Chou." Accessed January 15, 2022. <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0159450/>.
- . "Fu-Ling Wang." Accessed January 15, 2022. <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0910891/>.
- . "Woo-Ping Yuen." Accessed February 17, 2022. <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0950759/>.
- Kalinak, Kathryn Marie. *Settling the Score: Music and the Classical Hollywood Film*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992.
- Kang, Angela. "Musical Chinoiserie." PhD diss., University of Nottingham, 2011. ProQuest (1798374995).

- Knight, Gladys L. *Female Action Heroes: A Guide to Women in Comics, Video Games, Film and Television*. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2010.
- Landis, Stella Baty. "The Soviet Operas of Sergei Prokofiev." PhD diss., Princeton University, 2007. Proquest UMI 3255843.
- Lau, Frederick. "Fusion or Fission: The Paradox and Politics of Contemporary Chinese Avant-Garde Music." In *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*, eds. Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau, 22-39. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan Press, 2004.
- . "Context, Agency and Chineseness: The Music of Law Wing Fai." *Contemporary Music Review* 26, no. 5-6 (October/December 2007): 585-603.
- . *Music in China: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- . "When a Great Nation Emerges: Chinese Music in the World." In *China and the West: Music, Representation and Reception*, edited by Yang Hon-Lun and Michael Saffle, 265-82. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017.
- Law, Ho-Chak. "King Hu's *Cinema Opera* in his Early *Wuxia* Films." *Music and the Moving Image* 7, no. 3 (Fall 2014): 24-40.
- Lee, Ang, and James Schamus. *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon: Portrait of the Ang Lee Film*. New York: Newmarket Press, 2000.
- Lee, Ang, dir. "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon." January 25, 2014. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUfMIGK_s9s.
- Lee, Ming-yen. "An Analysis of the Three Modern Chinese Orchestras in the Context of Cultural Interaction Across Greater China." PhD diss., Kent State University, Kent, OH, 2015. Proquest 3671434.
- Lee, Vivian. "Virtual Bodies, Flying Objects: The Digital Imaginary in Contemporary Martial Arts Films." *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 1, no. 1 (2007): 9-26.
- Lidskog, Rolf. "The Role of Music in Ethnic Identity Formation in Diaspora: A Research Review." *International Social Science Journal*, 66, no. 219-220 (2016): 23-38.

- Liu, Kang “Popular Culture and the Culture of the Masses in Contemporary China,” *boundary 2* 24, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 99-122.
- Liu, Marian, Youjin Shin and Shelly Tan. “How K-Pop Conquered the Universe.” *Washington Post*, accessed November 19, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/arts-entertainment/interactive/2021/kpop-bts-youtube-twitter-blackpink/>.
- Locke, Ralph P. *Music and the Exotic from the Renaissance to Mozart*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Lockspeiser, Edward. *Debussy, His Life and Mind*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978.
- Lu, Sheldon H. “Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, Bouncing Angels: Hollywood, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Transnational Cinema.” in *Chinese Language Film: Historiography, Poetics, Politics*, edited by Sheldon H. Lu and Emilie Yueh-yu Yeh, 220-33. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2005.
- Ma, Yo-Yo. “Seven Years in Tibet.” Accessed March 6, 2022. <https://www.yo-yoma.com/sounds-symphonies-archive/seven-years-in-tibet/>.
- Mackerras, Colin. *Images of Asia: Peking Opera*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Mann, Susan L. *Gender and Sexuality in Modern Chinese History*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Manning, Kimberley Ens. “Embodied Activisms: The Case of the Mu Guiying Brigade.” *The China Quarterly* 204, no. 204 (2010): 850-69.
- Mao, Yu Run, "Music under Mao: Its Background and Aftermath." *Asian Music* 22, no. 2 (1991): 97-125.
- Mao, Zedong, “Talks at the Yen’an Forum on Literature and Art (May 1942).” in *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1965.
- Mativetsky, Shawn. “Comments by Tan Dun on His Music.” *Circuit* 12, no. 3 (2002): 35-44.

- Matthes, Erich Hatala. "Cultural Appropriation Without Cultural Essentialism?" *Social Theory and Practice*, 42, no. 2 (April 2016): 343-66.
- Millward, James A. "The Silk Road and the Sitar: Finding Centuries of Sociocultural Exchange in the History of an Instrument." *Journal of Social History* 52, no. 2 (2018): 206-33.
- Mittler, Barbara. "Eight Stage Works for 800 Million People': The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in Music—A View from Revolutionary Opera," *The Opera Quarterly* 26, no. 2-3 (2010): 377-401.
- Morricone, Ennio and Sergio Miceli, *Composing for the Cinema: The Theory and Praxis of Music in Film*. Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2013.
- Musicatis. "Hans Zimmer - Takemitsu - Tan Dun (Interview)." September 9, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGnOqMYhLc>.
- Nan, Chen. "Maestro weaved his magic to convey spirit of novel." *China Daily*. August 5, 2017. https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/weekend/2017-08/05/content_30348902.htm.
- Newhouse, Ben. *Creative Strategies in Film Scoring*. Boston: Berklee Press, 2020.
- Ng, Maria. "The Taming of the Oriental shrew: The Two Asias in Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot*." In *A Vision of the Orient: Texts, Intertexts, and Contexts of Madame Butterfly*, edited by Jonathan Wisenthal, Sherrill E. Grace and Melinda Boyd, 170-180. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016.
- Ngo, Sheau-Shi. "Nüxia: Historical Depiction and Modern Visuality." *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 20, no. 3 (2014): 7-26.
- Oh, Hee Sook. "Threnody and the Aesthetics of Interculturality in Twenty-First-Century East Asian Composition." *Acta Musicologica* 89, no. 2 (2017): 195-213.
- O'Mahony, John. "Crossing Continents." September 9, 2000. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2000/sep/09/classicalmusicandopera>.
- Oteri, Frank J. "Explore Tan Dun's Story," October 15, 2007. <http://tandun.com/about/explore-tan-duns-story/>.

- Powell, John A. "Us vs. Them: The Sinister Techniques of 'Othering' - And How to Avoid Them." *The Guardian*, November 8, 2017.
<https://www.theguardian.com/inequality/2017/nov/08/us-vs-them-the-sinister-techniques-of-othering-and-how-to-avoid-them>.
- Provine, Robert, Yosihiko Tokumaru, and Lawrence Witzleben. *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 7: East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Qi, Fei, Yuqi Wu and Qi Wang. "Anti-Domestic Violence Law: The Fight for Legal Rights in China," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 26, no. 3 (2020): 383-96.
- Rainfeather Records. "Ma Xiaohui." Accessed March 6, 2022.
<https://www.rainfeatherrecords.com/ma-xiaohui>.
- Rao, Nancy Yunhwa. "Henry Cowell and His Chinese Music Heritage." in *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music*, edited by Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau, 119-45. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004.
- . "Chen Yi, Symphony No. 2 (1993)." In *Analytical Essays on Music by Women Composers: Concert Music 1960-2000*, edited by Laurel Parsons and Brenda Ravenscroft, 127-52. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.
- Richards, Kimberly and Heather Davis-Fisch. "Extractivism and Performance." *Canadian Theatre Review* 182 (2020): 5-8.
- Roberts, Rosemary. *Maoist Model Theatre: The Semiotics of Gender and Sexuality in the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)*. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Robinson, Dylan. *Hungry Listening: Resonant Theory for Indigenous Sound Studies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020.
- Rózsa, Miklós. *Double Life*. New York: Wynwood Press, 1982.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1978.
- Scherzinger, Martin. "Wagner Redux: Badiou on Music for the Future." *Contemporary Music Review* 31, no. 5-6 (2012): 461-85.
- Schifrin, Lalo. *Music Composition for Film and Television*. Boston: Berklee Press, 2011.

- Schmidt, Benjamin. *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.
- Schmitz, David Michael. "Oriental Influences in the Piano Music of Claude Achille Debussy." Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 1995. ProQuest 9531137.
- Shanghai Chinese Orchestra. "Liu Bo: Ruan." Accessed March 13, 2022. <https://www.shchineseorchestra.com/en/musician/liu-bo/>.
- Shanghai Percussion Ensemble, "Standing Dragons and Leaping Tigers." December 11, 2010. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9XXO2IHqGjM>.
- Silkroad. "Yo-Yo Ma." Accessed March 6, 2022. <https://www.silkroad.org/artists-yo-yo-ma>.
- Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake and Naomi Klein. "Dancing the World into Being: A Conversation with Idle No More's Leanne Simpson." *Yes! Magazine*. March 6, 2013. <https://www.yesmagazine.org/social-justice/2013/03/06/dancing-the-world-into-being-a-conversation-with-idle-no-more-leanne-simpson>.
- Tam, Arthur. "Cheng Pei-pei on Ang Lee and Her Iconic Roles with Shaw Studios." March 31, 2015. <https://www.timeout.com/hong-kong/film/cheng-pei-pei-on-ang-lee-and-her-iconic-roles-with-shaw-studios>.
- Tan, Dun. *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon - Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*. With Yo-Yo-Ma (cello), Coco Lee (voice), David Cossin (percussion), Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Chen Xie-Yang, Shanghai National Orchestra & Shanghai Percussion Ensemble. Sony Classical SK 89347. Released November 14, 2000, iTunes.
- . "'Death and Fire': Dialogue with Paul Klee. An Analysis (with Volume II: Original composition)." DMA diss., Columbia University, New York, 1993. ProQuest (9412852).
- . "In Distance." Accessed November 11, 2021. <http://tandun.com/composition/in-distance/>.
- . "Marco Polo." Accessed December 1, 2021. <http://tandun.com/composition/marco-polo/>.

- . “Nine Songs: Composition.” Accessed October 23, 2021.
<http://tandun.com/composition/nine-songs/>.
- . “Official Biography.” Accessed November 18, 2021.
<http://tandun.com/about/official-biography/>.
- . “Peony Pavilion (1998): Compositions.” Accessed October 23, 2021.
<http://tandun.com/composition/peony-pavilion-1998/>.
- . “Tan Dun - Eight Memories in Watercolor (for piano) (1979).” Accessed October 7, 2021. <https://www.wisemusicclassical.com/work/33556/>.
- . “Tea: A Mirror of Soul (Opera in Three Acts).” Accessed October 23, 2021.
<http://tandun.com/composition/tea-a-mirror-of-soul-opera-in-three-acts>
- . “Tea (Opera in 3 acts).” New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 2002. Accessed October 23, 2021. <https://www.wisemusicclassical.com/work/33592/Tea-A-Mirror-of-Soul--Tan-Dun/>.
- . “The Map: Concerto for Cello, Video and Orchestra.” July 10, 2004.
<http://tandun.com/composition/the-map-concerto-for-cello-video-and-orchestra/>.
- . “Triple Concerto: Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon for Violin, Violoncello, Piano and Orchestra.” October 31, 2019.
https://issuu.com/scoresondemand/docs/triple_concerto_cthd_60366.
- . “Yi°: concerto for Orchestra.” Accessed 7 October 2021.
<http://tandun.com/composition/yi-concerto-for-orchestra/>.
- Taylor, Timothy D. *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Teo, Stephen. “The ‘Missing’ Female Knight-errant in Hong Kong Action Cinema 1965-1971: Back in Critical Action.” *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 4, no. 2 (2010): 143-54.

- UNESCO. "An Interview with the newest UNESCO's Goodwill Ambassador Tan Dun"
 Accessed October 5, 2021. <https://en.unesco.org/news/interview-newest-unesco's-goodwill-ambassador-tan-dun>.
- . "Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions" Accessed October 26, 2021.
<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/cultural-diversity/cultural-expressions/the-convention/convention-text>.
- UN Women. "Fourth World Conference on Women." Accessed April 2, 2022.
<https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/index.html>.
- Utz, Christian. *Musical Composition in the Context of Globalization: New Perspectives on Music History of the 20th and 21st Century*. Translated by Laurence Sinclair Willis. Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2021.
- Wang, George Chun Han. "King Hu and Run Run Shaw: The Clash of Two Cinema Legends." *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 4, no. 2 (2010): 127-42.
- Wang, Grace. *Soundtracks of Asian America: Navigating Race Through Musical Performance*. London: Duke University Press, 2015.
- Wang, Ping. *Aching for Beauty: Footbinding in China*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000.
- Weng, Po-wei. "If You Can Recite it You Can Play It: the Transmission and Transcription of Jingju (Peking Opera) Percussion Music," *Journal of Chinese Oral and Performing Literature* 35, no. 2 (December 2016): 89-113.
- Wie, Jungyoon. "Artists Confronting Society - A Panel Discussion and Performance." *China Now Music Festival*, US China Music Institute. October 14, 2021.
- Wilson, Carl. *Let's Talk about Love: Why Other People Have Such Bad Taste*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014.
- Winter, Tim. "The Geocultural Heritage of the Silk Roads." *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 27, no. 7 (2021): 700-19.

- Winters, Ben. *Erich Wolfgang Korngold's The Adventures of Robin Hood: A Film Score Guide*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2007.
- Wise Music Classical. "Composing Myself: Tan Dun." November 27, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiPWNQbwKxU>.
- Wong, Deborah. *Speak it Louder: Asian Americans Making Music*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Woo, X.L. *Empress Dowager Cixi: China's Last Dynasty and the Reign of a Formidable Concubine*. New York: Algora Publishing, 2002.
- Wright, James K. "Chinese Instruments and Music." Public Presentation, Carleton University, September 26, 2018.
- Wright, Melissa. *Disposable Women and Other Myths of Global Capitalism*. Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2013.
- Wu, Fei. "Bio." Accessed January 10, 2022. <http://www.wufeimusic.com/bio>.
- . "Compositions." Accessed January 10, 2022. <http://www.wufeimusic.com/compositions>.
- Wu, Huaiting and Joseph Man Chan. "Globalizing Chinese Martial Arts Cinema: The Global-Local Alliance and the Production of Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon." *Media, Culture & Society* 29, no. 2 (2007): 195–217.
- Xi, Qiang. *Chinese Music and Musical Instruments*. Shanghai: Shanghai Press and Publishing Development Company, 2011.
- Yan, Jiaqi, Gao Gao, and Daniel W.Y. Kwok. *Turbulent Decade: A History of the Cultural Revolution*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1996.
- YouTube Culture and Trends. "All-Time Top 24-Hour Music Debuts." Accessed November 19, 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/trends/records/?record=top-24-hour-music-debuts>.
- YouTube. "The Banquet: Tan Dun and Lang Lang." December 21, 2008. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iL1THJyq2Aw>.
- Yu Xiaohang. "Crouching Tiger Cello Concerto – A Melding of Form and Content for the Concert Stage." DMA diss., University of Kentucky, Lexington, 2021.

Zhang, Nan. "Neo-Orientalism in the Operas of Tan Dun." MA thesis, Dalhousie University, 2015.

Zheng, Su. *Claiming Diaspora: Music, Transnationalism, and Cultural Politics in Asian/Chinese America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Filmography

- Annaud, Jean-Jacques, dir. *Seven Years in Tibet*, 1997; TriStar Pictures.
- Bertolucci, Bernardo, dir. *The Last Emperor*, 1997; Columbia Pictures.
- Besson, Luc, dir. *The Fifth Element*, 1997; Gaumont.
- Boden, Anna and Ryan Fleck, dir. *Captain Marvel*, 2019; Marvel Studios.
- Boyle, Danny, dir. *Slumdog Millionaire*, 2008; Celador Films.
- Chang, Cheh, dir. *The One-Armed Swordsman*, 1967; Shaw Brothers Studio.
- Chang, Cheh, dir. *The Golden Swallow*, 1968; Shaw Brothers Studio.
- Chang, Cheh, dir. *The Flying Dagger*, 1969; Shaw Brothers Studio.
- Chang, Hsin-Yen and Fu Qi, dirs. *The Jade Bow*, 1966; Great Wall Movie Enterprise Ltd.
- Chang, Hsin Yen, dir. *The Shaolin Temple*, 1982; Chung Yuen Motion Picture Company.
- Chen, Kaige, dir. *Farewell My Concubine*, 1993; Miramax Films.
- Cheng, Chang-Ho, dir. *Five Fingers of Death*, 1972; Shaw Brothers Studio.
- Choy, Christine Christine and Nancy Tong, dirs. *In the Name of the Emperor*, 1998.
- Clouse, Robert, dir. *Enter the Dragon*, 1973; Golden Harvest.
- Cronenberg, David, dir. *M. Butterfly*, 1993; Warner Brothers.
- Dietz, Kathryn and Sue Williams, dirs. *China in Revolution: 1911-1949*, 1989; Ambrica Productions.
- Flipse, Eline, dir. *De oogst van de stilte*, 1995; Scarabee Films.
- Hitchcock, Alfred, dir. *Spellbound*, 1945; United Artists.
- Hoblit, Gregory, dir. *Fallen*, 1997; Warner Brothers.
- Hu, King, dir. *Come Drink With Me*, 1966; Shaw Brothers Studio.

———. *A Touch of Zen*, 1971; Union Film.

Jenkins, Patty, dir. *Wonder Woman*, 2017; Warner Brothers Pictures.

Joffé, Roland, dir. *The Mission*, 1986; Goldcrest Films.

Kurtiz, Michael and William Keighley, dirs. *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, 1938;
Warner Brothers Pictures.

Lee, Ang, dir. *Pushing Hands*, 1991; Central Motion Pictures.

———. *The Wedding Banquet*, 1993; Good Machine Productions.

———. *Eat Drink Man Woman*, 1994; Central Motion Pictures.

———. *Sense and Sensibility*, 1995; Columbia Pictures.

———. *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, 2000; Sony Pictures Classics.

Leone, Sergio, dir. *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*, 1966; Produzioni Europee
Associate.

Leone, Sergio, dir. *Once Upon a Time in the West*, 1968; Paramount Pictures.

LeRoy, Mervyn, dir. *Quo Vadis*, 1951; Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Lo, Wei, dir. *The Shadow Whip*, 1971; Shaw Brothers Studio.

Lucas, George, dir. *Star Wars*, 1977; Lucasfilm Ltd.

McG, dir. *Charlie's Angels*, 2000; Columbia Pictures.

Miller, George, dir. *Mad Max: Fury Road*, 2015; Warner Brothers Pictures.

Noyce, Phillip, dir. *Salt*, 2010; Columbia Pictures.

Parks, Gordon, dir. *Shaft*, 1971; Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Scott, Ridley, dir. *Alien*, 1979; 20th Century Fox.

Shortland, Cate, dir. *Black Widow*, 2021; Marvel Studios.

Siodmak, Robert, dir. *The Killers*, 1946; Universal Pictures.

Soderbergh, Steven, dir. *Haywire*, 2011; Relativity Media.

Spielberg, Steven, dir. *Jaws*, 1975; Universal Pictures.

Tarantino, Quentin, dir. *Kill Bill*, 2003; Miramax Films.

———. *The Hateful Eight*, 2015; The Weinstein Company.

Tornatore, Giuseppe, dir. *Cinema Paradiso*, 1988; Titanus.

Tsui, Hark, dir. *Once Upon a Time in China*, 1991; Golden Harvest.

Wachowski, Lana and Lilly Wachowski, dirs. *The Matrix*, 1999; Warner Brothers.

Wei, Lo, dir. *Fists of Fury*, 1972; Golden Harvest.

Wilder, Billy, dir. *Double Indemnity*, 1944; Paramount Pictures.

Williams, Sue, dir. *The Mao Years: 1949-1976*, 1994; Ambrica Productions.

Wong, Kar-wai, dir. *Ashes of Time*, 1994; Newport Entertainment.

Wu, Ziniu dir. *Nanjing 1937*, 1995.

Wyler, William, dir. *Ben-Hur*, 1959; Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Xiaogang, Feng, dir. *The Banquet*, 2006; Huayi Brothers.

Yuen, Corey, dir. *Yes, Madam*, 1985; D & B Films.

Yuen, Woo-Ping, dir. *Drunken Master*, 1978; Seasonal Film Corporation.

———. *Iron Monkey*, 1993; Golden Harvest.

Zhang, Shichuan, dir. *Burning of the Red Lotus Monastery*, 1928; Mingxing Film Company.

Zhang, Yimou, dir. *Raise the Red Lantern*, 1991; Orion Classics.

———. *To Live*, 1994; The Samuel Goldwyn Company.

———. *Hero*, 2002; Beijing New Picture Film.

Appendix 1: Music in Selected Popular Hong Kong and Chinese Martial Arts and Drama Films 1965-2000

Film title	Year	Director	Composer	Instrumentation in score	Music genres used	Scoring for fight scenes?
The Jade Bow	1966	Fu Chi	Tien Tsao	Symphony orchestra, chinese opera percussion, solo guzheng,	1950s-60s Golden Age Hollywood scoring; Chinese orchestra	Yes
Come Drink With Me	1966	King Hu	Eddie H. Wang, Chou Lan-Ping	Pipa, Chinese percussion, dizi, double bass, guzheng	Chinese orchestra, pop songs (shidaiqu)	No
One-Armed Swordsman	1967	Chang Cheh	Wang Fu-ling	Chinese instruments (suona, percussion guzheng), symphony orchestra, solo flute, vibraphone, tremolo guitar, trumpet, big band	Hollywood suspense and action, Hollywood Western (choir, horns, strings)	Occasionally
A Touch of Zen	1971	King Hu	Wu Ta-chiang, Lo Ming-tao	choir, Chinese orchestra, solo guzheng, solo pipa, brass section, string section (symphonic), vibraphone, diegetic guzheng with vocal	Chinese orchestra, Hollywood suspense scoring,	Yes
Five Fingers of Death (aka King Boxer)	1972	Chang Ho Cheng	Chen Yung-yu	guitar, strings, drumset, horns	Big band jazz,	No
Fists of Fury	1972	Lo Wei	Joseph Koo	rhythm section, orchestra	funk, orchestral (Romantic)	No

Enter the Dragon	1973	Robert Clouse	Lalo Schifrin	jazz big band	funk, big band	Only at the end
Drunken Master	1978	Yuen Woo-Ping	Chou Fu-liang	Chinese opera percussion, symphony orchestra,	jazz, polka, orchestral, Chinese orchestra	No
The Shaolin Temple	1982	Chang Hsin Yen	Wang Li Ping	Chinese instruments	Chinese orchestra and small ensemble	No
The Last Emperor	1987	Bernardo Bertolucci	Ryuichi Sakamoto, David Byrne, Cong Su	Synthesizer, strings, marimba, percussion, erhu, pipa, guzheng, dizi	Romantic orchestral, small ensemble and solo Chinese classical, ambient synth	N/A
Once Upon a Time in China (1)	1991	Tsui Hark	James Wong, George Lam	Guzheng, suona, pipa, western strings	jiangnan sizhu, string quartet	Yes
Raise the Red Lantern	1991	Zhang Yimou	Zhao Jiping	Synthesizer, voice, Chinese percussion	Peking opera, new age synth	N/A
Farewell My Concubine	1993	Chen Kaige	Zhao Jiping	Chinese opera small ensemble, plus dizi, suona, synthesizer	Peking opera, kunqu opera, new age synth	N/A
Iron Monkey (1)	1993	Yuen Woo-Ping	James L. Venable, Gam-wing Chow, Johnny Njo, Wai Lap Wu	Symphony orchestra, Chinese orchestra	Peking opera percussion,	Yes
Ashes of Time	1994	Wong Kar-wai	Frankie Chan, Roel A. Garcia	Symphony orchestra, Chinese orchestra	Small ensemble and solo Chinese classical	Yes
Eat Drink Man Woman	1994	Ang Lee	Thierry Schollhammer	rhythm section, Cuban percussion, sax, trumpet, clarinets, erhu	jazz, mambo, minimalist piano	N/A

To Live	1994	Zhang Yimou	Zhao Jiping	Synthesizer, erhu	Chinese puppet theatre small ensemble (percussion, sanxian, voice), new age synth	N/A
Sunrise Over Tiananmen Square	1998	Wang Shui-Bo	Melissa Hui	Flute, trumpet, pipa, string quartet	Chamber - Chinese classical, European classical	N/A

Appendix 2: List of Compositions by Tan Dun

Opera

1989	<i>Nine Songs</i>
1995	<i>Marco Polo</i>
1998	[Adaptation of] <i>Peony Pavillion</i>
2002	<i>Tea: A Mirror of the Soul</i>
2006	<i>The First Emperor</i>

Film Scores²⁷⁴

1983	Hou bu dui yuan
1985	Lei bei hao chenmo zai yinduyang
1987	Green Jacket
1989	China in Revolution: 1911-1949 (documentary)
1994	The Mao Years: 1949-1976 (documentary)
1994	Aktion K (documentary)
1995	De Oogst Van De Stilte “Broken Silence” (documentary)
1995	Nanjing 1937
1998	Fallen (feature film)
1998	In the Name of the Emperor (documentary)
2000	Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (feature film)
2002	Hero (feature film)
2002	Opera ‘Tea Chakyoubun’ Tan Dun Sakkyoku (TV movie)
2003	Taoism in a Bowl of Water: Tan Dun, a Chinese Composer
2003	The Map
2006	The Banquet (feature film)
2013	Heaven’s Gate (documentary)
2019	East Meets West Chinese New Year (TV movie)

²⁷⁴ IMDb, “Dun Tan,” accessed October 6, 2021.

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0241753/?ref =nmbio bio nm#composer>.

Orchestral Works

(* = date of composition is unverified)

- * Violin Concerto: Rhapsody and Fantasia
- * *Orchestral Theatre*
- 1979 *Li Sao*
- 1985 *On Taoism*
- 1990 *Orchestral Theatre I: O*
- 1992 *Orchestral Theatre II: Re*
- 1993 *Death and Fire, Dialogue with Paul Klee*
- 1995 *Yi1: Intercourse of Fire and Water, for Cello and Orchestra*
- 1996 *Yi2 Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra*
- 1996 *Orchestral Theatre III: Red Forecast*
- 1997 *Yi3 for Cello, Bianzhong, and Orchestra*
- 1997 *Heaven Earth Mankind*
- 1998 *Water Concerto for Water Percussion and Orchestra*
- 1999 *Concerto For String Orchestra and Zheng*
- 1999 *2000 Today: A World Symphony for the Millennium*
- 1999 *Orchestral Theatre IV: The Gate*
- 2002 *Yi0: Concerto for Orchestra*
- 2003 *Paper Concerto for Paper Percussion and Orchestra*
- 2008 *Piano Concerto: The Fire*
- 2009 *Symphony for Strings*
- 2009 *Internet Symphony 'Eroica'*
- 2009 *Earth Concerto for Ceramic Percussion and Orchestra*
- 2011 *Symphonic Poem on 3 Notes*
- 2012 *Percussion Concerto: The Tears of Nature*
- 2013 *Nu Shu: The Secret Songs of Women (harp, 13 microfilms and orchestra)*
- 2014 *Contrabass Concerto: Wolf Totem*
- 2015 *Passacaglia: Secret of Wind and Birds*
- 2017 *Symphony of Colours: Terra Cotta*
- 2018 *Violin Concerto: Fire Ritual*

Chamber and Solo Works

(* = date of composition is unverified)

- * *Black Dance* (string quartet)
- * *Shuang Que* (erhu and yangqin)
- 1977* *Mama is Coming to Visit Me in the Country*²⁷⁵
- 1977* *I Dreamed of Mao Zedong*²⁷⁶ (piano trio)
- 1978 *Eight Memories in Watercolor* (piano) [revised 2002]
- 1982 *Feng Ya Song* (string quartet)
- 1986 *Eight Colours for String Quartet*
- 1987 *In Distance* (piccolo, harp, bass drum)
- 1989 *Traces* (piano)
- 1989 *Soundshape* (water, paper, ceramics)
- 1991 *Elegy: Snow in June* (cello, 4 percussion)
- 1992 *Circle with Four Trios, Conductor and Audience*
- 1993 *Memorial 19 fucks: A memorial to injustice, to all people who have been fucked over* (voice, piano, double bass)
- 1994 *C A G E* (piano)
- 1994 *Ghost Opera* (string quartet, pipa, percussion)
- 1995 *Concerto for Pizzicato Piano and Ten Instruments*
- 1999 *Concerto for String Quartet and Pipa*
- 2000 *Dew-Fall Drops* (piano)
- 2002 *Seven Desires* (guitar)
- 2006 *Secret Land* (cello orchestra)
- 2010 *Chiacone - after Colombi* (cello)

²⁷⁵ Hung, "Western Media (Part I)," 606.

²⁷⁶ Hung, "Western Media (Part I)," 606.

Vocal and Choral

- 1989 "Silk Road" (soprano, percussion)
- 1993 "Lament: Autumn Wind" (solo voice, chamber ensemble)
- 1995 "A Sinking Love" (soprano, 4 viola da gamba or string quartet)
- 2000 Water Passion after St. Matthew
- 2015 Concerto for Piano and Peking Opera Soprano "Farewell My Concubine"
- 2018 Buddha Passion
- 2020 "Prayer and Blessing" (soprano, 12 tam tam, 2 violin, viola, cello)

Experimental Performance

- 1990 Soundshape
- 1991 Silent Earth
- 1992 Jo-Ha-Kyu
- 1993 The Pink

Appendix 3: Summary of Scenes in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*

Act #, Scene #	Time	Approx. scene length	Description (who, where, what)	Music?	Foreground/ Melody Instrument(s)	Cue name in soundtrack
1,1	0.57-2.15	4 min	Li Mu Bai arrives at Shu Lien's compound	YES	cello	1. "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" first half
1,2	2.15-5.10	3 min	Li Mu Bai gives Shu Lien Green Destiny sword, they talk	YES	bawu	
1,3	5.10-6.15	1 min	Shu Lien arrives in Beijing and makes delivery	YES	pipa, string section, brass section	1. "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" second half
1,4	6.15-8.15	2 min	Shu Lien meets with Sir Te at his home	NO		
1,5	8.15-11.40	3.5 min	Shu Lien meets Jen at Sir Te's home	AT END		
1,6	11.40-13.28	2 min	Sir Te shows Green Destiny sword to Governor Yu	NO		
1,7	13.28-15.17	2 min	Jen Yu and Jade Fox prepare for sleep	AT END		
1,8	15.17-21.12	6 min	Jen steals the Green Destiny, is pursued and fights Shu Lien	YES	bawu / nanbangzi / paigu, dagu	4. "Night Fight"
1,9	21.12-22.05	1 min	Shu Lien reports back to Sir Te the next morning	NO		
1,10	22.05-22.45	0.5 min	Madam Yu and Jade Fox see wanted posters for Jade Fox	NO		

1,11	22.45- 23.52	1 min	Bo seeks out May and Tsai	DIEGETIC + AT END		
1,12	23.52- 27.50	4 min	Shu Lien visits Jen Yu at her home	AT END		
1,13	27.50- 28.50	1 min	Jen has a flashback to travelling in desert	YES	dizi / cello / tar / erhu	5. "Silk Road"
1,14	28.50- 30.40	2 min	Tsai and May spy on the Yus, then discover Bo in their home	AT START		
1,15	30.40- 33.05	2.5 min	Shu Lien speaks to Mu Bai when he arrives at Sir Te's home	NO		
1,16	33.05- 39.05	6 min	Fight at Cemetery Hill (Jade Fox, Tsai, May, Bo, Jen, Mu Bai)	YES	string section, percussion, brass	N/A (similar to 3. "A Wedding Interrupted")
1,17	39.05- 40.15	1 min	Sir Te investigates the death of Tsai, with Shu Lien and Mu Bai	NO		
1,18	40.15- 42.25	2 min	Shu Lien has tea with Madam Yu and Jen	NO		
1,19	42.25- 43.05	0.5 min	Bo stands guard outside May's house	YES	pipa	
1,20	43.05- 46.00	3 min	Jen and Mu Bai duel, Mu Bai recovers Green Destiny	YES	dizi, string section, nanbangzi / pipa	10. "In the Old Temple"
1,21	46.00- 49.00	3 Min	Jade Fox and Jen argue at Jen's house	AT START		
1,22	49.00- 52.10	3 min	Mu Bai practices with Green Destiny in courtyard, talks with Shu Lien	YES	erhu, cello	11. "Yearning of the Sword"
1,23	52.10- 53.00	1 min	Lo sneaks into Jen's room at night	NO		

2,1	53.00-55.20	2 min	Flashback - Yu caravan crosses desert, Lo's men attack	YES	english horn, tar / brass section, string section, doumbek	8. "The Encounter"
2,2	55.20-59.45	4.5 min	Jen chases Lo across the desert, they fight	YES	laruan, tar, tambourine	N/A - this is Liu Bo's recording of 'Caravan Bells on the Silk Road'
2,3	59.45-1:02.10	2.5 min	Jen wakes in Lo's cave home, eats, attacks Lo, leaves	DIEGETIC + AT END		
2,4	1:02.10-1:02.50	0.5 min	Jen rides into the desert	YES	cello, pipa	N/A (similar to 2. "The Eternal Vow")
2,5	1:02.50-1:05.00	2 min	Jen wakes up in Lo's cave home again, now a prisoner	NO		
2,6	1:05.00-1:06.00	1 min	Jen takes a bath while Lo sings so she'll know where he is	DIEGETIC		
2,7	1:06.00-1:08.00	2 min	Jen and Lo fight then make love	AT END		
2,8	1:08.00-1:09.30	1.5 min	Jen and Lo ride across the desert, cut to them stargazing	YES	cello, string section, erhu,	N/A (similar to 2. "The Eternal Vow")
2,9	1:09.30-1:12.30	3 min	Jen and Lo ride into mountains to escape the Yu search parties	YES	pipa, erhu, cello	2. "The Eternal Vow" but with erhu instead of cello in intro
3,1	1:12.30-1:13.25	1 min	<i>Flashback ends - Lo and Jen are in Jen's room in present time</i>	AT START		
3,2	1:13.25-1:15.10	2 min	Jen's wedding caravan is interrupted by Lo's profession of love	DIEGETIC + YES	suona, dizi, drums / string section,	3. "A Wedding Interrupted"

3,15	1:39.25-1:40.25	1 min	In cave, Jade Fox prepares poison darts while Jen sleeps (drugged)	NO		
3,16	1:40.25-1:41.20	1 min	Shu Lien's family tends to her wounds	NO		
3,17	1:41.20-1:44.00	2.5 min	Mu Bai finds Jen in the cave drugged, Shu Lien arrives with Bo	NO		
3,18	1:44.00-1:47.00	3 min	(same scene) Jade Fox attacks Mu Bai, dies, Shu Lien and Jen make a plan to find the antidote for Mu Bai	YES	string section, brass / bawu	12. "Sorrow"
3,19	1:47.00-1:47.45	0.5 min	Bo buries Jade Fox, Jen rushes to find the antidote	YES	brass / string section	
3,20	1:47.45-1:50.50	3 min	Shu Lien and Mu Bai talk in the cave, as Mu Bai slowly dies from poison	YES	string section / cello	
3,21	1:50.50-1:52.20	1.5 min	Jen arrives too late to save Mu Bai, Shu Lien gives her parting advice	YES	cello	
3,22	1:52.20-1:53.30	1 min	Jen goes to Wudang Mountain to meet Lo	YES	cello	
3,23	1:53.30-1:55.10	1.5 min	The next morning, Jen jumps from Wudang Mountain, floats away	YES	cello, percussion	