

**MUSICAL AND CULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS WITHIN THREE CHINESE  
ORCHESTRAS IN TORONTO**

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## **Abstract**

Chinese orchestras have been active in Toronto, Canada since at least 1969, but their activity has rarely been documented; as a genre, Chinese orchestras in the diaspora are largely unrepresented in musical scholarship. In addressing this significant gap, my dissertation explores the question: how do Chinese diasporic musicians negotiate internal musical and cultural spaces within their orchestras? It traces the roots and development of Chinese orchestras in Toronto, situating them within discourses of diasporic and transnational histories and development.

Using interviews, questionnaires, participant-observation, and document analysis, I examine three primary topics: music education, repertoire, and musical and cultural interactions. First, I discuss how Chinese instrument education in the GTA, especially for youths and seniors, assists Chinese immigrants in staying linked to their culture and teaches successive generations about their heritage. Chinese instrument education has undergone significant changes over the past seven decades, broadening from “internal” transmission of music knowledge and skills within private lessons, ensembles and orchestras to a broader community engagement. I then analyze the patterns of repertoire among Toronto Chinese orchestras and learn that these orchestras have frequently cooperated and exchanged ideas with musicians and composers from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan over the years, and their main target audience is the Chinese communities within the GTA. Finally, I explore the cultural, social and musical interactions that occur within Chinese orchestras. I discover that the identities and self-positioning of Chinese orchestra members are expressed through the choices they make in relation to musical notation, competence, membership, and social interaction. Chinese orchestras

serve as a microcosm of society, revealing how Chinese social and cultural practices in the diaspora operate in Toronto's Chinese communities.

Through a systematic study of three Chinese orchestras in the Greater Toronto Area of Canada, this study explores the rich history of Chinese musical involvement in the region that connects homeland to new Canadian contexts, demonstrating the musical and cultural complexity of engaging Chinese musicians and music in a specific diaspora setting.

**To my parents**  
致我的父母

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **Background**

All immigrant groups to Canada have brought with them their rich cultural heritage; the Chinese are no exception. The history of the Chinese in Canada reaches back to the late eighteenth century. In 1788, fifty Chinese artisans accompanied Captain John Meares to help build a west coast trading post and boost trade in sea otter pelts between Guangzhou, China and Nootka Sound, British Columbia (A B. Chan 2019). In 1858, Chinese immigrants from San Francisco started landing in the Fraser River valley (A B. Chan 2019). From these modest beginnings, today, according to the 2021 Census, 4.7 percent of Canada's population identifies as ethnically Chinese (Statistics Canada 2022a), and 13.9 percent of the population in Toronto is Chinese (Statistics Canada 2022b). Chinese Canadians have contributed to every aspect of Canadian society, including music and music education. As an essential part of Chinese culture, Chinese traditional instrumental music preserves and enhances the cultural diversity of Canada.

Since the late nineteenth century, music of Chinese immigrants, primarily Cantonese, has taken root in Canada and can be divided into four genres: folk song, Cantonese opera, Cantonese ensemble music, and traditional music other than Cantonese (Liang 2014). In the late nineteenth century, the predominant music genres were Cantonese folk song and Cantonese opera. By the 1870s, there were three Cantonese operatic clubs established in Victoria, BC (Liang 2014). In the early twentieth century in Canada, a large number of amateur Cantonese opera groups were established (Canada Museum of History, n.d.). Cantonese opera in Canada was at its heyday from the mid-1930s until the beginning of the 1940s (A Chan 2011, 157). From 1945 until the mid-1960s, however, Cantonese opera was less active in Vancouver, as the older generations withered and the younger generations pursued different interests in a more racially

tolerant city (Johnson 1996). The majority of Chinese immigrants during that period were from Hong Kong, and from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, amateur Cantonese opera clubs in Canada once more drew in professional performers and groups from Hong Kong (discussed further in Chapter Two). Despite these developments, formal cultural interactions between the People's Republic of China and Canada did not exist prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1970 (Liang 2014). By the end of the 1970s, Cantonese folk song and Cantonese opera were still the predominant genres of Canadian Chinese music, as well as Cantonese instrumental ensemble music. After China's reform and opening up in 1979, increasing numbers of people from mainland China immigrated to Canada, which brought many professional Chinese instrumentalists and Chinese music enthusiasts. These musicians became involved in the Chinese community's musical activities in Canada, contributing both new repertoire and techniques to performances.<sup>1</sup>

In the late 1960s, another music genre, the Chinese orchestra, started to take its place in the Canadian Chinese music scene. Chinese orchestras consist of around fifteen to sixty members performing large ensemble pieces and concertos featuring mainly Chinese instruments with a mix of Western instruments.<sup>2</sup> Compositions performed are mostly based on the principles of Western symphonic music.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the four genres Liang mentions, Cantopop and Mandopop were also brought to Canada by Chinese immigrants. Although the Chinese music scene in Toronto is diverse and well-developed, I am not able to describe it in its entirety in this dissertation.

<sup>2</sup> There are four instrument sections in the modern Chinese orchestra: plucked strings, bowed strings, winds, and percussion. Western instruments can include cello, double-bass, timpani, marimba or harp.

<sup>3</sup> Chinese orchestras are differentiated from Chinese ensembles, which consist of ten to thirty members playing traditional silk and bamboo music (Chinese string instruments and wind instruments) or newly composed ensemble pieces with Chinese instruments (ensembles mainly feature Chinese instruments, but will on occasion add a cello or double-bass). These instruments usually simultaneously play variations of a single melodic line, creating a heterophonic texture.

Over the past two decades, Chinese orchestras have blossomed in Canada. Among Canadian cities and districts, the Greater Toronto Area has the largest number of Chinese orchestras (see appendix a). In the Greater Toronto Area, there are five main Chinese orchestras: Toronto Chinese Orchestra (TCO), Ontario Chinese Orchestra (OCO), Canadian Chinese Orchestra (CCO), Canada Oriental Chinese Orchestra (COCO) and North America Chinese Orchestra (NACO). My research focuses on three of these five orchestras, the ones to which I was able to gain access and had available historical documents: first, the longest-running Chinese orchestra (TCO) comprised mostly of amateur musicians; second, the second longest-running Chinese orchestra (OCO) comprised of professional musicians;<sup>4</sup> and third, a relatively new Chinese orchestra (CCO) with amateur musicians.

## **Thesis**

In this dissertation, I explore how three Chinese orchestras establish their presence and meet the needs of their community in the GTA.<sup>5</sup> Through an examination of immigration and settlement history, music education, repertoire, and culture, I argue that Chinese diasporic musicians engage in complex negotiations of internal musical and cultural spaces within community orchestras.<sup>6</sup> These negotiations depend on interactions amongst individuals within the orchestras including their age, birthplace, experience of music, competency level on instruments, language, the degree to which they maintain Chinese cultural practices, as well as

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<sup>4</sup> According to the orchestras' directors and members, professional musicians are those who graduated from conservatories of music in China.

<sup>5</sup> I decided to conduct my research in the Greater Toronto Area because it has the most Chinese orchestras in Canada; it is also where I am living, making more indepth fieldwork possible.

<sup>6</sup> I use the term "internal" here to refer to the internal workings of Chinese orchestras, in opposition to the orchestras' interactions with entities outside of themselves (eg., audiences, funding bodies, venues, etc.). The orchestras' internal and external aspects are inextricably interrelated. In order to delimit the scope of my research, I focus primarily on the internal relationships within the orchestras.

the aims and purposes of each orchestra.<sup>7</sup> The following subtopics will add further depth to this research:

- How do Chinese and non-Chinese students learn about Chinese music?
- What are the patterns of repertoire amongst Toronto Chinese orchestras?
- What kinds of cultural, social and musical interactions are taking place within Chinese orchestras?

Although Chinese music orchestras have been active in Toronto since 1969, their activities have been rarely documented; as a genre, Chinese orchestras in diaspora are largely unrepresented in musical scholarship. My research will fill this significant gap, tracing the roots and development of Chinese orchestras in Toronto, situating them within discourses of diasporic and transnational histories and development.

## **Theoretical Frameworks**

In the past twenty years, scholars have applied theoretical frameworks inspired by cultural and social studies of Chinese diasporic music ensembles in Canada and the US and have examined issues related to diaspora (e.g., Zheng 2010; Rao 2016; Ng 2015; McGuire 2014), gender (e.g., Zheng 2010; McGuire 2014), identity (e.g., Zheng 2010; Cheung 2013; McGuire 2014), globalization (e.g., Lam 2008; Zheng 2010; Cheung 2013), transnationalism (e.g., Jeffcoat 2009; Zheng 2010; Wang 2014), and hybridity (e.g. McGuire 2014; Rao 2017; Hung 2017).

## Diaspora

In her book, *Claiming Diaspora: Music, Transnationalism, and Cultural Politics in*

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<sup>7</sup> Exploring the relationship of Toronto's Chinese orchestras in with Canadian policies of multiculturalism, and particularly the complex and constantly changing cultural negotiations in Toronto, is beyond the scope of this study.

*Asian/Chinese America* (2010), devoted to Chinese immigrants' music-making history in the United States, Su Zheng views the term "diaspora" as a way to describe the social and cultural experiences of Chinese Americans, both past and present, as well as their emotions, memories, and imaginations. Through in-depth research, it can also serve as a tool for analyzing the deeper meanings and implications of the diasporic conditions that shape Chinese American cultural practices and forms (11).

Nancy Rao (2016) focuses on the historical study of Cantonese opera in North America during the 1920s. She explores the importance and meaning of the ritual and entertainment functions that Cantonese opera offered to Chinese diaspora communities (113). Similarly, Wing Chung Ng (2015) also explores the crucial role played by Chinese diaspora communities in the development of Cantonese opera.

McGuire (2014) explores how members of a Chinese Canadian kung fu club maintain their Chinese identity in diaspora through participation in lion dance and kung fu.

### Gender

Zheng (2010) touches on the topic of gender roles in Chinese diasporic music making. She traces the complex intercultural influences on gender roles in these immigrant contexts, in particular the increased involvement of women in American Chinese music compared to that of Chinese women in music in China. She finds that in the United States, Chinese American women have been highly involved in music making. As early as 1916, the Women's American Oriental Club—a group established with around thirty members made up of female Chinese students and the wives of Chinese students at Columbia University—organized the first formal public reception specifically for Chinese women in New York (174-75). Zheng traces gender patterns of the early twentieth century Chinese immigration back to the traditional patriarchal Confucian

norms, and departures from these—all of which had a profound impact on Chinese diaspora gender roles in music and the increased roles of women.

In Chinese societies, particular art forms and instruments are identified mostly with one gender. For example, lion dances and their accompanying percussion are most commonly associated with men. McGuire (2014) notices that while men conventionally performed lion dances and drumming in the Hong Luck Kung Fu Club in Toronto, women conventionally played cymbals. During McGuire's fieldwork in 2008-2014, the club started to loosen gender restrictions on lion dance roles, although most of the students were still male (126). This pattern reflects the traditional patriarchy of China in which men are dominant and powerful; the lion dance is a symbol of such masculinity. Meanwhile, in Hong Kong, Toronto, and Boston, McGuire found that increasing numbers of female lion dancers perform on stages, thereby challenging traditional masculinity and social inequality. McGuire offers a perspective of at-once an insider and outsider (being a non-Chinese member of the lion dance club) which allows him to observe how Chinese female performers struggle and negotiate with masculinity.

Cases of gender inequality are becoming less prominent in scholarship devoted to Chinese music groups in North America. Nevertheless, I would like to see more research on these topics to understand the history of music within Chinese diaspora and its progress toward gender equality.

### Identity

The relationship between music and cultural and social identity is a frequent topic in the literature (Lum 1996; Zheng 2010; Cheung 2013; McGuire 2014). Lum (1996) provides a close examination of how karaoke has been embraced by various groups of first-generation Chinese

immigrants as more than just a form of popular entertainment, but as a tool to (re)shape their social identity and lifestyle.

Zheng (2010) discusses the differences in attitudes toward music-making between two Chinese music groups in “(re)constructing their cultural identities and influencing music group and individual musicians to select different modes of performance and presentation” (107): that is, between either self-enjoyment or pursuit of the acceptance of Chinese musical culture by mainstream Americans (108). Zheng’s research reveals the complexity of the Chinese diaspora’s acculturation to American society. On one hand, these music groups want to help community members maintain their Chinese culture identities through performing Chinese music. On the other hand, they try to incorporate themselves into mainstream culture and seek mainstream acceptance.

Similar to Zheng, Cheung (2013) studies the interrelationship between Cantonese opera and the Chinese communities in Edmonton. Cantonese opera, as an art form and a cultural practice, “plays a pivotal role in meeting changing community needs and in shaping the Chinese self-identity that shifted from sojourners to settlers over a period of nearly a hundred years in Edmonton” (100). After the late 1980s, through Cantonese opera fundraising, the Chinese not only helped build Chinese community infrastructures but also contributed to mainstream higher educational institutions in Edmonton. Their philanthropic participation has enriched multiculturalism of Canada as the Chinese share this performing art and also has enhanced their self-identity as settlers (97).

McGuire (2014, 140) shows that these diasporic clients, who are Canadian-born Chinese or of mixed Chinese descent, associate the lion dance with Chineseness and attempt to display

that identity at their celebrations through entertainment for their guests. This pattern reflects the lasting power of the lion dance performance in reinforcing their Chinese cultural identity.

Both Cheung and McGuire conducted studies on Chinese traditional art forms and state these art forms are not just for entertainment purposes but play essential roles in shaping/displaying the cultural identities of the Chinese diaspora. Music and other art forms can be utilized to draw boundaries between cultures by strengthening cultural identities and, at the same time, these art forms can also help the Chinese diaspora reach out to the mainstream cultures and display the richness of their cultural forms.

### Globalization

Globalization is a timely and thus prominent topic for scholars. Globalization thrives in music transmission through Arjun Appadurai's well-recognized five scapes: ethnoscapescapes, technoscapescapes, ideoscapescapes, financescapescapes, and mediascapescapes (Appadurai 1990, 296). People travel or immigrate to foreign countries and bring back and forth cultures, ideologies, arts, music, etc., with them; furthermore, these exchanges occur through global media networks. Thus, globalization has led to an increase in music transmission and development among countries.

Lam's article (2008) is dedicated to exploring the relationship between Chinese music and globalization. He outlines how Chinese immigrants have introduced their hybridized, globalized Chinese contemporary instrumental music to their host countries, "whether it is played on the piano, the *guzheng*, or with some kind of mixed ensembles" (47). "As a result, throughout the globalized world, wherever there are Chinese people, there is Chinese music, which often means contemporary Chinese instrumental music" (47).

In contrast to Lam, Cheung (2013) focuses on how globalization has contributed to the development of Cantonese opera in Edmonton and enabled it to catch up with the advances of Cantonese opera in China. The author mentions that before the mid-1960s, Cantonese opera development in Edmonton was two to three decades behind the production of Cantonese opera in Cantonese dialect areas in China during the same time span. He traces this pattern back to the sociopolitical environment of hatred under oppressive Canadian immigration regulations, prohibitive migration strategies and restrictive re-entry processes that prevented travel to China from Edmonton. With the development of technology and globalization in the twenty-first century, Cantonese opera in Edmonton has been able to catch up to that in Hong Kong and Guangzhou (99).

In addition, Cheung perceives three associated developments: “acquisition of the most up-to-date repertoires, the use of modern stage effects and capitalizing on visiting professionals to take lessons from them” (80).

Frequent travels between Edmonton, Hong Kong and China in the twenty-first century enabled amateur performers to easily acquire the most up-to-date repertoires and news to share with other club members. The information and news were then transmitted to the audience through performances (80).

These exchanges form a complete cycle of global transmission.

Zheng (2010) also conducted research on how globalization influences Chinese instrumental ensemble in New York. In the 1980s, some famous Chinese instrumental musicians arrived in New York. Therefore, Chinese instrumental music performance became more professional to the point that the artistic level of musicians of some particular instruments is comparable to that in China (132).

Overseas Chinese instrumental music has been profoundly influenced by that of China, including technique and repertoire. Globalization has aided overseas Chinese musicians to achieve synchronous development with Chinese instrumental music in their homeland.

### Transnationalism

The transnational flows and exchange of culture and arts in the Chinese diaspora local music networks have expanded in the past thirty years (Zheng 2010). Jeffcoat (2009) studies two Chinese orchestras in America and finds that both have deep connections with mainland Chinese orchestras and Chinese music organizations. They have invited and supported ensembles, orchestras and musicians from China to perform in the US. The orchestra members and leaders also build networks in mainland China and maintain contact with orchestras there (27). Chinese diaspora orchestras have imported musical materials, recruited musicians and been trained by musicians from China (35). However, in Jeffcoat's estimate, the practices of Chinese diaspora musicians have had very little effect on orchestras in the homeland. Jeffcoat's research not only indicates that overseas Chinese orchestras have been greatly influenced and benefited by transnationalism, but also that musical and cultural transnationalism does not always work mutually or symmetrically between host countries and homelands.

Like Jeffcoat, Zheng (2010) also conducted research on how transnationalism impacts Chinese diaspora musicians in the United States. In the past three decades, New York local institutions have continuously sponsored performing troupes and visiting musicians from China and have imported musical instruments as well (270). However, in contrast with Jeffcoat's view, Zheng notes that while New York organizations have invited Chinese musicians and troupes to visit, New York Chinese musicians have also traveled to other countries including China for recording, performances, lectures, and festivals. Furthermore, some Chinese American

composers, musicians and groups have been invited to music festivals as guest artists in their home countries.

Grace Wang (2014) examines the many ways that Asian Americans utilize music to shape their personal and cultural identities in transnational and national environment. She indicates that transnational music industries such as Mandopop demonstrate the processes of globalization that are less through “East-West polarities” than through the diverse and “multidirectional” interactions of “cultural, popular, and market influences in Asia” (20).

Transnationalism, as a social phenomenon, has helped overseas Chinese to establish a closer relationship with their homeland, made the music exchange between overseas and China more convenient, and promoted the development of Chinese music between China and abroad.

### Hybridity

Canada and the United States are multicultural societies continuously being built by immigrants from different parts of the world. Multiculturalism and pluralism often lead to processes of cultural hybridity, including musical hybridity.

McGuire (2014) maintains that even though the Hong Luck club is devoted to continuing traditional Chinese art form and culture, “members also show their awareness of the complexity and hybridity of a multicultural and multigenerational group of people engaging in these practices in a diasporic context” (40). For example, he recounts a hybridized encounter with a client—a groom who, for his marriage celebration and reception, sought to honour his one-eighth Chinese heritage with a lion dance, but a lion dance accompanied by rock music. For this man, the lion dance was just entertainment in which the accompanying music was replaceable; however, the musicians were conflicted about traditional cultural beliefs and ritual uses of the lion dance. They finally found a solution: at the beginning they played the rock music to

accompany the lion's entrance, then played the lion dance club's own percussion when they did a traditional performance. This compromise not only met the groom's wish to represent his complex identity as one-eighth Chinese as well as a rock music fan, but also permitted the club to keep its legitimacy and tradition (142).

Nancy Rao (2017) discusses how Cantonese opera troupes in the 1920s/1930s United States/Canada became mixed gender by necessity, since there were not enough performers of either gender to form their own troupe, a kind of hybridity that was not allowed in Hong Kong and southern China (85).

Eric Hung (2017) explores hybridity between Chinese and Western European art music by examining how songs from the Cultural Revolution are arranged by Jiang Yiwen, the second violinist of the Shanghai Quartet, in the United States in order to "bring the Chinese piece closer to Western conventions" (231). For example, in the beginning of Yiwen's arrangement of CHEN Gang's "Miao Mountain Morning," he adds "a major-chord tremolo played by the second violin, viola, and cello throughout the opening solo by the first violin...[creating] an exotic-sounding work closer to Western art music" (232).

McGuire, Rao, and Hung all consider how musicians negotiate cultural hybridity and musical hybridity—a topic warranting further attention.

## **Positionality**

As an international Chinese student in Canada, a *pipa* performer, a member of TCO, an invited guest of CCO and the founder of Panda Booboo Music Club,<sup>8</sup> my identities and positions as both an insider and outsider have provided me valuable insights into Chinese

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<sup>8</sup> Panda Booboo Music Club is a non-profit Chinese music ensemble that consists of three York University students or alumni.

orchestras and Chinese diaspora communities. Being an “insider” has provided me with personal contact and information available only to those actually participating in the musical activities and life. In China, I began playing the *pipa* at the age of six and joined a youth orchestra at the age of ten. I received my bachelor's degree from the Nanjing University of the Arts in instrument performance and participated in both large community orchestras and university ensembles. I have subsequently done graduate work in World Music and Ethnomusicology in the United States and Canada (Northern Illinois University in Dekalb, Illinois, USA and York University in Toronto, Ontario, Canada) and have participated in Chinese music ensembles and orchestras in both countries. I thus have an insider perspective of Chinese orchestras both inside China and in North American diaspora. However, I consider myself an outsider to the Chinese diaspora community in the GTA since I have been in Toronto for only four years and am still new to the specific Chinese orchestras and Chinese communities in the GTA. Being an “outsider” and relative newcomer to these communities—both inside and outside the academy—has also provided me a distinct perspective. I can appreciate views of musical and cultural activities and experiences in the bigger contexts.

My various positions and experiences have not only enriched my musical career as a performer but also have offered me opportunities to engage in Chinese orchestras and Chinese diaspora communities, which in turn triggered my interest in studying Chinese music ensembles and orchestras in Toronto, the city where I now live. Despite the fact that Chinese orchestras have nearly thirty years of history in the GTA, little information or sources regarding the orchestras have been documented. There are very few archives or books that include this information. I hope that through conducting research, I will be able to uncover this vital

information and data, thereby contributing to the history of Chinese music ensembles and orchestras in the GTA and in diaspora more broadly.

## **Methodology**

I used both qualitative and quantitative methodologies in my research and data collection. To achieve a deeper understanding of these three orchestras, I conducted approximately twenty in-depth interviews with the directors and members between March 2020 and January 2023, including former and current Chinese and non-Chinese members, as well as casual interviews with TCO members from different instrument sections (see appendix b). I also had many casual conversations with TCO members during dinners and “hanging out” over bubble-tea or BBQ. In order to gather broader information from more people and further understand the orchestras' impacts on the community, I also distributed questionnaires (see appendix c) to twenty-two TCO members, of which eleven were returned to me. I integrated the information from the questionnaires into the body of my dissertation. In addition, I was a participant-observer in both performances and rehearsals of TCO and CCO,<sup>9</sup> allowing me to more fully understand the challenges and negotiations that have occurred inside the orchestras. Furthermore, I analyzed documents and program books from each of the three orchestras to learn more about how the orchestras selected and expanded repertoire over the last two decades.

I began fieldwork for this project in the early days of the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has necessarily impacted the work that I have been able to do, and how I have been able to do it. One of the most obvious impacts was the fact that I had to conduct many of my interviews

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<sup>9</sup> In February 2022 I joined the pipa section of the TCO. I performed in one of their annual concerts (June 25, 2022) and in one recording session (December 16, 2022). I also joined the pipa section of the CCO and participated in two of their annual concerts: June 19, 2021 and June 26, 2022.

online. Online platforms such as Zoom and WeChat provided my interlocutors and me with a safe space to connect with each other; however, there are a number of drawbacks to conducting interviews online during the COVID-19 pandemic. Facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice are more difficult to interpret in an online setting. Another difficulty of conducting interviews online is the potential for technical problems. During an interview, a poor internet connection, audio or video glitches, and software compatibility issues can all cause disruptions. Additionally, distractions such as background noise, pets, children may be more likely to occur during online interviews for both the interviewer and the interlocutors.

More importantly than the physical constraints of fieldwork has to do with my research community being Chinese, broadly understood to be ground zero of the pandemic. The established connection between China and the origins of the pandemic led to an increase in global anti-Asian prejudice and hate crimes, including in Canada and Toronto. Chinese and those who are perceived as Chinese have experienced verbal and physical harassment. The rise in anti-Asian sentiment led to a fear among many in the Chinese diaspora of going out in public and general anxiety about their Chinese identity. While many of the participants with whom I spoke played in Chinese orchestras to establish and maintain their Chinese identities, I was working with them during a period of time when their Chinese identities were making them targets. While I can't say for sure how my work was affected by this situation, I am sure that it played a significant role in the ways people behaved and what they said. Throughout my fieldwork, I remained vigilant to these effects.

## **Overview of Chapters**

This dissertation comprises six chapters. Following the introduction in the first chapter,

the second chapter provides an overview of the history of Chinese music in Toronto, covering Chinese immigrant history in first Canada and then Toronto, as well as Chinese music groups/orchestras in Canada and Toronto, and finally Chinese orchestra development abroad and in Toronto.

The third chapter explores the history of Chinese musical instrument education in Toronto which includes: comparing Chinese instrument training in China and Canada, specifically in Toronto; providing a brief overview of the history of Chinese instrument training in Toronto before the 1990s; introducing the four most common ways of learning to play a Chinese instrument in Toronto along with the outlines of the Chinese Music Proficiency Examination.

The fourth chapter discusses the repertoire of Toronto Chinese orchestras, which includes discussing the evolution of the Chinese orchestra in China; introducing Toronto-based Chinese orchestras and analyzing these orchestras' repertoire; and discussing the changes of the repertoire of each orchestra over the past two decades.

The fifth chapter concerns how musicians negotiate the internal musical and cultural spaces within Canadian Chinese orchestras through choices made about musical notation, membership issues, and social interaction issues.

The sixth and last chapter concludes by summarizing the various ways in which my findings support the thesis of the dissertation that Chinese diasporic musicians have to navigate internal musical and cultural spaces within their Chinese orchestras. It clarifies how the project contributes to the ethnomusicology literature on Chinese orchestras in diaspora, as well as providing future directions for research.

## **Chapter Two: History of Chinese Music in Toronto**

### **Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the historical immigration context of Chinese music in the diaspora in Canada. In doing this, it follows a specific thread—that of music—within a complex fabric of the history of the Chinese community in Canada, treating the following topics: Chinese immigrant history in Canada, Chinese immigrant history in Toronto, Chinese music groups/orchestras in Canada, Chinese Orchestras Development Abroad, and Chinese Orchestras in Toronto. The chapter thereby provides an overview and chronology of the evolution of Chinese music in Canada.

### **Chinese Immigration to Canada**

The history of Chinese immigration in Canada can be traced back more than 200 years. In 1788, Captain John Meares, a British fur trader, sailed into Nootka Sound on Vancouver Island with fifty Chinese laborers from Macao and Guangzhou. The Captain brought in another seventy Chinese laborers the next year. The laborers assisted him in the construction of “a fortress and a 40-tonne schooner” (Simon Fraser University, n.d.). The availability of low-cost Chinese labor was essential in the development of British Columbia. However, there was no record of further Chinese immigrants on the western coast of Canada until the mid-nineteenth century (Simon Fraser University, n.d.).

In 1857, the “gold rush” started along the west coast, and news of the discovery reached China. In the next year, the first group of Chinese immigrants came to Victoria from San Francisco. Later, more Chinese laborers arrived in British Columbia from Hong Kong—and Guangdong province according to some sources—in a search of a better life. According to

the 1881 Census of Canada, there were “4,383 Chinese in Canada of which 4,350 resided in B.C., 22 in Ontario, 7 in Quebec, and 4 in Manitoba. Before the 1900s, virtually all Chinese in Canada were concentrated in B.C” (Simon Fraser University, n.d.).

During this period, Chinese people were commonly discriminated against in British Columbia. In 1871, British Columbia joined Confederation, and the first Legislative Assembly approved an act disenfranchising Native Indians and Chinese the next year (Simon Fraser University, n.d.). Such an episode of racism would clearly have psychological, social, educational and economic consequences which would extend over generations.

The effects of these racist policies were intertwined with very poor working conditions. The Canadian Pacific Railway began construction in 1881 and was finished in 1885. The railway linked Eastern Canada to British Columbia and played a significant part in the nation's growth. The railway was built with the help of around 15,000 Chinese laborers (Lavallé 2008). These laborers were regarded as expendable and not as potential fellow citizens. In fact, in the same year that the railway was finished, the federal government placed a \$50 head tax on all Chinese immigrants. Diplomats, clergymen, businessmen, students, tourists, and men of science were the only ones who were exempted. The head tax was meant to deter Chinese laborers from coming to Canada by imposing a significant financial burden on them. In 1901, the tax was raised to \$100, and in 1903, it was raised to \$500 (Simon Fraser University, n.d.).<sup>10</sup>

The Chinese were not welcome in Canada in the late nineteenth century. They were forced to live on the outskirts of cities in areas known as “Chinatowns.” As with any ghetto arrangement, the inhabitants valued being separated since they preferred living together and practicing their traditions (Simon Fraser University, n.d.). However, the ghettoization was

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<sup>10</sup> According to the Bank of Canada, \$100 Canadian dollars in 1914 equals \$2,545.00 Canadian dollars in 2022.

imposed on the Chinese and had many negative effects: isolation, inconvenience, difficulties of connection to services and lack of policing, health services and schools.

A union was established in 1916 by Chinese laborers called the Chinese Labor Association, which went on strikes for equal treatment.<sup>11</sup> The Chinese Workers' Protective Association (CWPA) had ties to the Canadian Communist Party in the 1920s. During 1930s, some white workers started to cooperate with Chinese workers to fight against inequality. The CWPA and the Unemployed Workers Association co-hosted a gathering in 1935 to demand that Chinese workers be treated equally in work (Simon Fraser University, n.d.).

In 1923, the government approved a law prohibiting Chinese from coming to Canada after the failure of head taxes to deter Chinese immigration. A lot of Chinese had to undergo the difficulty of being apart from their Chinese families during 1923 to 1947. According to the 1941 Census, "about 47% of Canada's 35,000 Chinese lived in 5 metropolitan cities: Vancouver (7,880), Victoria (3,435), Toronto (2,559), Montreal (1,865), and Winnipeg (762). Over 90% of the metropolitan Chinese population resided in and near Chinatowns" (Simon Fraser University, n.d.).

In 1947, in response to a complex of factors including pressure from the Chinese Canadian community, many members of which had served in the Canadian forces during WWII, the Canadian government revoked the Chinese Exclusion Act, as well as other prejudicial restrictions. The immigration policy of 1962 allowed Chinese immigrants to enter the country without special restrictions due to race. Consequently, the number of Chinese immigrants increased dramatically from 1962 to 1966 (Simon Fraser University, n.d.). The Canadian government finally lifted all immigration restrictions based on ethnicity in 1967, enabling

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<sup>11</sup> Of course, like in any population, early Chinese immigrants held a wide variety of political views.

qualified people from all around the world to come to Canada, including Chinese business people, professionals and academics. The Investment Canada Act of 1986 subsequently attracted a large number of businessmen from Hong Kong and Taiwan to invest in Canada, though not from mainland China, which had only recently “opened” itself to economic reform.

The majority of Hong Kong residents who immigrated to Canada in the early 1990s were driven by political and economic uncertainty because of Hong Kong’s return to Chinese control. Fewer people left Hong Kong after it was recognized as a Special Administrative Region of China in 1997. Immigrants from mainland China also increased during the 1990s. Throughout the 2000s, the number continued to rise (Simon Fraser University, n.d.). According to the 2021 Census, 4.7 percent of Canada's population identifies as ethnically Chinese (Statistics Canada 2022a).

In 1980, an act recognizing “the contribution of Canadians of Chinese ancestry to Canadian diversity and culture” was approved by the federal government. For the first time, Chinese railway laborers were granted formal acknowledgement. The harm and unfairness of the head tax and the Chinese Exclusion Act were acknowledged in 1987 by all the major political parties, passing a resolution in Parliament. In 2006, the federal government formally apologized for the country’s previous maltreatment of Chinese people (Simon Fraser University, n.d.).

### **Chinese Immigration to Toronto**

Among all the metropolitan cities in Canada, Toronto has the largest Chinese population. According to the 2021 Census, 13.9 percent of the population in Toronto is Chinese (Statistics Canada 2022b). According to Toronto's First Chinatown Plaque (see figure 1), the city's first Chinese dweller was Mr. Sam Ching, who ran a laundry store on Adelaide Street in downtown

Toronto in 1878. During the following decades, Chinese-owned laundries were commonplace in the city. After the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed in 1885, many of its Chinese laborers arrived in Toronto. From 1900 to 1925, Elizabeth Street, north of Queen Street, developed as the site of Toronto's first Chinatown and became a business and residential district.



Figure 1: Spudgun67, *Toronto First Chinatown Plaque 2 - Nathan Phillips Square Toronto, ON*, 2020, photograph, Wikimedia Commons, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Toronto\\_First\\_Chinatown\\_Plaque\\_2\\_-\\_Nathan\\_Phillips\\_Square\\_Toronto\\_ON\\_ON\\_M5H\\_2N1,\\_Canada.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Toronto_First_Chinatown_Plaque_2_-_Nathan_Phillips_Square_Toronto_ON_ON_M5H_2N1,_Canada.jpg).

The size of the Chinese Canadian communities has followed in waves according to these immigration circumstances. The Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 banned Chinese immigration to Toronto, causing a decline in population and businesses. In the early 1950s, there were about 3,000 Chinese residents in Toronto. Over the next decades, with less restrictive immigration

policies, the population doubled as family members of former Chinese immigrants arrived in Canada. In 1967, more Hong Kong immigrants arrived in Toronto after the Canadian government further loosened immigration policies (City of Toronto, n.d.). After 1985, many people from Hong Kong immigrated to Toronto due to the uncertain political future of Hong Kong. From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, the Greater Toronto Area's Chinese demographic increased to 240,000 (Lee 2000, 61). After the mid-1960s, many Chinese immigrants settled in Scarborough, North York, Markham, and Richmond Hill (Lee 2000, 63). The number of Hong Kong immigrants has noticeably decreased since the start of the twenty-first century since they foresaw a more stable political and economic future after China designated Hong Kong a Special Administrative Region. Since the twenty-first century, the majority of Chinese immigrants have come from Mainland China due to increased mobility, prosperity and globalization.

These political and economic circumstances have determined the size and cultural and educational composition of the Chinese communities in Canadian cities, including that in Toronto. These in turn have formed the context for the development of Chinese music initiatives in the diaspora—operas, orchestras, music schools etc.

### **Chinese Music in Diaspora**

While iconic Chinese music traditions such as Cantonese opera and the Lion Dance have received considerable attention from ethnomusicologists (e.g., Rao 2000, 2014; Pang 2005; Cheung 2013; McGuire 2014; Walden 2019), Chinese instrumental ensembles/orchestras are relatively under-researched. In order to understand the issues and theoretical frameworks that have been used by scholars in research on Chinese diasporic music, and in order to situate this research, I will review literature on Chinese diasporic instrumental orchestras/ensembles and

music-related traditional Chinese art forms in North America over the past two decades.

Although my ultimate goal is to focus specifically on instrumental orchestras/ensembles since they are underrepresented in the literature—and I will highlight this category in my dissertation—I will here broaden this literature review to include some other music-related traditional Chinese art forms. At the same time, I will limit my review to Chinese diasporic orchestras/ensembles and music-related traditional Chinese art forms in North America and publications within the last twenty years to focus my attention on the most recent publications as being most relevant to my dissertation. If there are publications that examine Chinese diasporic musics outside of North America and published earlier than 2000 that are highly regarded and seminal to this discussion, I will include those too.

This discussion will first review instrumental music ensembles in China and Chinese instrumental music ensembles in North America; then review musical issues which include musical repertoire, musical notation, playing techniques, and music teaching and learning.

#### Chinese Instrumental Music Ensembles in North America

Chinese orchestras in diaspora now look similar to Chinese orchestras in the homeland, which have members from all over China (professional orchestras) or specific regions (regional or amateur orchestras). Prior to the 1990s however, unlike Chinese orchestras in mainland China, the majority of members of Chinese music ensembles in North America were from Hong Kong. Since the reform and opening up in mainland China in 1979, immigrants from different areas of mainland China have come to North America and participated in musical ensembles. There are some critical differences in the repertoire played by ensembles in the North American diaspora versus ensembles in mainland China, largely because of their differing cultural contexts. In recent years, diasporic orchestras have embraced the host countries' multi-cultures and musics

and blended these music elements into Chinese music; they display their hybrid identities as “Chinese American” or “Chinese Canadian.”

Patty Chan (2022), Toronto Chinese Orchestra’s music director, writes about Chinese orchestras in Canada, which are mostly mid-sized orchestras. Heidi Chan (2015), a Canadian doctoral student and multi-instrumentalist, writes about a mid-sized Chinese orchestra based in Mississauga; ethnomusicologist Kim Chow Morris (2013) describes small Chinese ensembles in Quebec; Huaisheng Qiu (2005), a Chinese visiting scholar at the University of British Columbia, focuses on three mid-sized Chinese ensembles; Yuxin Mei (2014) explores a mid-sized Chinese music ensemble in Houston—the Houston Chinese Traditional Music Group; Zheng (2010) mainly discusses a mid-sized Chinese ensemble in New York – the Chinese Music Ensemble of New York; Jeffcoat (2009), an ethnomusicology graduate student at National Taiwan Normal University, likewise discusses the Chinese Music Ensemble of New York as well as the Chinese Music Society of North America, which is also based in New York. In summary, most North American scholars tend to study medium-sized Chinese ensembles/orchestras. In my opinion, this representation may suggest that medium-sized Chinese ensembles are present in all major cities in North America, with a relatively long history and a stable membership structure.

Previous work on musical features of Chinese diasporic music ensembles focused on subjects such as repertoire selection (e.g., Zheng 2000; Qiu 2005; Jeffcoat 2009; Zheng 2010; Mei 2014; Chan 2015; Chan 2022), musical notation (e.g., Wang 2013; McGuire 2014), innovation in music playing techniques (e.g., Morris, 2013), and music teaching and learning (e.g., Qiu 2005; Prescott, Li, and Lei 2008; Zheng 2010; Wang 2013; McGuire 2014; Chan 2015; Chan 2022).

## Musical Repertoire

Repertoire selection is a common focus in the literature on Chinese diasporic music. Each ensemble/orchestra selects its own preferred repertoire on the basis of its size, performance skills, events, founder, members' ages, generations and backgrounds, and cultural and social goals (e.g., Zheng 2000; Jeffcoat 2009; Zheng 2010; Mei 2014; Chan 2015; Chan 2022). In some of the literature, scholars focus on the repertoire from the perspective of the ensemble's cultural and social goals (e.g., Zheng 2000). However, other scholars pay attention to the ensemble members' generation, event repertoire, and the performance skills and sizes of the ensemble (Jeffcoat 2009; Mei 2014; Chan 2015).

In her entry for "Chinese Music," in the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Su Zheng, an ethnomusicologist working in both United States and China, provides a general introduction to the range of Chinese traditional instrumental music in North America, including repertoire. She states that "small ensembles" with five to ten members often perform some Chinese regional music, for example, Cantonese music or *jiangnan sizhu* (silk and bamboo) music. By contrast, the repertoire of a large Chinese orchestra like The Chinese Music Ensemble of New York, with about fifty members, tends to consist more largely of Chinese classical music, Chinese operas, folk music and modern music, in addition to regional music.

Zheng (2010) offers a nuanced study of how Chinese instrumental ensembles customize their repertoires according to different cultural contexts for performances in distinctive cultural and class locations in New York (193). She finds that the concerts in Chinese communities are less formal than the uptown ones, which have more established conservative "mixed" audiences. The repertoire for Chinese community concerts includes Cantonese music, popular folk songs and traditional Chinese operas, which are recognizable and serve the purpose of making Chinese

diaspora aware of their cultural heritage and sense of belonging. By contrast, the uptown concert repertoire includes Chinese traditional “classic” music or Chinese contemporary modern orchestral pieces in order to introduce Chinese music to mainstream America (193). She looks at the cultural and social meaning of the ensembles’ performances, for example, quoting the CMENY program notes to reveal that their goal is to “help Asian-Americans to be conscious of their cultural heritage and come to a better understanding of it” (193). She highlights their belief that the performances “will serve as cultural activities for young and old immigrants alike for whom Chinese music is the form of music they know best. For those who have newly arrived in this country, such activities will help ease their adjustment to a new environment” (193). While she does not cover other areas of potential analysis, such as performance skills and generational differences in repertoire preference (due perhaps to the fact that she herself is not a Chinese instrumentalist), her contribution is very useful in sketching the landscape of diasporic ensembles in a huge metropolitan setting, identifying membership, location, class context, and cultural context.

Unlike Zheng’s exclusive focus on cultural and social aspects of repertoire selection, Jeffcoat takes a broader viewpoint to examine the repertoire of two New York-based Chinese music ensembles: the Chinese Music Ensemble of New York and Chinese Music Society of North America (2009). He suggests that the common cultural and social goal of these two ensembles is to introduce Chinese music to the West, which is ubiquitous among Chinese diaspora ensembles in North America. To this end, Jeffcoat identifies sources of the construction of what he calls “a borderless pan-Chinese identity” in the regional music of, for example, “Guangdong, Shanghai, Taiwan, remote regions of northwestern China as well as homeland(s) in general” (20). He also shows how the choice of repertoire determines instrumentation and

ensemble size: “during live performances instrumentation and ensemble size fluctuates according to the particular piece being performed” (21). In this article, however, Jeffcoat does not consider whether the ensembles tailor their repertoires for audiences in different events and different locations.

Mei (2014) studies the Houston Chinese Traditional Music Group (HCTMG), examining its repertoire in relation to the members’ ages, generations and backgrounds. The founder of the orchestra and the majority of the members were born in China in the 1950s and 1960s. These members lived through the Cultural Revolution in which music was their main cultural activity; thus, music is strongly tied to their cultural identities, as well as their shared memories. Their repertoire reflects these influences, being “music styles which were composed after the 1960s, and relate to the conservatory style” (5). Not surprisingly, the group focuses on music that was composed after the 1960s, and which was strongly influenced by Mao Zedong’s guiding principle of art: “Making the past serve the present; adapting foreign things for China’s needs” (古为今用, 洋为中用). Mei focuses more on how the founder’s background affects the repertoire. However, she does not discuss whether the repertoire of the group has evolved over time as different generations have joined the group.

Similar to Mei, Chan (2022) also studies the repertoire of Canadian Chinese music ensembles/orchestras in connections to the members’ generations from the 1970s to the present. For instance, the repertoire of the Chinese Instrumental Music Group of the University of Toronto (CIMGUT) (1969-1972) comprised mainly Chinese folk tunes and music composed during the Cultural Revolution, as they were popular during the time (15). However, in recent years, the Toronto Chinese Orchestra’s demographic “has become younger over the years as our repertoire has grown more challenging” (30). Chan states “We needed to inspire our players: to

find repertoire that is challenging and interesting, we have played traditional, contemporary, pop, film, and Canadian works” (30). Apparently, different generations in different periods of time have different preferences on repertoire. These Canadian Chinese ensembles/orchestras’ repertoires have changed from exclusively Chinese music to diverse music genres, which also reveals the younger generations’ keen desire to embrace Canada’s multiculturalism and to build connections beyond the Chinese community.

The literature on diasporic repertoire reveals that sometimes repertoire is chosen for a specific event. For example, Chan (2015) recounts in passing, in an article devoted to the creation of the Millennium Orchestra, how a Chinese music teacher and director in Mississauga arranged well-known Christmas songs such as “Jingle Bells” and “Silent Night” for his class in response to an invitation to perform at a Chinese singing group’s annual event. The popularity of this event with a Chinese audience led to the formation of the Millennium orchestra. The author does not discuss, though, whether the ensemble adjusts its repertoire for each event (i.e., whether or not they have fixed repertoire for certain events).

Developments of hybridization, such as arranging Christmas songs for Chinese instruments, raise the question(s) how such choices of the ensemble’s/orchestra’s repertoire not only reflect its preferences, but also are a product of globalization and transnational musical developments. Furthermore, while membership in Chinese music ensembles/orchestras shows that in recent decades more and more foreign musicians are interested in Chinese music and willing to participate, there is a gap in the research on the repertoire of any ensemble that comprises both Chinese and foreign musicians; that is, whether or not non-Chinese ensemble members’ decisions are reflected in the repertoire remains largely unexplored.

## Musical Notation

In ancient China, oral/aural transmission was the main teaching method for musical education. The traditional *gongche pu* notation<sup>12</sup> was only used for reminding. Western notation was introduced to China by Portuguese Catholic missionaries in the middle of the 17th century, originally only used to record and disseminate liturgy and chants sung in Catholic church. Throughout 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, still through Catholic churches and schools, the status of western notation in the professional music field in China spread. Today, western notation plays a very important role in the music composition of Chinese professional composers, the performance and singing of professional music groups, the music teaching of professional music schools, and people's learning of Western instruments such as piano and violin (Qi and Zhao 2003, 28).

Meanwhile, in the early twentieth century, through increasing contact with the “West,” *jianpu* (numbered musical notation)<sup>13</sup> was introduced to China, brought from France via Japan by Chinese students studying there as one modernizing method of music education. The *jianpu* and the method of recording the music notes are simpler and more accurate than the *gong che* notation. Therefore, the *jianpu* was popularized in China and continues to be used even more broadly than western notation (Qi and Zhao 2003, 28).

The repertoire of most contemporary Chinese ensembles both inside and outside China includes pieces written in both *jianpu* and western notation. Wang (2013) states that *jianpu* is taught and used almost exclusively in the curriculum in Northern Illinois University, since

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<sup>12</sup> *Gongche* notation is one of the traditional musical notation methods of China, originating in the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD). The name is derived from the use of Chinese characters to represent musical notes (Chen 2015, 132).

<sup>13</sup> The *jianpu* notation (numbered musical notation) is a French musical notation system of the 19th century widely used in China (Qi and Zhao 2003, 28).

Chinese Music Ensemble is a credit course. The members are comprised of Chinese and non-Chinese students. Most of them are able to read the notation (either by being taught in the ensemble or knowing it before joining). However, as they are new to Chinese instruments, they may find it challenging to locate corresponding fingering and notes in different keys.

She points out the difficulties that novices encounter when they learn to read *jianpu*—that is, in interpreting the directions the notation gives for playing instruments, for example, in terms of fingering. However, she does not mention the inverse case in which pieces written in western notation may present a challenge for Chinese members to read and find the right pitches on their instruments. Moreover, she also overlooks the fact that in some Chinese music ensembles, some western-trained members prefer to use western notation, and would ask for a western notation version, or just translate the score into western notation. The complexities of the processes of the globalizing dynamic involved in a diasporic ensemble situation include and are reflected in the complexities of contrasting notation systems, issues my dissertation will address.

Canadian ethnomusicologist, Colin McGuire, (2014) is a member of Hong Luck's lion dance club in downtown Toronto. Lion dance is always accompanied by Chinese percussion. As a form of performance, the percussion music is traditionally taught using an oral/aural teaching method. In the absence of any written notation, in order to transcribe Lion Dance and percussion music for his own use and study, McGuire created his own notation, which incorporates music and movement into a system reflecting the characteristics of the style (37).

While he has applied himself to creating his own music notation, it is useful only for himself and for documentation. As his lion dance and drumming teacher David Lieu told him directly, "the rhythms should never be written down because that would allow people to learn them the wrong way; the correct method of transmission was aural, oral, and person-to-person"

(25). Even though it is unusual and not recommended to use notation, in an exceptional accommodation, he was permitted to do it for his own use and study and even to share it in his dissertation for its technical interest.

A review of the literature on these cross-cultural issues of musical notation systems reveals a need for more research on the question: what challenges do novices encounter in learning to read unfamiliar notation? Specifically, I would like to see more research on how non-Chinese musicians or musicians that are not trained in mainland China negotiate reading Chinese notation.

### Playing Techniques

Through vastly increased globalization of the last century, musicians from different cultural and musical backgrounds have been able to experience greatly expanded musical diversity and to cooperate with musicians from other countries. This opportunity has spurred innovations in music playing techniques in order to create novel sounds and to better explore the possibilities of instruments. Kim Chow-Morris (2013) gives her attention to Montreal's Chinese diasporic music-making scenes and discusses two Chinese string instrument musicians—Chih-Lin Chou and Yang Li—who introduced new playing techniques on their instruments (for instance double stops on the *erhu*) to expand their engagement with Western improvisation and electroacoustic traditions and create “a new transcultural musical language” (66). Zhang and Lam (2022) focus on Wu Man, a *pipa* player, and explore how she incorporates “musical elements and world musics” into innovative performative techniques.

Chow-Morris, Zhang, and Lam's attention to Chinese instrument playing techniques is valuable in indicating potential intercultural musical development and new territories of research to explore. Since intercultural music-making is an ongoing and expanding development for

Chinese musicians in diaspora, I expect that there will be more literature on this topic in the coming years.

### Music Teaching and Learning

Musical instruction in diaspora faces the challenge of passing on techniques and knowledge to novices both within and outside the Chinese community. Zheng, in summarizing where and how Chinese American music ensemble members receive musical training, enumerates “four alternatives: music groups, music schools, private teachers, and the media” (2010, 177). Nevertheless, the lack of skilled musicians hampers many Chinese music ensembles/orchestras in North America. Qiu (2005) outlines various means of instruction in Chinese music ensembles/orchestras in British Columbia and reports that in order to improve amateur members’ instrument playing level, the BCCME – a professional-level Chinese music ensemble – cooperating with the BC Chinese Orchestra (BCCO), provides sectional and individual lessons (4). Similarly, Chan (2022) describes how members of the Chinese Instrumental Music Group of Toronto (CIMGOT) taught youth from the Chinese community in the 1970s. They developed their own curricula using folk tunes written in *jianpu* and appointed experienced members as instructors (21).

Likewise, Chan (2015) pays attention to the teaching-learning relationships among members of a Chinese orchestra in Mississauga, Ontario. Her research shows that the focus of teaching in diaspora contexts can be wider than in traditional mainland Chinese ensemble contexts. During her trip with the Millennium Orchestra (consisting of about 30 senior amateur musicians), she found that many members of this Chinese orchestra had been encouraged to learn new instruments in order to fill in gaps in instrumentation within the orchestra. Members learning new instruments usually took lessons from other members within the group (10). This

way of teaching and learning in Chinese music ensembles is characteristic of diaspora contexts where there are few formal Chinese musical teaching institutions or professional teachers. While readers may be interested to learn the pedagogy of these initiatives, none of the above articles focuses on teaching methods.

In order to enrich diversity through music in Midwestern America communities, Missouri State University set up a faculty exchange program in 2007 with a Chinese university for a three-week course of traditional Chinese instrumental music taught on the MSU campus. Prescott, Li, and Lei (2008) provide details of the design and operation of this course, which include choosing and recruiting teachers from China and students locally; establishing teaching schedules and locations; providing technical information and a brief history of Chinese instruments; conducting instrument exercises, and holding the final concert. The authors show the full scope of a Chinese instrument music course, so that we have a comprehensive understanding of how they teach and learn the music.

There were eighteen students (including a high school student and a non-music faculty member) aged 16 to 53 (Lei 2008, 377). Most of them had little background knowledge about Chinese music. The course was successful in introducing the fundamentals of Chinese instrumental music and had a significant effect on the students and the community, as evident in the well-received performances. After the teachers' departure in February 2007, seven students continued to practice and perform in the following months. Their performances attracted diverse audiences, including families with children adopted from China (378). This intercultural musical teaching and learning program raised awareness and interest in another culture, not just in a university but also in the surrounding community.

Wang (2013) introduces another institutional Chinese music ensemble located in Midwestern America: The Northern Illinois University Chinese Music Ensemble. The ensemble constitutes a credit course and is open to both music majors and non-music majors. The instructor of the ensemble is from outside the university and specializes in some Chinese string instruments. The course usually is divided into two parts: private lessons and group rehearsal. The instructor provides private lessons to students. She first demonstrates on instruments, then observes students playing and provides correction or advising. Wang's article reveals how shortages of skilled Chinese instrumental instructors and students can be a problem for Chinese music study and performance among universities in North America. Only a few universities have their own in-resident Chinese instrumental musicians. However, despite the shortage of skilled instructors, this teaching-learning approach of private lessons remains typical.

McGuire (2014) investigates the affiliations between the lion dance and percussion; he describes his own process of becoming a drummer and discusses particular percussion pedagogies. In the lion dance club, the percussion learning is part of lion dance training. Only members who have experience with lion dancing are allowed to learn percussion. Hence they are familiar with those dance routines and repertoire. Even though a few of McGuire's teachers demonstrated percussion rhythms, ornaments and variations to him, the traditional way for learning percussion is not taught, which means that novices observe others' practice and play; then the teachers watch, listen, and correct mistakes (187). This process echoes a Chinese idiom, “‘*throw tiles collect jade* (抛砖引玉),’ meaning trying to figure things out on one's own and being rewarded with guidance” (187). McGuire's research not only spells out the relationship between lion dance and percussion instruments, but also the broader Chinese traditional teaching philosophy.

It appears that many scholars are interested in Chinese music teaching and learning. The main means of music training are through music ensembles/orchestras, schools and private teachers; however, I could not find any mention of Zheng's (2010) fourth alternative: the media. It may be a focus that instructors could use more, and scholars could study more, since online learning is becoming essential, especially during this pandemic. In particular, it offers a way for students in North America to study with excellent teachers in China, as is critical to intercultural communication.

Through reviewing the literature on Chinese music in diaspora, I have found that few works on Chinese diasporic instrumental ensembles/orchestras in North America have appeared over the past two decades. While the literature covers musical issues (e.g., repertoire selection, musical notation, music teaching and learning, music playing techniques), very few academic articles focus on the means of communication within the orchestra; repertoire discussions and decisions inside/outside ensembles; performer and audience expectations; and the experiences of non-Chinese performers. In particular, as I noted above, there is a conspicuous gap in research on how non-Chinese musicians or musicians who are not trained in mainland China negotiate reading Chinese notation.

My dissertation addresses some of these gaps. It will address issues of teaching, learning, rehearsing, and performing music in contexts of Chinese diasporic orchestras in Toronto—in sum, how musicians negotiate the internal musical and cultural spaces within Canadian Chinese orchestras.

These issues involve both musical communication and non-musical communication.<sup>14</sup> Chinese orchestras are sites of cultural contact in which musical communication (e.g., notation

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<sup>14</sup> The “language” of conducting—both gestural and oral—straddles the musical/non-musical divide, and is a centrally important consideration beyond the scope of this dissertation, deserving focused attention.

usage decision) can be categorized culturally as employing either Chinese or Western notation. The non-musical communication in the ensemble contexts can be considered to consist of oral language (Chinese and/or English) and cultural norms (discussed further in Chapter Five).

My dissertation explores these specific musical and cultural areas and questions, and the interfaces among them, taking as a starting point my personal experience as an insider/outsider in Chinese ensembles/orchestras in Toronto.

### **Chinese Music in Canada**

As these Chinese immigrants moved from their homeland to Canada, they also carried their musical traditions to their host country. According to ethnomusicologist Ming-yueh Liang, “Canadian Chinese music is predominantly Cantonese and may be classified in four genres: folk-street-work songs; Cantonese operas; Cantonese ensemble music; and traditional music other than Cantonese” (Liang 2014). Folk-street-work songs and Cantonese operas were probably the first two genres to be recognized. The earliest Cantonese opera activities in Canada can be traced back about 160 years ago. From the early 1860s to 1885, five theatres were built in Victoria’s Chinatown, primarily for Cantonese opera performances (Sebryk 1995, 111). Cantonese opera groups toured from mainland China and Hong Kong to Canada often, reinforcing and nurturing Chinese diaspora’s cultures and traditions. In the 1920s, numerous non-professional Cantonese opera groups were founded in Canada (Canada Museum of History, n.d.).

From the middle of the 1930s to the early 1940s, Cantonese opera in Canada was in its glory (A Chan 2011, 157). Some clubs performed a couple of times per week, challenging each other for prominence. However, from 1945 to the mid-1960s, Cantonese opera was less active in Vancouver, as the elders faded and young generations varied their passions in a more racially

inclusive city (Johnson 1996). From the late 1960s to early 1970s, professional performers and groups from Hong Kong—the source of the majority of Chinese immigrants at the time—were once again brought in by Canadian amateur Cantonese opera clubs. At the end of the 1960s, following the lifting of the restraint on Chinese immigration, a large influx of newcomers led to the revival of Cantonese opera in Canada (Johnson 1996). As recently as 1996 there is testimony that Cantonese opera was popular in Vancouver and Toronto.

In the 1960s, Chinese instrument ensembles became active in Canada. In Vancouver, several young males partook in a Chinese ensemble led by the Hai Fung Association (Sound of Dragon, n.d.). Around about the same period, the Chinese Instrumental Music Group of the University of Toronto (CIMGUT) was formed in Toronto.

Professional musicians from China began arriving in Vancouver in the late 1980s. As a result, the Vancouver Chinese Music Ensemble, Canada's first professional Chinese instrumental ensemble, was founded in 1989 (Sound of Dragon, n.d.). In 1993, Toronto's first Chinese instrument music ensemble, the Toronto Chinese Music Association, was established. Chinese music ensembles and orchestras flourished in Canada after the 1990s. As of 2022, there are about forty-two Chinese instrumental ensembles and orchestras currently active in ten cities across Canada.

### **Chinese Music in Toronto**

In Toronto, Cantonese opera has experienced three development periods: “the burgeoning period, 1918–1949; the transition period, 1950–1962; and the renaissance period, 1963 onwards” (Chan 2011, 155). Toronto's first Chinese music group, the World Mirror, about which very little information survives, was established in 1919. After eight years, the Chinese Freemasons

founded the Gee Gung Tong club in 1927. The city welcomed the Ship Toy Yeun Dramatic Society in 1932. In the following year, The Chinese United Dramatic Society was established (Chan 2011, 155). This society not only brought in professionals from Guangzhou and Hong Kong, but also taught local enthusiasts (City of Toronto, n.d.).

Although Cantonese opera in Toronto thrived until 1949, it was all but silent from 1950 until 1962 (Li 1987, 194).<sup>15</sup> The brief flowering between early 1930s and late 1940s was in fact an unintended consequence of the outbreak of WW II, which trapped professional opera musicians from Guangzhou and Hong Kong in Toronto. With their support, Cantonese opera flourished in Toronto, but when the war ended, the professionals among them gradually left Toronto for home. Without any professional guidance, the opera form began to decline and eventually became silent after 1949 (Li 1987, 193). However, Cantonese opera has seen a revival in Toronto since 1963. New clubs have established in Toronto and professional troupes from Hong Kong and Guangzhou have been brought at least once every year since 1975 (Li 1987, 195).

Another Chinese music genre, the Chinese orchestra, emerged in Toronto in 1969. The Chinese Instrumental Music Group of the University of Toronto (CIMGUT) was the first documented orchestra that I have been able to find. It was founded by Ming Chan, a student at the University of Toronto who was originally from Hong Kong (Patty Chan, personal communication, May 6, 2022). The members were Chinese immigrant students at the university. Some of them played the instruments from Hong Kong, and some of them wanted to learn how to play them. They formed the ensemble “with the purpose of playing and having fun together” (Patty Chan, personal communication, May 6, 2022). In 1973, after many of the members

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<sup>15</sup> The only music group to continue performing in Toronto from 1950 to was the Jin Hung Sing Music Club (Li 1987, 194).

graduated from the university, the ensemble recruited many younger members and changed its name to the Chinese Instrumental Music Group of Toronto (CIMGOT). By 1987, however, after many members dropped out upon entering university or starting to work, the ensemble “disassembled” (Patty Chan, personal communication, May 6, 2022).

After over two decades, the Toronto Chinese Music Association (the former name of the Toronto Chinese Orchestra) was established in 1993. Following that, numerous Chinese orchestras were established in Toronto, and many continue to thrive.

### **Chinese Orchestras in China**

Before discussing Chinese orchestras in Canada, I will outline the history of the Chinese orchestra and its development overseas. Scholars such as Jianzhong Qiao, Kuo-Huang Han, Yan Cheng believe that the founding of the 大同乐会 (Datong Music Society) in 1919 marked the initial formation of the national orchestra. According to ethnomusicologists Kuo-Huang Han and Judith Gray, the modern Chinese orchestra emerged in Nanking, China in 1935 and was based on the Jiangnan Sizhu ensemble.<sup>16</sup> Han and Gray are representative of the widely held belief that this type of ensemble was adopted as the model for the modern Chinese orchestra when they say, “judging from the early instrumentation and repertoire of the modern Chinese orchestra, and from the fact that the jiangnan sizhu ensemble, though a local genre, employed the most popular Chinese instruments, it is fairly accurate to accept this conclusion” (Han and Gray 1979, 14). After the invasions of China by the West and Japan in the second half of the nineteenth and the

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<sup>16</sup> Jiangnan sizhu ensemble takes its name from the “silk and bamboo” music from south of the Yangtze River, featuring bowed, plucked, and struck strings (the “silk”) and bamboo flutes and mouth organ (the “bamboo”) (Witzleben 2001, 223).

beginning of the twentieth centuries, “Chinese intellectuals realized the necessity for modernization” (Han and Gray 1979, 12). Therefore, the modern Chinese orchestra was highly influenced by the Western symphony orchestra. One thing that changed was instrumentation. Even now, although instruments in Chinese orchestras are mainly Chinese instruments, some Western instruments, such as cellos and double-basses, are included because of the need for a bass part to accommodate Western instrumentation (Han and Gray 1979, 16).

Additionally, different instruments, such as marimba and harp, are sometimes added to an orchestra to meet the needs of the repertoire. Furthermore, similar to the west, there are four instrument sections in the modern Chinese orchestra: plucked strings, bowed strings, winds, and percussion. As in the Western symphony orchestra, the musicians typically sit in a semicircle around the conductor (see figure 2). In Chinese communities this type of ensemble is called a “xiandai minzu guanxian yuetuan” (modern folk philharmonic orchestra), a “xiandai guoyuetuan” (modern national orchestra), or the like (Tsui 2001, 264).

Due to the war and lack of attention, the Chinese orchestra was not well developed before the founding of New China (1949). In the 1950s, the Chinese government placed a high priority on the development of Chinese orchestras, and a number of professional Chinese orchestras were formed. In the early period of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), Chinese orchestral activities left almost no traces. After 1974, there were some activities in Chinese orchestral music. Following the end of the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese orchestras rapidly recovered and developed. After the reform and opening up, with the development of China's economy and various undertakings, Chinese orchestras have also been further developed (Cheng 2013).

At present, all provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities in mainland China have established professional Chinese orchestras, and many other cities are actively establishing

Chinese orchestras. All music conservatories, art institutions, and music (or art) departments of universities have founded their own Chinese orchestras. Additionally, there are numerous non-professional Chinese orchestras (Cheng 2013, 155).

According to Qing Xi, the former president of China National Traditional Orchestra (Xi 2011), there are four types of Chinese orchestras (also called national orchestras) in mainland China: first, professional national orchestras in large-scale state-owned institutions supported by the national government; second, national orchestras which evolved from the national bands belonging to the song and dance theaters (groups) of various provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions; third, national orchestras established according to different characteristics in different parts of the country; and fourth, student national orchestras affiliated to national music and art colleges (Xi 2011).

To these four could be added a fifth – amateur orchestras – which are organized by cities, elementary and secondary schools, and other non-governmental groups. Generally speaking, the Chinese orchestra is divided into three types in terms of size: a small ensemble has about ten people; a medium orchestra has about thirty people; and a large orchestra has about seventy people. In a full orchestra, there are four instrument sections: plucked strings, bowed strings, winds, and percussion. In smaller ensembles, only two or three of these are represented, and in exceptional cases, only one (e.g., percussion ensemble).



Figure 2: China National Traditional Orchestra (Photograph from China National Traditional Orchestra's Weibo. Accessed Jan 2, 2021.  
[https://weibo.com/u/2129390231?ssl\\_rnd=1609607421.7299&is\\_all=1#\\_rnd1609607573600](https://weibo.com/u/2129390231?ssl_rnd=1609607421.7299&is_all=1#_rnd1609607573600)).

### **Chinese Orchestras in Diaspora**

Since the mid-twentieth century, Chinese orchestras have flourished not only in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao, and other countries and districts in Asia, but also in Europe, Oceania, and North America. Chinese music scholar Jianzhong Qiao stated that from the 1950s to the present...these Chinese orchestras are found almost everywhere in the world where there are Chinese people, and their international influence is growing (2016, 92). For instance, the earliest Chinese orchestra in Hong Kong was formed by the South China Film Workers' Association in 1957. The Macau Chinese Orchestra was founded in 1987 (Li 2019, 99). The Thau Yong Amateur Musical Association, established in 1959, was the first full-fledged Chinese

orchestra in Singapore, and the Central Cultural Bureau Chinese Orchestra was established in 1960 in Singapore (He 2016, 212). The Melbourne Zhao Feng Chinese Orchestra, Australia's first non-profit Chinese orchestra, was founded in 1982 (Li 2019, 99). The first Chinese orchestra in the United States was the Chinese Music Ensemble of New York, founded in 1961 (The Chinese Music Ensemble of New York, n.d.). Not far behind, Canada's first Chinese orchestra, the Chinese Instrumental Music Group of the University of Toronto, was founded in 1969.<sup>17</sup> See Appendix A for a comprehensive and updated list of “all known ensembles and opera troupes performing Chinese music based in North America, past and present” that was compiled by David Badagnani, an ethnomusicologist and the director of Cleveland Chinese Music Ensemble (Badagnani 2022). This list supplements the history provided above by including an updated account representing the variety of Chinese musical groups in North America including orchestras and ensembles.

Appendix A demonstrates that Chinese music groups can be found in almost every state and province in North America, particularly in metropolitan cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, New York, Vancouver and Toronto, which each have a significant number of Chinese music groups. These groups have been thriving due to the cities' strong social and Chinese demographic bases.

In the past decades, many overseas Chinese orchestras have collaborated with local music groups and those from other cultures to develop their distinct characteristics and repertoires. I

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<sup>17</sup> The difference between a Chinese orchestra and a Chinese music ensemble is one of size. Ensembles are smaller with generally less than 30 members, and a limited range of Chinese and western instruments. Orchestras are bigger with from 30-70 members, playing a much wider range of instruments including both Chinese and western instruments and able to take on repertoire requiring the large instrumentation of orchestral works.

will go into more detail on this issue in relation to Chinese orchestras in the Greater Toronto Area in Chapter Four.

In Toronto and Vancouver—the two cities with the largest number of Chinese immigrants in Canada—a considerable number of Chinese music groups have also been established, and their sizes are relatively large. I will introduce some of the major Chinese orchestras in Toronto in the following section.

### **Chinese Orchestras in Toronto**

In the Greater Toronto Area, there are five main Chinese orchestras: Toronto Chinese Orchestra (TCO), Ontario Chinese Orchestra (OCO), Canadian Chinese Orchestra (CCO), North America Chinese Orchestra (NACO) and Canada Oriental Chinese Orchestra (COCO).

#### Toronto Chinese Orchestra

The TCO, founded in 1993, is the largest Chinese orchestra in Ontario and the longest-running in Canada (Toronto Chinese Orchestra 2009). At the beginning, the group was named the Toronto Chinese Music Association. Their registration in 2000 shows they changed the name at that time to the Toronto Chinese Orchestra, reflecting a more professional identity oriented towards performance. The President/founder was Hoi Lee, an *erhu* player and instrument store owner who founded the Harmony Music Company in Hong Kong in 1980. After twelve years, Lee established a North American branch store in Toronto (Harmony Music, n.d.) carrying both western and Chinese instruments. In this enterprise he was clearly an active “merchant” of Chinese culture in the diaspora. In 1993, he convened about fifty Chinese instrumental musicians in Canada and the United States to give a concert, and the orchestra was formed. According to a long-time member of the TCO, they rehearsed for just two months before the first concert and

didn't have regular rehearsals for the first two years. In the early days, they did not have their own rehearsal venue and could only rehearse in Lee's musical instrument store.

The orchestra's stated purpose is "to promote and develop an appreciation of Chinese orchestral music and culture amongst Canadians" (Toronto Chinese Orchestra, n.d.). The orchestra has both professional and amateur musicians and is composed of five groups: Toronto Chinese Orchestra (TCO), Toronto Community Chinese Orchestra (TCCO), Toronto Youth Chinese Orchestra (TYCO), TCO Chambers Players (TCOCP) and Apex Drumming Team. The TCO holds two concerts each year: an annual concert and a small concert. The annual concert is usually held in June, and the small concert in December (Toronto Chinese Orchestra). TCO had virtual rehearsals and performances from March 2020 to February 2022. At that point, the orchestra resumed regular in-person rehearsals and annual concerts in June 2022 and these continue until now.

#### Ontario Chinese Orchestra

The OCO was founded in 2007 and was the first professional Chinese orchestra in Canada, in that most of the members graduated from prestigious conservatories in China. The vision of OCO is to "provide a reliable and effective platform for ... performers allowing them to bring their expertise of Chinese folk music to this multi-cultural community to be accepted and enjoyed by the community and at the same time, allow them to continue to flourish their musical talents" (Ontario Chinese Orchestra 2016 Concert Program Book). The orchestra comprises about twenty professional Chinese musicians who have immigrated to Toronto. The OCO is directed by Peter Bok, an *erhu* player originally from Hong Kong. He was a member of the TCO from 1993 to 2007. However, he left the orchestra and formed his own orchestra due to some

differences in his thoughts and opinions from those of TCO.<sup>18</sup> OCO usually hosts an annual concert. The repertoire is influenced to some degree by Cantonese music, as the founder was from Hong Kong. Nevertheless, most elements of the repertoire are brought in by professional musicians from mainland China. OCO did not have rehearsals or concerts in the past three years—since even before the pandemic—and there has been no news about when it will resume doing so.

#### Northern American Chinese Orchestra

The NACO was established in 2011. The purpose of the establishment of the orchestra was to promote and popularize traditional Chinese music and spread it overseas, thereby allowing overseas Chinese to understand and participate in the learning and performance of traditional Chinese music and making efforts to gradually integrate traditional Chinese music into Canada's multicultural society. The director of the orchestra is Xiaomei He, a *pipa* player, and the music director is Guochan Chen, a *huqin* player. Both of them were originally from mainland China. The orchestra has about twenty professional performers from the Toronto area serving as resident tutors. With the attraction of some outstanding students of the Chinese Orchestra of the former Toronto Chinese Conservatory of Music, the orchestra has also absorbed some senior Chinese music fans in the Toronto area to form a Chinese orchestra with nearly sixty members (North America Chinese Orchestra YouTube, n.d.). NACO did not have in-person rehearsals from early 2020 to late 2021. The orchestra resumed in-person rehearsals and performances in 2022.

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<sup>18</sup> These differences in opinion will be further explored in Chapter Four.

### Canadian Chinese Orchestra

The CCO was founded in 2017; their goal is to “challenge the boundaries of Chinese music making and Chinese music communities from within, to create a healthy environment for both the professional players and the music enthusiasts”:

It will also serve as a platform for musicians to challenge themselves to new repertoires and ensemble playing. The CCO seeks to improve by collaborating with different organizations in the future to promote Chinese musical culture and arts. (Canadian Chinese Orchestra 2019 Concert Program Book)

The director of CCO is Amely Zhou, an *erhu* musician. She was also a member of TCO from 2007 to 2017, and left for personal reasons. The CCO consists of two orchestras: the Canadian Philharmonic Chinese Orchestra (CPCO) and the Canadian Youth Chinese Orchestra (CYCO), both of which have professional as well as amateur musicians (all professional and amateur musicians in this orchestra are unpaid). The CPCO consists of fifteen members, the youngest around forty and the oldest over seventy years old. The CYCO has fewer than thirty members, and the orchestra focuses on education and team-building. The CCO orchestra has an annual concert. Same as TCO, CCO had virtual rehearsals and performances during March 2020 to early 2022. The orchestra resumed regular in-person rehearsals from early 2022 and presented an annual concert in June 2022, and these continue.

### Canada Oriental Chinese Orchestra

The COCO was established in 2017 with about thirty people. Amateurs from China with good levels of performing techniques account for one-third of the orchestra, and two-thirds are professionals. They are all from the mainland, and most of them are young. The repertoire is relatively newly composed. A concert is held every year. While no information is available about what the orchestra is doing now, it is very doubtful the orchestra was active during the pandemic.

Because I am dependent on my personal connections and the availability of archival repertoire records, my dissertation concentrates on three of these five orchestras: the longest-running Chinese orchestra (TCO), which is composed mostly of amateur musicians; the second longest-running Chinese orchestra (OCO), which is composed of professional musicians; and one relatively new Chinese orchestra (CCO) with amateur musicians, including youth. The reasons I chose these three rather than other Toronto-based Chinese orchestras are: first, the records for the North American Chinese Orchestra (2011) and the Canada Oriental Cultural Orchestra (2017) are unavailable to me, and second, both OCO's and CCO's directors were former members of TCO. It is intriguing to explore the similarities and differences between their orchestras and the TCO.

## **Conclusion**

Chinese immigrants brought their culture and music to Canada more than one and a half centuries ago. The community evolved, from being oppressed laborers in the 1850s, to ultimately being at present a significant and well-established minority. Given the fact that Chinese have always had music as an essential part of their lives, they have carried these musical traditions with them into their new circumstances in the diaspora. Even though over the better part of two centuries, Chinese music in Canada has had its periods of relative strength and relative weakness, it continues to thrive in this country.

## **Chapter Three: A History of Chinese Musical Instrument Education in Toronto**

### **Introduction**

Any cultural music community, especially in a diasporic context, relies on music education as a tool for continuity and development. The literature on Chinese instrument training in North America focuses primarily on music instruction within Chinese community music ensembles/orchestras (e.g., Qiu 2005; Chan 2015; Chan 2022) and in universities (e.g., Prescott, Li & Lei 2008; Wang 2013); however, there has been little scholarly attention paid to the history and development of Chinese instrumental music education in North America generally, and even less on that in Toronto specifically. In this chapter I address the gaps in the literature through exploring the following general questions: How do Chinese immigrants pass on their instrumental musical expertise in Toronto? How and where do students take Chinese instrument training? How do Chinese instruments methods of transmission and pedagogical techniques adapt to a Canadian context? My fieldwork in universities, Chinese music ensembles/orchestras, and private studios, and interviews with music educators/teachers and students in Toronto provides some insights into these questions.

I will begin by exploring the history of Chinese instrument training in Toronto before the 1990s, when Chinese music instrument instruction in higher education institutions and music stores began. Then, I will introduce the four most common ways of learning to play a Chinese instrument in Toronto after the 1990s, along with the Chinese Music Proficiency Examination transplanted to Canada—both of which bridge the Chinese and Canadian contexts of Chinese musical education. In particular, I will examine how the “internal” transmissions within Chinese orchestras transform into community engagement. Finally, I will compare the ways that students take Chinese instrument training in China and Canada, specifically in Toronto. This

chapter documents the history of Chinese instrument education in the diasporic context of Toronto.

### **A History of Chinese Music Education in Toronto Before 1990**

In the late nineteenth century, Chinese immigrant music took root and has since flourished in Canada. The first predominant Chinese music genres to appear were Cantonese folk song and Cantonese opera because most of the first Chinese immigrants to Canada were from the Taishan community, in the Cantonese region of China. In the 1870s, there were three Cantonese operatic clubs established in Victoria, BC (Liang 2014); by 1970, one hundred years later, Cantonese folk songs and Cantonese operas still made up the bulk of Canadian Chinese music (Liang 2014). According to Patty Chan (personal communication, February 28, 2021), before the 1970s, the Cantonese opera community played Cantonese music only. Many of them were restaurant workers from the Taishan community, and tended to be middle-aged or senior. These groups were not really involved much in teaching; in Chan's account, these activities were more "like a break from work. It was a social thing, and they wanted to keep the art alive" (personal communication, February 28, 2021).

Meanwhile, another Chinese music genre, the Chinese instrument ensemble, appeared in Toronto in the late 1960s. As I described earlier in this dissertation, the first Chinese instrument ensemble, the Chinese Instrumental Music Group of the University of Toronto (CIMGUT), was founded by Ming Chan in 1969. As a student from Hong Kong studying at the University of Toronto, Chan was an amateur *erhu* player, and taught on the side to help with his tuition, giving lessons to classmates and students who were interested in learning Chinese instruments. In the 1970s, Chinese community members in Toronto asked Ming Chan to teach their children in

either group or individual lessons. Around fifteen children, ages eight to teenagers, began learning different instruments. Patty Chan herself was one of those children; she started to learn *erhu* in 1978. As described by Patty (personal communication, December 19, 2021), the Chinese music ensemble rehearsed every Friday, and the children would come at the same time for their lessons. They had different rooms and various musicians from the ensemble would take turns leaving the rehearsal to teach the children. Every three months, the ensemble would present a concert; short pieces were distributed to the children to prepare for the concert, and whoever could pass the audition of the pieces could play in the concert. If they did well in the concert, they were allowed to perform for the community. It was a good experience for Patty because she was with other children in the ensemble and made many friends.

The first professional musician from mainland China who came to Toronto, that Patty Chan was aware of, came in the late 1970s. He was a professional *pipa* player from Guangdong province. However, he could not make a living teaching Chinese music and could not speak English. He worked at a factory in a very low paying job and taught a little bit in the orchestra where Patty Chan was playing. He was never able to transition to a full time career in Chinese music education. He is still in Toronto with his family; however, he faded from the Toronto Chinese community music scene.

### **Main Approaches of Chinese Musical Education in the GTA**

In this section, I will consider how Chinese immigrants pass down their music in the host country and how music education and pedagogy bridge Chinese and Canadian contexts. Chinese instrument education outside of China includes passing on techniques and knowledge to novices both within and beyond the Chinese diasporic community. According to Chinese orchestra

leaders Patty Chan (the current director of TCO) and Amely Zhou (the current director of the Canadian Chinese Orchestra), students in the GTA currently have various ways of learning to play an instrument, some of which are similar to those in China.

First, individuals can arrange and pay for private lessons or group lessons with expert musicians. Also, a variation on this pattern of private individual lessons is the private group lesson offered by music stores and commercial music training schools. Second, some publicly-funded community centers provide Chinese instrument lessons for interested youth or seniors. Private one-on-one and group lessons and publicly funded classes in community centres occur both in China and Canada. Different than in China, some Toronto Chinese orchestras have started to partner with local music schools to provide group lessons and in the last decade have started to provide Chinese instrument scholarships and seniors' music learning programs. Finally, although some higher institutions of learning in the public system in Toronto offer Chinese instrumental lessons or Chinese music studies as part of their curricula, these understandably are much less extensive than those in China and would not prepare students for a professional career. For example, York University provides (or did in the past) Chinese instrumental lessons, and all three Toronto-based universities offer (or did in the past) Chinese instrumental ensemble courses.<sup>19</sup> The following sections will discuss the history, development and challenges of Chinese instrumental education in the Greater Toronto Area, in relation to the four main approaches for acquiring training.

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<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately, because of the limited access to records, I have been unable to determine details including dates of these course offering.

## Private Lessons

The prevalent approach to receiving Chinese music training in the Greater Toronto Area is through private lessons. Wendy Zhao, a Toronto-based *pipa* expert, confirms this pattern; according to her, ninety percent of students aiming to learn a Chinese instrument attend private lessons (Wendy Zhao, personal communication, July 12, 2022). Private Chinese instrument instruction has been available in the GTA since the 1970s. Individuals can arrange and pay for private one-on-one lessons or group lessons with expert musicians. Some variations on this pattern of the private lesson are the private group lessons or one-on-one lessons offered by music stores and commercial music training schools.

Lessons are provided not only to members of Chinese communities but also to non-Chinese music enthusiasts. For example, Naomi Norquay, a retired professor in the Faculty of Education at York University, was one such non-Chinese student who received Chinese instrument instruction in Toronto in the 1970s. Born and raised in the province of Ontario, she is a well-trained musician who plays the cello and banjo among other instruments. In 1978, while still an undergraduate doing research on how the establishment of the Chinese Republic in 1911 officially marked dramatic changes in Chinese music, Norquay had an opportunity to interview Siu-Ming Ho, a student at the University of Toronto who taught the *erhu* for the Chinese Students' Association. Later on, she began to study the instrument from Ho (Naomi Norquay, personal communication, March 3, 2021).

Norquay described how Ho taught beginners to play *erhu* and shared examples of some of the teaching materials that he had provided to her (figures 3-6). Ho taught her how to read music using *jianpu* by correlating western notation and *jianpu* (figure 6) because the majority of Chinese music was written in *jianpu* at that time. He also demonstrated how to play the

instrument and gave her exercises (figures 3 and 4) and melodic excerpts (figure 5) to practice, which were all handwritten, possibly due to lack of access to books for either Chinese or non-Chinese *erhu* players. Norquay's *erhu* learning experience provides valuable historical documentation of how Chinese musicians taught non-Chinese players during the 1970s, and demonstrates that the Chinese diaspora welcomed non-Chinese people to learn their instruments and collaborate with them.

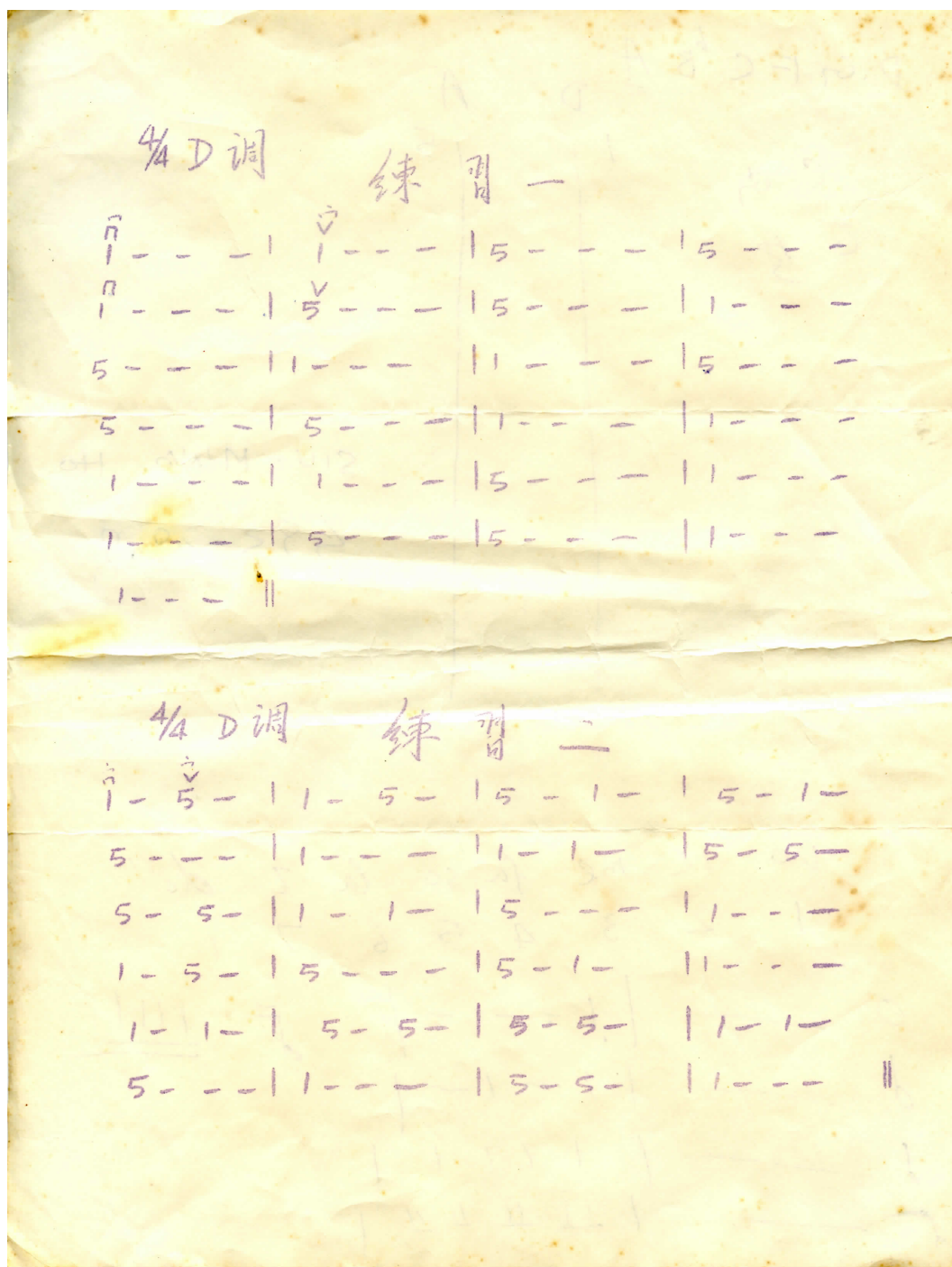


Figure 3: Open-string exercises for *erhu*. Written by Siu-Ming Ho. Manuscript provided by Naomi Norquay. Photo by Naomi Norquay, March 5, 2021.

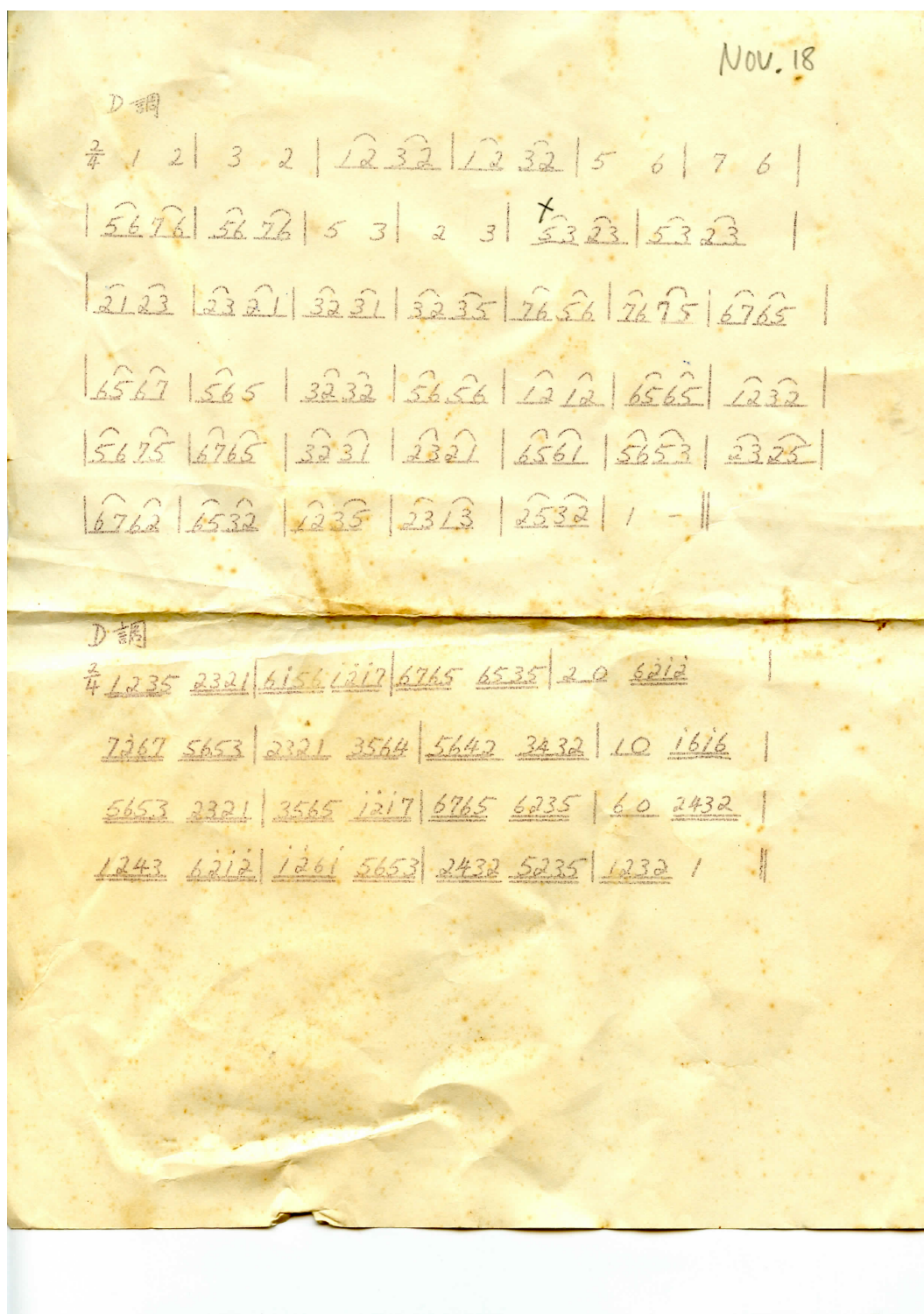


Figure 4: Two scale exercises for *erhu*. Written by Siu-Ming Ho. Manuscript provided by Naomi Norquay. Photo by Naomi Norquay, March 5, 2021.

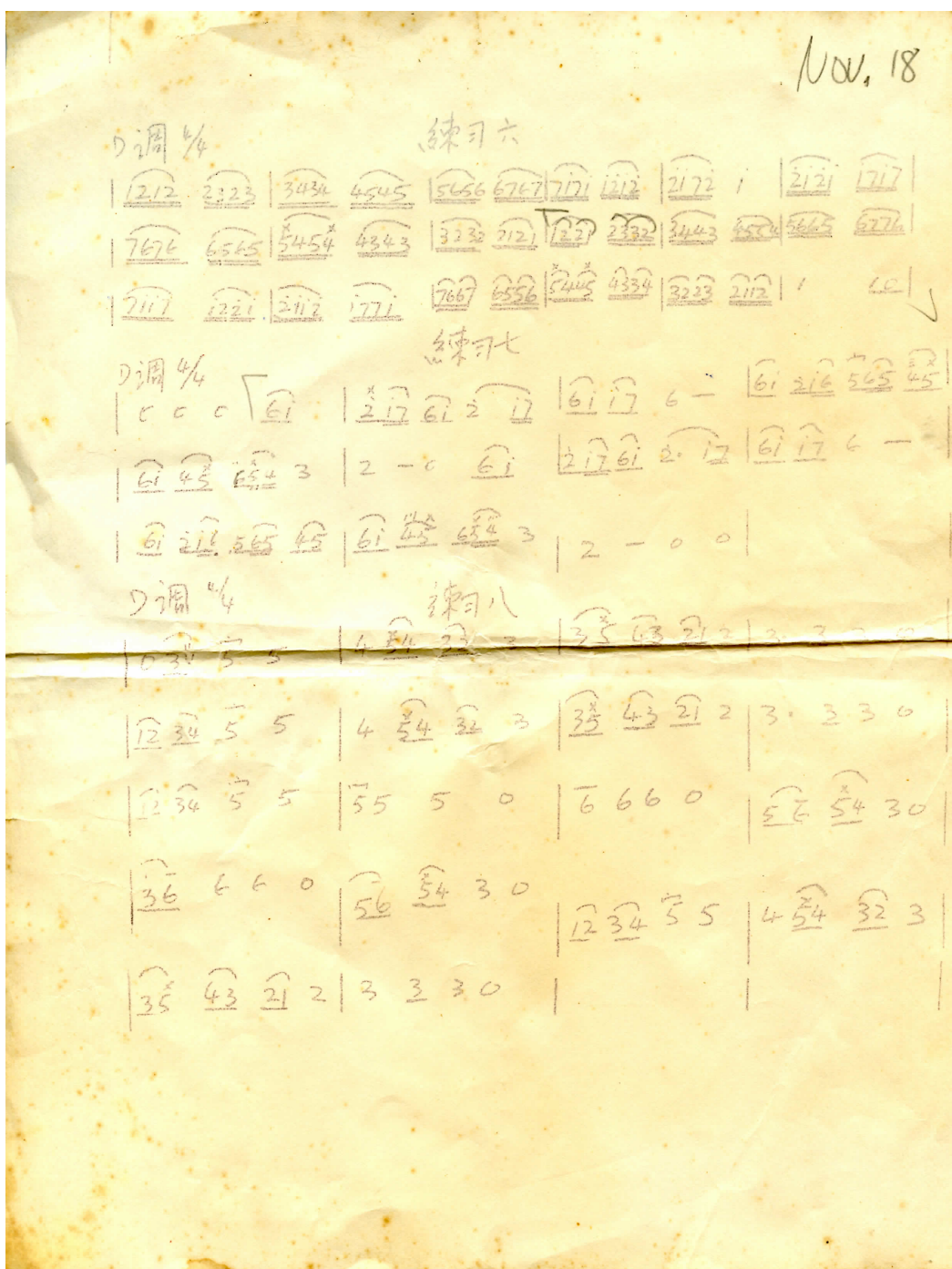


Figure 5: Song melodies arranged by Luobin Wang in 1939. The top one is “In that Distant Place” and the bottom one is “Half Moon Climbed Up”. Written by Siu-Ming Ho. Manuscript provided by Naomi Norquay. Photo Naomi Norquay, March 5, 2021.

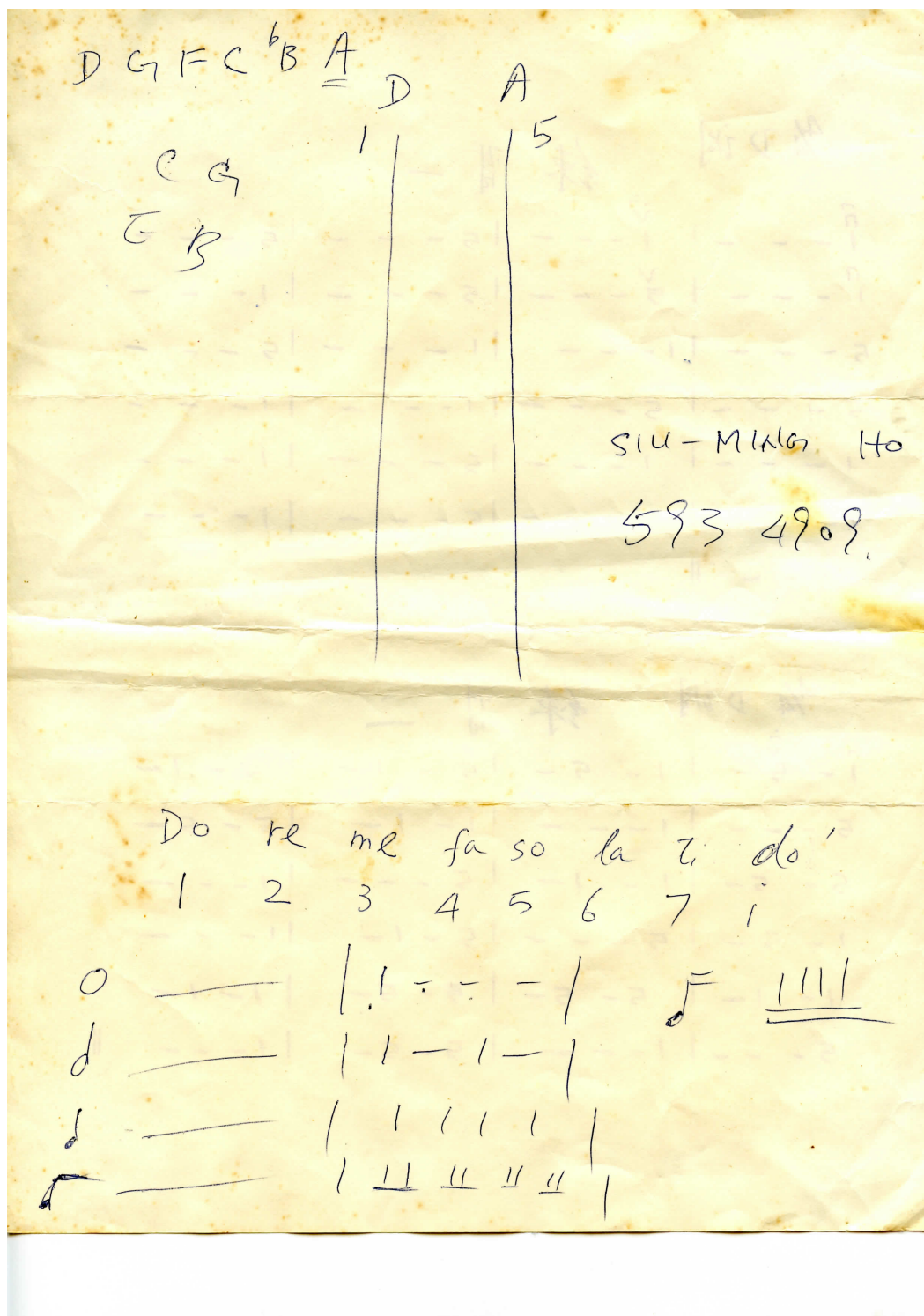


Figure 6: *Jianpu* notation instruction: the top diagram explains the intervals between the two strings of the *erhu*, and at the bottom, the first diagram indicates *jianpu* solfege and the second explains different note durations in both *jianpu* and western notation. Written by Siu-Ming Ho. Manuscript provided by Naomi Norquay. Photo by Naomi Norquay, March 5, 2021.

In the 1990s, as more Chinese immigrants arrived in Toronto, some music stores started to offer Chinese instrument lessons. In 1992, Harmony Music Inc, a Hong Kong music store branch, opened its doors in Toronto. The original owner, Hoi Lee, was from Hong Kong and was a professional *erhu* player in the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra. He was also the *erhu* teacher of Peter Bok (the president of OCO) when they both lived in Hong Kong. After moving to Toronto, Lee opened Harmony Music Inc. This store not only provided Chinese music enthusiasts in the Toronto area with a diverse and large choice of Western and Chinese instruments, but also offered Chinese music lessons, on instruments such as *erhu*, *guzheng*, *dizi*, and *ruan*. Lee was also one of the founders of the Toronto Chinese Music Association (the former name of the TCO). Due to a scarcity of rehearsal space, the store provided a rehearsal space for the TCO for about ten years (Peter Bok, personal communication, December 23, 2020). Lee returned to Hong Kong in 1996 and handed over the store to his brother-in-law (Patty Chan, personal communication, March 27, 2022); Harmony Music Inc. continued to operate for about twenty more years before being taken over by May Mei (an *erhu* and cello player) and her husband, Henry Zhao, in 2014. They changed the name of the store to “Music of May.” Despite the fact that Music of May sells both Western and Chinese music instruments, Patty Chan observes that there are considerably fewer Chinese instruments on display than in the previous store, and that some Chinese instruments which would have formerly been available in the store are now only available online from China. However, the store continues to provide instruction in *erhu*, *guzheng*, *guqin*, *yangqin*, *pipa*, *ruan*, *liuqin*, *dizi*, *xiao*, and *hulusi*, as well as providing support and registration to students preparing for the Chinese Music Proficiency Examination (CMPE).

Like Music of May, Toronto Music Pro is an online instrument store run for over twenty years by Pingxin Xu, a *yangqin* musician originally from mainland China. It offers a range of

Chinese instrument lessons in *guzheng*, *guqin*, *pipa*, *yangqin*, *zhongruan*, *daruan*, *xiaoruan*, *liuqin*, *yueqin*, *qinqin*, *sanxian*, *dizi*, *hulusi*, *bawu*, *xiao* and *erhu*, and sells—along with Western instruments—*guzheng*, *guqin*, *yangqing*, *erhu*, *zhonghu*, *gaohu*, *pipa*, *ruan*, *liuqin*, *sanxian*, *qinqin*, *yueqin*, *morin quur*, *jinghu*, *banhu*, *dihu*, *sheng*, *xun*, *suona*, *dizi*, *xiao*, *bawu*, *hulusi*, Chinese percussion (Toronto Music Pro, n.d.). According to Patty Chan and other Chinese orchestra members, Music May is the most well-known Chinese music store in the Greater Toronto Area due to the store's owner's good connections with musicians.

Apart from these stores offering private lessons, since 2007 the Toronto Chinese Music School, founded by *pipa* musician Ms. He Xiaomei and *huqin* musician Mr. Chen Guochan, offers private instruction in Chinese instruments. The school employs professional musicians who have immigrated from mainland China and is the only music school in Toronto taught by professional musicians. The school was established to provide quality instruction to students in the Greater Toronto Area who are interested in Chinese music at all levels and in all formats, from beginner to advanced performance classes. The classes are offered in sizes ranging from one-on-one, small groups of two to four, and small groups of five to eight students, and offer lessons in *erhu*, *gaohu*, *pipa*, *guzheng*, *yangqin*, *zhongruan*, *liuqin*, *hulusi*, and *dizi* (London Chinese Music School 2014).

I believe that the following factors contribute to the prevalence of private Chinese music instruction available in the GTA: 1) students can take Chinese music lessons or courses without having to be admitted by a college, which makes private sessions more accessible than official instruction in Chinese music at higher education institutions; 2) individual classes offer greater scheduling flexibility since lessons with teachers can be scheduled at a time that is convenient for both parties; 3) individual classes are flexible with regard to individual level, ability, and

interest in particular pieces, especially for those who want to gain advanced playing techniques; and 4) in contrast to both community centers and higher institutions, which have a restricted number of instructors, the most well-known Chinese instrumentalists offer private sessions, so students can study with their preferred instructor. Based on the information I gathered from the questionnaire (see appendix c) that I distributed to members of the TCO, and subsequent interviews with some of them, it appears that many members of Toronto Chinese orchestras learned to play their instruments through private lessons, either in China or in Toronto.

#### Community Centers and Churches/Temples

According to Patty Chan, around the beginning of the 2000s, various Chinese community organizations, charities, nursing homes, and religious organizations began offering Chinese instrument training to people of all ages, including youths and seniors (personal communication, May 6, 2022). According to Amely Zhou, *erhu* courses have also been offered at the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto, Yee Hong (senior care organization), Mon Sheong Foundation, and Fo Guang Shan Temple of Toronto. *Erhu* lessons are also available at The Shaolin Temple Quanfa Institute (STQI).<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Canada One Family Network (COFN) provides classes in Chinese instruments and has a small group of seniors who perform together (email exchange with author, January 1, 2022). According to its mission statement,

COFN aims to raise the standards of awareness and respectability of the performing arts (music, dancing, musical instruments, songs, recitals, opera, painting, carving, calligraphy, martial arts, health and wellness, tea culture) and artists of Chinese Traditional, Ancient and Cultural origins and their acceptance by the communities through exposure, exhibits, entertainment, magazine publication and education (Canada one Family Network, n.d.).

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<sup>20</sup> The STQI is a martial arts school but it includes instrument classes as part of the Chinese cultural program.

The majority of these community organizations are located inside prominent Chinese communities, such as Scarborough, Richmond Hill, Markham, and Toronto's Chinatown. The predominant format of music instruction for the centers is group lessons. Chinese instrument group classes provide opportunities for entertainment, self-expression, social gathering, wellbeing, and a sense of belonging. However, most of the lessons are for beginners who do not intend to develop to an advanced level.

### Chinese Orchestras

In summarizing where and how Chinese American music ensemble members receive musical training, Su Zheng (2010) states that many amateur musicians receive informal instruction from their own group members. This approach is used by Chinese Canadian music orchestras and ensembles, of which, including the major five already listed in Chapter Two, there are more than ten in the Greater Toronto Area.<sup>21</sup> Most of these orchestras and ensembles do not offer formal instrumental lessons; however, members informally assist one another in learning their instruments. For example, several members of the Millennium Chinese Music Workshop, made up of around thirty senior amateur Chinese Canadian musicians, learn new instruments by instruction from other members of the orchestra. Heidi Chan, a Canadian ethnomusicologist and the daughter of a member, reports that some members of this orchestra have been encouraged to learn new instruments in order to fill gaps in the orchestra's instrumentation. To do so, members typically learn new instruments from other members who are experienced on that instrument (Chan 2015, 10). This internal teaching and learning method in Chinese music ensembles and orchestras is common in diasporic contexts where there are fewer Chinese music education institutions or professional teachers.

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<sup>21</sup> The five major orchestras are larger in size than the rest of the orchestras and ensembles (usually less than thirty members).

In addition to this informal music training method, some Toronto-based Chinese orchestras have found alternative ways to provide Chinese instrument lessons to enthusiastic youths and seniors through Chinese music group lessons, summer camps, scholarships and senior learning programs. For instance, the Toronto Chinese Orchestra and Canadian Chinese Orchestra partnered with a local music school to provide both a Chinese music group and a summer camp. Yip's Canada is a private music school founded in 1990 by Dr. Wai Hong Yip, a music educator originally from Hong Kong. Yip's Canada began working with TCO on an all-year Chinese music program in 2013, which included Chinese instrumental group lessons and a Chinese music ensemble. They rehearsed for an hour and a half per week, with group lessons in the first half and ensemble rehearsing in the second half. Yip's and TCO also co-hosted a summer camp - Chinese Music & Culture Camp in the same year. The camp provided “a chance to learn more about the Chinese Culture as well as have a hands-on experience with one of the Chinese instruments” (Yip’s Canada 2013). The weekly Chinese music program ended in 2016 due to the conductor's departure. However, the summer camp remains.

After Yip's collaboration with TCO ended in 2017, Yip’s began working with Amely Zhou in 2018. Zhou was a member of TCO and taught *erhu* at the summer camp and music program. She was also the conductor of the Toronto Youth Chinese Orchestra from 2015 to 2017. In 2017, Zhou left TCO and founded CCO, her own orchestra. In 2018, Yip reached out to Zhou and the summer camp was resumed. In 2021, Zhou’s orchestra, the CCO, began co-presenting the summer camp with Yip's (see figure 7). The Chinese music group lessons and the summer camp that Yip’s offered, together with TCO and CCO, provided students with an opportunity to learn about Chinese music and culture. This account of Yip’s involvement with

two GTA Chinese orchestras demonstrates the orchestras' development from internal music training methods to include community-based music education.

Yip's Canada & Canadian Chinese Orchestra  
co-present

**Chinese Music Summer Program**  
**中樂文化夏令營**  
August 2 - 12, 2022

Children age 6 - 14 are welcome!




**Woodwind**



埙 Xun (clay vessel flute)



排簫 Paixiao (panpipes)



巴烏 Bawu (free-reed aerophone)



号筒 Hao tong (copper signal pipe)



管子 Bili / Guan (oboe)



箫 Xiao (notched flute)



笙 Sheng (mouth organ)



笛 Di (transverse flute)



唢呐 Suona (trumpet)

**Bowed Strings**



二胡 Erhu (violin)



京胡 Jinghu (two-string fiddle)



革胡 Gehu (large four-string fiddle)



马头琴 Matouqin / Morinhor (two-string fiddle)



板胡 Banhu (two-string fiddle)



艾捷克 Gijik (spike fiddle)

**Percussion**



梆子 Bangzi (concussion plaque)



木鱼 Muyu (woodblock)



板鼓 Banggu (single-headed frame drum)



堂鼓 Tanggu (medium barrel drum)



云锣 Yunluo (small bronze gongs)



扬琴 Yangqin (struck box zither / dulcimer)

**Plucked Strings**



琴 Zheng (half-tube zither, harp)



阮 Ruan (long-necked lute)



琵琶 Pipa (pear-shaped lute)



月琴 Yueqin (short-necked lute)



弹布儿 Tambur (five-stringed lute)



柳琴 Liuyeqin (small lute)

Chinese Instrument:  
Erhu  
Zheng  
Zhongruan  
Flower Pot Drum

Music Theory  
Practice Session  
Chinese Culture  
Painting / Folk Arts  
Folk Dance

2 Weeks Per Term  
Full Day  
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Registration:  
Unionville Campus  
100 Lee Ave

Camp Venue:  
Somerset Academy  
7700 Brimley Road

**905-948-9477**  
Ext. 2100

**Limited Space!**  
**Register Early!**

Figure 7: Chinese Music Camp 2022 (<https://canadianchineseorchestra.com/chinese-music-camp-2022/>)

Among the Chinese orchestras in the GTA, the Canadian Chinese Orchestra is unique in its Chinese music education outreach, in that its community engagement is explicitly designed for youth and seniors. According to Amely Zhou, the orchestra director, the CCO is committed to promoting Chinese music and education. Since 2018, the orchestra has provided Chinese instrument lessons to about nine youths, one middle-aged person, and seventy-three seniors in Chinese communities through scholarship learning programs and a seniors' music learning program.

In order to encourage youth to learn about some lesser-known Chinese instruments, and also for the development of CCO, the orchestra launched two scholarship learning programs in 2018 for Chinese wind instruments, specifically *suona* and *sheng* (see figures 8 and 9). It is the first scholarship offered by a Chinese orchestra in the GTA. These scholarships were offered to people who were older than eight years old and were residents of the GTA. People who have previous musical training knowledge were considered first. Applicants ranging in age from eight years old to seventeen years old would automatically be awarded the scholarship prized at \$1000.00. Applicants born before January 1st, 2002 would have to write a small paragraph and request the scholarship for the amount up to \$1000.00, and the approved amount could be smaller than requested.

In the past year, the CCO offered two scholarships for each instrument to candidates ranging in age from teenage to mid-60s. The scholarship offered weekly forty-five minute private lessons for the 2018-2020 seasons (September to June) by professional musicians, Huiming Li and Yiwang, who are also the teachers at CCO. By the end of the program the scholarship recipients would also potentially have opportunities to perform with the orchestra. The *sheng* scholarship ended in 2020 due to the instructor returning to China. The *suona*

scholarship has continued. Since 2020, the orchestra has offered a *yangqin* scholarship learning program in addition to the *suona* scholarship, because it is also a less-played instrument. Every year, about five to ten people apply for the scholarships, and over the years, ten people have been awarded the scholarships. The majority of recipients are teenagers, although there are two recipients in their middle years. Five of the scholarship recipients joined the CCO. Overall, while the level of interest may not be high, the scholarships appear to be making a positive impact by helping to promote these lesser-known Chinese instruments and Chinese music, showing that the scholarship is effectively meeting its goals.



*Thinking about which wind instrument to learn?  
Consider learning an ancient Chinese wind instrument!*

## 遗失的民族乐器 A Lost Musical Instrument

### 唢呐 奖学金项目 Suona Scholarship Learning Program

The **SUONA** is a double reeded Chinese horn which has a sonorous sound and is a very important part of Chinese musical traditions. You can hear the sound of suona mainly in northern parts of China for festivals and rituals.

Receive **45 Minutes of Private Lesson Weekly**  
for 2018-2019 season (September to June).

Total of **40 One-on-One Lessons!**

**Instrument Rental Fees Waived**  
for 2018-2019 season (September to June).

Program Fee \$1699

**The Scholarship Covers up to \$1000**

Limited Scholarship Positions Available  
**Apply by August 29th, 2018**

**Instrument will be given out for free** as part of the scholarship if successfully accepted as either a CYCO or CPCO member for 2019-2020 season.

**For more information and Application Forms**

Please visit: [www.CanadianChineseOrchestra.com](http://www.CanadianChineseOrchestra.com)

Contact: (647)889-8042

唢呐导师 :  
Suona Instructor :

李惠明  
Huiming Li



Figure 8: Suona Scholarship Learning Program (image provided by Amely Zhou, March 6, 2022)

*Thinking about which wind instrument to learn?  
Consider learning an ancient Chinese wind instrument!*

遗失的民族乐器  
A Lost Musical Instrument

紅楓華樂團  
Canadian Chinese Orchestra

笙 奖学金项目  
Sheng Scholarship Learning Program

The **SHENG** is a free-reed wind instrument which dates back to 1000 years BC. It is the only polyphonic wind instrument in the family of Chinese wind instruments. The sheng has a meditative sound and is made by bamboo pipes.

Receive **45 Minutes of Private Lesson Weekly**  
for 2018-2019 season (September to June).

笙导师 :  
Sheng Instructor :  
王一  
Yi Wang

Total of **40 One-on-One Lessons !**

**Instrument Rental Fees Waived**  
for 2018-2019 season (September to June).

Program Fee \$1699  
**The Scholarship Covers up to \$1000**

Limited Scholarship Positions Available  
**Apply by August 29th, 2018**

**Instrument will be given out for free**  
as part of the scholarship if successfully  
accepted as either a CYCO or CPCO  
member for 2019-2020 season.

**For more information and Application Forms**  
Please visit:  
**[www.CanadianChineseOrchestra.com](http://www.CanadianChineseOrchestra.com)**  
Contact:  
**(647)889-8042**



Figure 9: Sheng Scholarship Learning Program (Image provided by Amely Zhou, March 6, 2022)

In December 2021, the CCO launched a senior music learning program. Since seniors could not go out and socialize normally during the pandemic, director Amely Zhou wanted to provide them with a way to socialize and build a sense of “community” through exposure to music. She applied for a Seniors Community Grant from the Ontario government to provide a fully-funded senior music learning program offered by the CCO (see figure 10). It is also the first fully-funded senior music learning program offered by a Chinese orchestra in the GTA. According to the government website, the goal of the grant is to “help community organizations provide opportunities for greater social inclusion, volunteerism and community engagement for older adults, from the safety of their homes or other safe environments” (Government of Ontario 2023).

This learning program was free of charge and offered to seventy seniors who were over fifty-five years old and interested in Chinese music. The program was held virtually twice per week from December 2021 to February 2022, in small groups and was taught by professional musicians. Classes were offered for six instruments: *erhu*, *guzheng*, *pipa*, *zhongruan*, *yangqin*, and *hulusi*. In addition to beginning-level classes for these instruments, the learning program also provided advanced classes in *erhu* and *guzheng* for experienced players. Even though the lessons were only held over a short period, the seniors’ hard work enabled them to learn the basic playing techniques on the instruments and a short piece of music.

On February 26th, 2022, the CCO, the Millennium Chinese Music Workshop, along with the students and professional musicians from the Seniors Music Learning Program, held a successful livestream concert called “The Epiphany” (see figure 11). The director of the CCO is hoping that there will be another government funding opportunity to enable further senior learning programs.



 **红枫华乐团**  
Canadian Chinese Orchestra

CANADIAN CHINESE ORCHESTRA PRESENTS

# *Seniors Music Learning Program*

FROM DECEMBER 6 TH 2021 TO FEBRUARY 26TH 2022

LEARN YOUR FAVORITE CHINESE INSTRUMENT WITH A PROFESSIONAL MUSICIAN VIRTUALLY AND ENJOY A PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFETIME MEMORY AT THE END OF THE PROGRAM.

**Available Instruments are**  
**Erhu, Guzheng, Pipa, Zhongruan, Yangqin, Hulusi**

The instrument will be provided if you don't have one.  
Applicant must be older than 55 years old.

**Limited to 50 participants, registration will be closed once spots are filled.**

Visit [www.CanadianChineseOrchestra.Com](http://www.CanadianChineseOrchestra.Com) to Register.

Generously funded by **Ontario** 

Figure 10: Senior Music Learning Program (<https://canadianchineseorchestra.com/seniors-music-learning-program/>)

紅楓華樂團  
Canadian Chinese Orchestra

*The Epiphany*  
網絡音樂會

2022年2月26日 | 傍晚7:30

**表演團體:**  
紅楓華樂團  
千禧雅樂坊

**特別出演:**  
長者音樂學習項目全體學員  
感謝安省政府項目贊助

Ontario

掃描以下二維碼獲取 YouTube 直播網址  
參與共享這場民樂盛宴

www.CanadianChineseOrchestra.com

Figure 11: The Epiphany (<https://canadianchineseorchestra.com/ch-the-epiphany-canadian-chinese-orchestra/>)

Both the scholarship program and the senior learning program, which are spearheaded by the CCO, aim to engage the community with Chinese music by promoting greater visibility of Chinese instruments among community members and by providing opportunities for children and seniors to learn Chinese music.

### Chinese Music in Higher Education

A prominent development in Chinese music education in Toronto is within the curriculum of the public higher education system. While the pioneering University of Toronto student group orchestra mentioned earlier offered instruction in Chinese music, its initiatives remained outside the university curriculum. In the early 2000s, universities in Toronto began to offer elective courses in Chinese instruments. However, the trajectory of Chinese musical education in universities in Toronto follows a rise and fall pattern—flourishing in the 2000s, declining at the end of 2010s.<sup>22</sup>

Since 2000, all three Toronto universities have offered Chinese instrumental lessons or Chinese music studies as part of their curricula. In 2000, Kim Chow-Morris, at the time a PhD student in ethnomusicology at York University and now a professor at Toronto Metropolitan University, started teaching Chinese music courses at York University (Muecke & Zach 2007, 274). Later, more Chinese instrumental teachers joined. Patty Chan was one of the Chinese music ensemble tutors at York University from 2003 to 2015 and the *erhu* instructor since

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<sup>22</sup> Chinese music has never been offered as a degree program in higher education in Canada. In fact, in North America, there is only one higher education institute that has provided an undergraduate degree in Chinese instruments: Bard College Conservatory of Music in New York City. This program began in the fall of 2018 with faculty members from the Central Conservatory of Music in China (The Bard US China Music Institute of the Bard College Conservatory of Music, n.d.). While Bard does not offer a purely music degree program, there is a five-year double-degree program, a Bachelor of Music and a Bachelor of Arts in a liberal arts field of their choice, which allows students to work towards both degrees. In Fall 2022, Bard College initiated a Master of Arts in Chinese Music and Culture (The Bard US China Music Institute of the Bard College Conservatory of Music, n.d.).

2003. Miriam Sue was the other music ensemble tutor and the *guzheng* instructor from 2004 to 2019. The courses featured a Chinese music ensemble, which was open to both music majors and non-music majors, and private one-to-one lessons in *erhu*, *zheng*, *dizi*, *xiao*, *guzheng*, and *yangqin*. According to Patty Chan, initially not many students enrolled in the Chinese music ensemble, but then it grew to about thirty students. About 65 to 70 percent of the students were Chinese, some from mainland China, some from Canada. The rest of the students were non-Chinese Canadians or citizens of other parts of Asia (personal communication, January 26, 2023). The Chinese ensemble was discontinued in 2019 due to funding issues; nevertheless, private lessons on some Chinese instruments are currently still being offered by the music department, although with low enrollment.

Chow-Morris then introduced some Chinese music courses at Toronto Metropolitan University at the end of the first decade of the 2000s after she had been hired as a full-time faculty member. She taught a Chinese music ensemble and a course in Chinese music history. Patty Chan was the graduate assistant of the Chinese music ensemble from 2009 to 2010 and taught Chinese music history as a contract faculty in 2011 and 2018. The courses were open to everyone in the university. There were around forty students enrolled in the Chinese music ensemble. Most of them were Asian and about 50 percent were from mainland China. The Chinese music course has since been taken over by Heidi Chan (contract faculty) in 2021. Chow-Morris had also attempted to start a Chinese ensemble course for the University of Toronto in 2004, but it was only offered for one year.

These efforts at including Chinese music in university curricula promote greater visibility and appreciation of Chinese music through formal course offerings, increasing musical and cultural diversity in the university and wider community. Unfortunately, as described above, they

do not seem to have had ongoing support; currently, only Toronto Metropolitan University maintains their full offerings in Chinese music, an ensemble and a history course. As decolonization is a critical issue in Canada and creating equitable and inclusive educational opportunities for all students is a concern in educational institutions, the trend of cutting world music offerings is surprising and worrying.

Chinese music being taught in universities, especially at York has had a profound impact on the Toronto Chinese Orchestra and Canadian Chinese Orchestra; both the orchestra directors Patty Chan and Amely Zhou were and are studying at York University. Since Patty has been teaching at York, she has brought many student musicians over to TCO who were interested in continuing to play in the Chinese ensemble even after they graduated. Up to now, she has brought over twenty students studying at or who have graduated from York University to TCO. The majority of them were in the York University Chinese music ensemble or studied *erhu* with Patty. About 70 percent of them are non-Chinese. For example, Lorne MacDonald, a *daruan* player, joined York University music ensemble in 2011, and Patty introduced him to TCO in the same year; he is still playing in the orchestra. Patty believes playing Chinese music can change lives. She was invited on January 24, 2023 to give a talk about *erhu* and Chinese orchestra in a lecture course required of all first-year music majors at York University. Some students who came to talk to her after her presentation showed a lot of interests in the *erhu* and Chinese orchestra. One of the students said his grandfather had an *erhu*, he wanted to fix it and try playing it, and asked Patty where to go to get it repaired. Another student, born in Canada of Chinese descent, said she wished she could learn more about the Chinese music of her heritage in university, but found there are no courses. Yet a third student who showed interest in joining the orchestra, even though he did not play the instruments, asked whether there was any way he

could be part of it. Patty thinks the university should offer these liaison opportunities with Chinese music groups to the students to learn and study Chinese music, so they get exposed to the music when they are learning. She believes that during their early 20s, people are curious and open-minded, making it the perfect time to introduce these instruments and music to the students. She reports that it is not only Chinese people who are interested in Chinese music but also people from other cultural backgrounds, and that is why it is important to have Chinese music in universities (Patty Chan, personal communication, January 15, 2023). Through studying a Master's of Music at York herself, Patty also got to know more diverse people in the music department. She invited her non-Chinese classmates Cheryl Ockrant, a cello player, and Diane Kolin, a singer and a musicologist, to join the TCO.

Amely Zhou currently is completing her MA at York university, where she is studying Chinese instrumental music in Toronto. Even though she does not teach lessons at York University as Patty Chan does, she has had exposure to different world music ensembles and compositional techniques at York, which enriched her collaborations with musicians and groups from other culture backgrounds and in arranging music repertoire (Amely Zhou, personal communication, January 15, 2023). In addition, she met me at the university and invited me to perform in some of CCO's concerts.

These initiatives and offerings by universities of the Greater Toronto Area provided, and continue to provide, Chinese music ensembles and private Chinese music lessons and enable and encourage students to engage with Chinese music. Universities are also a source of membership for Chinese orchestras in Toronto. Patty Chan and Amely Zhou hope that more universities will offer Chinese music courses in the future in the GTA.

## The CMPE in Canada

The Central Conservatory of Music of China (CCMC) is one of the most prestigious and important music and art institutions in China. Its External Music Proficiency Examinations Committee, which aims to popularize music education outside of China, provides a professional and authoritative assessment and evaluation for overseas amateur learners of Chinese music with a rigorous academic style and excellent tradition. The academic and recognition status of the school is undeniable (Toronto Chinese Orchestra. n. d.). In the past twenty years, the CCMC has successfully conducted the Chinese Music Proficiency Examination (CMPE) in overseas countries and regions such as the United States, Canada, Germany, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan. The CCMC and the Chinese Music Association of Canada (CMAC) have been cooperating to hold the Chinese Music Proficiency Examination (CMPE) in Canada since 2006, which includes both the Technical Examination and the Music Theory Examination. The CCMC sends its teachers from Beijing to conduct and assess the examinations and to issue the certificates for the external music level examinations. The teachers also help to improve professional levels of Chinese music and promote the development of Chinese music in the region. The teaching materials are written by experts from the CCMC and are based on the principles of gradual progression with an emphasis on basic skills training, so that, if students follow the correct curriculum, they will steadily move forward to develop musical intelligence and cultivate their culture (Toronto Chinese Orchestra, n.d.).

In 2006, test centers were only set up in Vancouver, BC. In later years, these centers were set up in Toronto, and now they have also spread to Calgary, Montreal and Ottawa. The CMPE's examination subjects include *erhu*, *pipa*, *yangqin*, *guzheng*, flute, *zhongruan*, *sheng*, and

*suona*. As well, technical examinations (sight singing and rhythm in *jianpu*) begin at level 1 and go up to level 6. All Canadian residents and citizens are eligible to take these exams.

For levels 1 - 6, the overseas version of the CCMC textbook (in Chinese language and *jianpu*) must be used, including the textbook required for the oral examination. From levels 7 - 10, the overseas edition of CCMC's and Chinese domestic repertoire must be used. However, if more selection range is needed, candidates can select a piece not included in these editions. It is recommended that candidates choose one traditional and one modern piece of music to demonstrate a greater range in learning levels. The overseas version of the CCMC's examination textbooks has helped unify the teaching of Chinese instruments overseas, and has become an important musical tool for overseas music teachers. Inviting professors from mainland China to adjudicate in Canada provides authority and consistency in grading.

According to the 2019 Chinese Musical Instruments Technique Grade Exam in Canada Brochure, Toronto had thirty Chinese instrument teachers and 167 examinees participated in the exam on the following instruments: fifty-six in *erhu*, six in *yangqin*, five in *dizi*, ten in *pipa*, and ninety in *guzheng* (Toronto Chinese Orchestra. n. d.).

The Chinese Music Proficiency Examination establishes a Chinese music education system and a pedagogical bridge between mainland China and the Chinese diaspora, thereby providing a means of systematic overseas Chinese instrumental pedagogy. Since the 2007/08 school year, the BC Ministry of Education has officially accepted the External Credential Program Courses from the Central Conservatory of Music in China as the “only” official Chinese music examination results that students can claim for high school graduation credit and university entrance (B.C. Chinese Music Association 2022). This practice reflects both the

importance that the province of British Columbia places on the education of Chinese national musical instruments, and the societal awareness and acceptance of Chinese music at large.

#### A Comparison of Chinese Music Educational Methods in China and Canada

In China, Chinese instrument education has followed a well-developed system since 1949, with the founding of a newly-defined China, and especially after the Chinese economic reform which began in 1979. Students in China are able to take Chinese instrument training in a variety of settings, from elementary schools to higher education institutions, private studios to conservatories, and private lessons to group lessons. Students in China, like music students everywhere, take music lessons from those already able to play the instruments well and therefore able to act as teachers. No formal accreditation is required, although qualifications from a respected conservatory or university are recognized.

Based on my own extensive experience of studying the *pipa* in China, there are various ways of learning to play an instrument. First, some schools, both public and private, offer instrumental lessons as part of their curricula at the elementary, middle, and high school level. Second, some colleges and universities, again both public and private, have music departments and programs. Third, music conservatories and art institutions, such as the Central Conservatory of Music, offer courses as part of their degree programs. Fourth, publicly funded art facilities, including those for music, are available to interested individuals—youths or seniors—outside of formal degree programs. Fifth, individuals can arrange and pay for one-on-one or group lessons with expert musicians, either privately or offered by commercial music training schools or music stores. This structure is parallel to the methods of teaching classical western music in Canada.

In Canada, unlike in China, there is no systematized structure of Chinese music education, there is no conservatory infrastructure for teaching Chinese instruments and in

general fewer Chinese instrument teachers are available. In this diasporic context, transmission of music knowledge is more restricted, more dependent on individual initiative and resources and more variable.

## **Conclusion**

Between 1969 when Ming Chan gave his first private Chinese instrument lesson and 2023, the Chinese instrument educational system in the Greater Toronto Area has gone through several stages: from an initial lack of textbooks and learning resources through to organized examination learning materials and from largely only private lessons to expanded community-organized orchestral groups and even university credit courses. Different waves of immigration have created diverse Chinese communities with varying music proficiencies and teaching sources. This expansion encouraged transnational musical exchange between Chinese music conservatories and Chinese communities in diaspora to establish a more standardized system with music textbooks and music proficiency exams.

Chinese instrument education in the GTA, especially for youths and seniors, assists Chinese immigrants in staying linked to their culture and teaches successive generations about their heritage. It also provides individuals with a social outlet. It has undergone many changes over the past seven decades, broadening from “internal” transmission of music knowledge and skills within private lessons, ensembles and orchestras into a broader community engagement. These approaches to Chinese music education, based on community engagement, might serve as models for creating and maintaining connections through music within the Chinese diaspora in other areas of Canada and abroad where these are missing. Nonetheless, evidence shows that the offerings of Chinese music in public higher education has followed a pattern of marked

decline since the peak of support in the first decade of this century. This decline is a loss of an important cultural heritage—among others—that demands attention.

## **Chapter Four: Repertoire of Toronto Chinese Orchestras**

### **Introduction**

The Greater Toronto Area is home to a massive Chinese diaspora, and host to no fewer than five Chinese orchestras. Varying in size from twenty to sixty members, and in status from professional to amateur, these orchestras have been providing a home for Chinese instrumentalists and exposing Torontonians to Chinese music since 1993. In this chapter, I analyze the repertoire choices of three of these orchestras from 1993 to the present, to consider how the repertoire relates to their members' identities and the organizations' goals. In particular, I examine how the repertoire represents complex negotiations between the orchestra members themselves and their audiences, and demonstrates the impact of transnationalism (e.g., Rao 2016; Tan and Rao 2016; Zheng 2010) and hybridity (e.g., Appert 2016; Draissey-Collishaw 2012; Taylor 2007; Weiss 2014) on diasporic Chinese communities in Canada.

First, I will analyze these orchestras' repertoires. Then, I will discuss the changes of the repertoire of each orchestra over the past two decades. What has and has not changed? What patterns in the repertoire can be seen over the years? Through this investigation, I hope to explore and clarify the significance of musical and social contexts in the evolution of repertoire in these diasporic orchestras.

### **Categorizing Chinese Music**

Categorizing Chinese music in diaspora, specifically in Toronto, presents many challenges. First, categories by region may conflict with categories by genre (see Table 1.1 in appendix d). Indeed, my charts combine both geographic categories with those of musical genres without clarifying the process of categorizing or possible overlapping categories (e.g.

contemporary Korean music). Second, specifying subcategories of music would generate an unmanageable degree of complexity.

In order to capture as many works and performances as possible in a manageable way for my research, while also accommodating the diverse cultural backgrounds represented in the repertoires, I devised the following categories: traditional (except Guangdong music/Cantonese music <sup>23</sup>), new Chinese music, Guangdong, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japanese music, Korean music, Western (except Canada) music, Canadian music, original composition, and world premiere.

According to Yaohua Wang and Yaxiong Du (1999), Chinese traditional music refers to the music created using the methods and forms characteristic of national cultural heritage recognized within the Chinese nation. It includes not only the ancient works composed in history and passed down from generation to generation but also those by contemporary Chinese people with the inherent characteristics of their own nation (Wang and Du 1999).

Since the 1920s and 1930s, people have used “national music” to refer to music passed down from ancient times and preserved in modern times, and “new music” to refer to that written by people who have studied Western music, and that draws more from Western musical genres and features (Wang 1999). Therefore “national music” here refers to “Chinese traditional music.”

Chinese traditional music is roughly composed of the following four genres: folk (*minjian*) music, literati music, court music, and religious music. Folk music is divided into folk songs, singing and dancing music, narrative song (说唱音乐), opera music, instrumental music, and comprehensive music. The other genres are less comprehensive. “Court music in China has essentially disappeared as a living tradition, although its legacy lives on in Japan and

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<sup>23</sup> The original members of TCO all immigrated from Hong Kong to Toronto. In the 90s, they initially played Chinese traditional music and Cantonese music. Based on this, I think Guangdong music/Cantonese music merits its own category in a repertoire analysis of Chinese diaspora music in Canada.

Korea. Literati music centers on the *qin* zither and *kunqu* opera. Ritual music includes state and court ceremonies along with music performed by Buddhists and Daoists in temples and in other contexts associated with popular religion” (Witzleben 2001, 129).

## **Repertoire Analysis**

Because I am reliant on the accessibility of historical repertoire documents, my dissertation focuses on the repertoire of three orchestras which are TCO, OCO and CCO. I collected this data on repertoire from the personal collections of program books compiled by directors of the orchestras involved (see figure 12). The program books are not complete; I am currently missing OCO’s 2007-2011, 2012, 2014 and TCO’s 2003-2007 program books.

In order to better analyze the repertoire, I sorted all the repertoire in the program books of each orchestra into Excel spreadsheets in chronological order of their concerts. I also listed the title, composer, arranger, time period, genre, performer of each piece of music (please see tables 1.1 -1.13 in appendix d).



Figure 12: Program books of OCO, TCO and CCO. The photo was taken on Jan 6, 2021 by Yao Cui.

The repertoire is a significant place to trace musical and social evolutions in Chinese diasporic orchestras. Similarities and differences between the three orchestras in Toronto speak to the patterns of engagement with types of music, members and other individuals or organizations.

### Toronto Chinese Orchestra

TCO's program book claims that the orchestra is "the longest-running traditional Chinese orchestra in Canada."

We are proud to bring traditional and contemporary repertoire for Chinese orchestra to

the community. TCO is committed to raising the standards of Chinese music. We have both amateur and professional musicians working together, with a focus on excellence. We regularly participate in national and international musical exchanges with other Chinese orchestras. We are creating our unique Canadian identity. Music is constantly evolving. To continue to grow and thrive in Canada, we must also encourage the creation of new compositions for traditional Chinese instruments and ensembles. We are excited to work with composers to bring new music to our audiences locally and abroad. (Toronto Chinese Orchestra 2019 Concert Program Book)<sup>24</sup>

#### TCO Mission Statement:

Make the best possible music  
Unite lovers of Chinese orchestral music  
Sustain Chinese orchestral music in Canada  
Inspire a future generation in the performance of Chinese orchestral music  
Collaborate with international artists as ambassadors of Chinese orchestral music  
(Toronto Chinese Orchestra 2018 Concert Program Book)

In the 1990s, the Toronto Chinese Orchestra performed mostly well-known Chinese pieces composed from the 1950s to 1980s and traditional music, especially those from Guangdong province since people from Cantonese-speaking areas, such as Guangdong and Hong Kong, accounted for a large proportion of Chinese immigrants in Toronto at that time. However, in the past ten years, alongside traditional and well-known music, they have incorporated newer repertoire, and they have also introduced original compositions and world premieres into their concerts (see table 1).

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<sup>24</sup> Chinese orchestras face a dilemma when it comes to connecting with Canadian audiences. While their mission statements emphasize the importance of engaging with a broader audience, the reality is that a significant majority of their audiences are composed of Chinese Canadians. This tension has yet to be addressed by any of the three orchestras that I worked with.

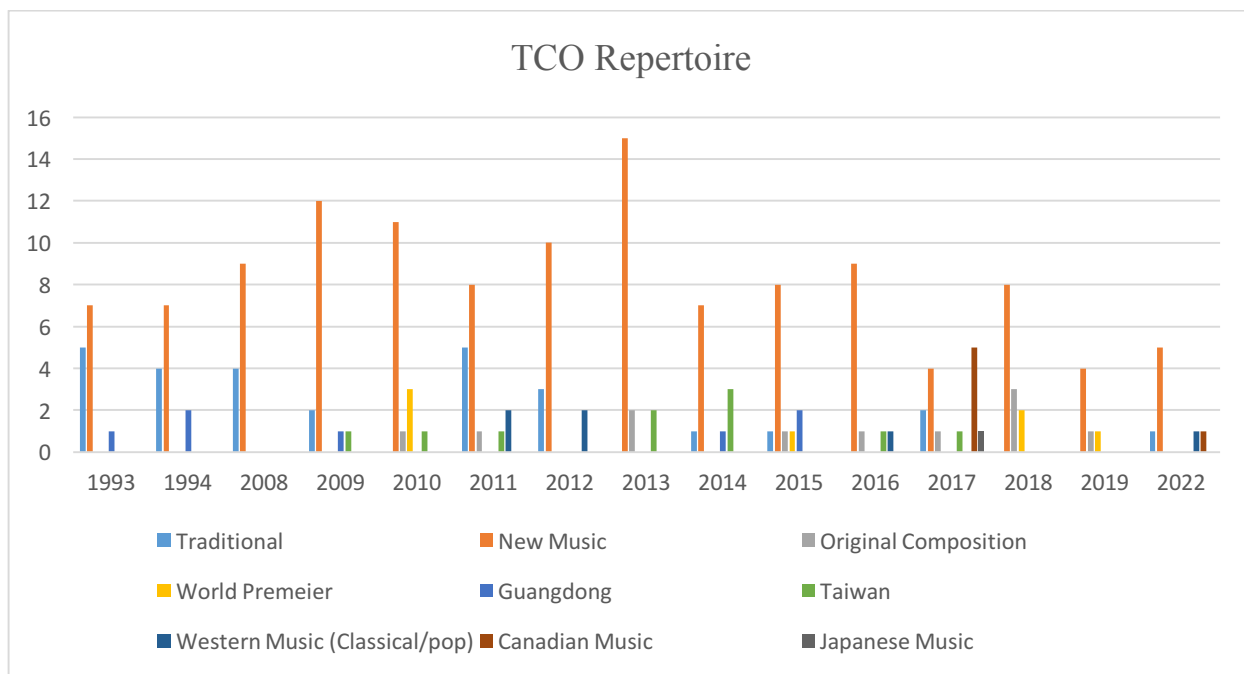


Table 1: TCO's repertoire

Based on TCO program books and according to Patty Chan, repertoire choices are influenced by members and audience nostalgia. The orchestra has to consider the audience's preferences. According to Patty Chan and members from TCO, the Chinese diaspora makes up the majority of TCO's audience. To cater to the audience's preferences, Music Director Chan usually ensures that at least fifty percent of the repertoire is famous or "old" Chinese music because these audiences favor the music with which they are familiar. However, Chan also hopes to push the orchestra to play new pieces/repertoire (Patty Chan, personal communication, May 6, 2022). By being challenged in this way, orchestra members will not feel bored by playing old pieces and can catch up with other overseas Chinese orchestras that are at a more advanced level. For instance, the 2022 TCO concert repertoire consists of *Red Chamber Suite*, "Colorful Dragon Boat," "Glowing with Joy," and "The Other Side of the Mountain." The *Red Chamber Suite* is arranged from the soundtrack of the popular TV series *Dream of the Red Chamber*, which is well-known in China. "Colorful Dragon Boat" and "Glowing with Joy" were composed

by famous Chinese composers. However, “The Other Side of the Mountain” is a new piece that was composed by Zhimin Yu, a Vancouver-based Chinese composer. The piece had its premiere on February 27, 2022, performed by the B.C. Chinese Music Association. After watching the premiere, Patty Chan requested the music score from the composer and added this piece to the 2022 TCO concert repertoire.

Moreover, in order to engage audience attention, expand the audience base, and immerse themselves in the broader society, TCO tries to incorporate musicians or groups from other cultural backgrounds. In the past decade, TCO has also played various genres of music other than traditional Chinese music and new Chinese music, including Western classical music, popular music, and Canadian folk songs. For instance, the repertoire of their 2017 concert, “Canada 150: A Chinese Mosaic” celebrated some integration with the host culture in the inclusion of a selection of Canadian folk songs. TCO has also collaborated with other music groups and art forms for performances. In 2011, TCO invited local groups such as the “Spire” band, an East/West fusion band, and the Center for Information & Community Service’s “Ah-Mazing Choir.” They also invited a Chinese dancer to accompany a percussion performance in May 2010.

When it comes to members’ repertoire preferences, according to my conversations with the musicians of this orchestra, there is a split amongst its members: one group wants to keep playing old music that people are familiar with; the other wants to perform new music and the music of different composers. The former group does not find new music interesting or attractive; as amateur musicians, their performance level is generally not high, and new music is difficult and unfamiliar to them and it is challenging to master quickly. Some younger members,

however, express their yearning for semi-professional development through tackling these pieces.

Despite this resistance, since 2010, TCO, uniquely, has developed a well-established pattern of producing, supporting, and performing original works. Finally, in 2017, they started a composition competition—TCO Composition Competition—that sought to connect emerging Canadian composers with Chinese orchestral music in order to produce new compositions. However, the composition competition ceased in 2018 because the director did not have the energy or resources to host a competition annually. During its short tenure, the orchestra's announcement served as a basic introduction to the competition:

#### Background

The Toronto Chinese Orchestra (TCO) is proud to announce a composition competition. This competition seeks to connect emerging Canadian composers with Chinese orchestral music in order to produce a new composition. Winning composer(s) will have their work premiered during the TCO's 2017|2018 concert season, at their 25th Anniversary Gala Concert in June, 2018. (Toronto Chinese Orchestra 2018 Concert Program Book)

#### Eligibility

The competition is open to emerging Canadian composers (citizens or permanent residents). There are no age restrictions. Jurists, TCO artistic leadership, and TCO board of directors are ineligible to apply. (Toronto Chinese Orchestra 2018 Concert Program Book)

There were two winners in this 2017 competition: Qinglin Bruce Bai and Lucas Oickle. Bruce Bai was born in China and pursued his musical education and career as a composer, songwriter, sound designer, and solo performing artist in Vancouver. He has focused on combining Eastern and Western music, and his goal is to “learn from tradition and innovate for the future” (Toronto Chinese Orchestra 2018 Concert Program Book). Unlike Bruce Bai, Lucas Oickle has no Chinese cultural background. He was born in Nova Scotia and received his Bachelor of Music and Master of Music in Canada. He has won various composition

competitions and received many awards. “He is always open to new projects-commissions, arrangements, collaborations, creating education materials, music for film, video games, and more” (Toronto Chinese Orchestra 2018 Concert Program Book).

With similar goals of combining eastern and western traditions, my fellow graduate student in ethnomusicology, Marko Koumoulas, composed a piece of music for the Dim Sum ensemble consisting of some TCO members. Koumoulas told me he knew very little about Chinese music instruments before composing. He was given a chart with the pitch ranges of the instruments, and he listened to each instruments sound on YouTube (Marko Koumoulas, personal communication, May 5, 2022). His composition was largely based on his Western composition knowledge and his own vision in Chinese music. In this sense, he was essentially composing Western music (with some Chinese flavor) for Chinese instruments.

On one hand, the orchestra invites Canadian composers in Canada to participate in this competition as a way to encourage them to engage with Chinese music and integrate their own interpretation and understanding, as well as composing techniques (Western or non-Western), with Chinese music to produce new music. In this sense, this initiative could be considered to be a process of localization. On the other hand, such a development can be seen as globalizing. It allows Chinese music to expand beyond the limits of the Chinese community. In this sense, its encouragement of hybrid compositional techniques works against the ghettoization of Canadian ethnic enclaves to promote cultural exchange. But it is a back-and-forth process allowing for adjustment of the repertoire depending on the experience of rehearsal and the availability of performers.

In recent years, the TCO’s repertoire has been partly determined by the TCO music director's personal networks and, especially, her links with the conductor of the Taiwan Little

Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra, which is based in Taipei and is famous for incorporating new repertoire. The Taiwanese conductor gives the director some suggestions and helps the TCO to choose repertoire. Through his professional networks, the Taiwanese conductor has resources of scores of new repertoires. In this way, TCO not only has new repertoire but also has gradually kept up with the pace of Taiwan.

The TCO's repertoire choices are also influenced by membership fluctuation, members' performance levels, member and audience nostalgia, and the orchestra's financial situation. Patty Chan told me she has to arrange concerts year by year and could not plan a concert for two or three years ahead since TCO's membership is unstable. Recruiting members is a constant mission for TCO. Each year, there will be some members graduating from schools and moving to other places. Due to the pandemic, some members could not attend rehearsals and concerts, which led to a decline in the number of members. Therefore, each year Chan has to see what instrument players the orchestra has, and then decide which pieces are suitable for the instrumentation settings (Patty Chan, personal communication, May 6, 2022).

The TCO's budget plays a role in repertoire choice. In order to obtain music scores, Chan has to use her networks through personal interactions and social media platforms like Facebook. In 2021, Chan heard a Chinese orchestra piece called "We Soar" on YouTube by a Singapore composer Chenwei Wang. She then found the composer and chatted with him through Facebook. Chan was interested in the pieces and requested the music score from the composer. At first, the composer wanted to charge fees. But after he learned that the TCO had very limited budget and was struggling with finances, he gave Chan the score (We Soar) for free, and in addition, he gave one more score for free, "Remembering Teresa Teng."

## **Ontario Chinese Orchestra**

Similarly, the Ontario Chinese Orchestra has roots in a Cantonese-speaking diaspora. A professional orchestra founded in 2007 and the first professional Chinese orchestra in Canada, the vision of OCO is to “provide a reliable and effective platform for ... performers allowing them to bring their expertise of Chinese folk music to this multi-cultural community to be accepted and enjoyed by the community and at the same time, allow them to continue to flourish their musical talents” (Ontario Chinese Orchestra 2016 Concert Program Book). The objective of the orchestra is to “introduce and leverage Chinese folk music to the Canadian society and provide an opportunity to the community to enjoy high-quality professional performance” (Ontario Chinese Orchestra 2016 Concert Program Book).

In the past decade, OCO’s repertoire has been almost exclusively Chinese music. They do not usually play popular music or non-Chinese movie theme music. Their repertoire also does not include any Canadian music. Unlike TCO, they do not repeat their repertoire often. Peter Bok, the president of the OCO, is a Chinese music enthusiast originally from Hong Kong. He wanted to provide a platform where Toronto-based Chinese professional musicians can get together and present their talents (Peter Bok, personal communication, December 23, 2020). He pays the musicians to rehearse and perform, and the orchestra must generate sales in order to cover his costs and perhaps even make a profit. Compared to the other two orchestras, the professional OCO uses a more profit-oriented model; therefore, audience preferences strongly influence the selection of repertoire. Bok is the main person who decides the repertoire. George Gao is the music director of the orchestra, and sometimes helps Bok to choose the repertoire. However, Bok, as president, feels that he knows best what the audience will like: “I know my target audience. 70% of them are from Hong Kong. I know what they want. And I

know their taste, so that's how I decide" (Peter Bok, personal communication, December 23, 2020).

The proportion of traditional music in OCO's repertoire is waning year by year; new music is growing; but Guangdong music/Cantonese music is almost always present. From 2016, original compositions begin to appear (see table 2). Bok says the orchestra performs Guangdong music to draw the attention of audience members from Hong Kong, especially those over 60 years old; they usually only play one or two pieces of Guangdong music, unless the whole concert is devoted to Guangdong music (Peter Bok, personal communication, December 23, 2020). This consistent pattern of Guangdong music representation shows the director's identity.

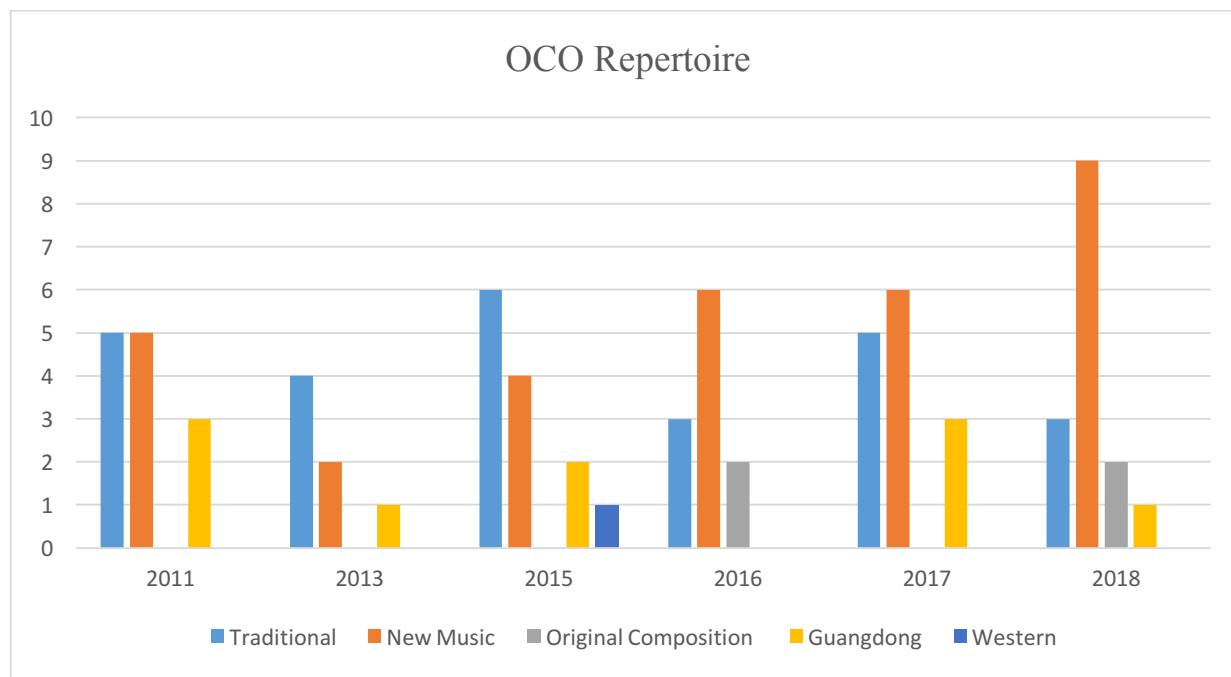


Table 2: OCO's repertoire

I asked Bok to tell me what change had taken place in OCO's repertoire in the past decades. His response was "a lot." He explained that OCO used to play old music; it was

outdated so they tried to expand their repertoire. Bok has had to find the balance between new and old. Otherwise, OCO would risk losing some audience members. Bok explained “we always try to insert at least some new idea or new music because otherwise, if we are not improving, we are staying the same and we get left behind.” If Bok has the funds, he can do that kind of thing; but OCO runs based solely on his financial ability.

Bok uses many approaches to choosing repertoire. The easiest is going through other orchestras’ past concerts and adopting the themes, then creating the OCO’s own repertoire. For example, a concert theme may be movie music that comes from a movie's soundtrack. Another approach is catering to the guest artists they invite for each year’s concert by seeking repertoire suitable for the artist.

At the beginning, OCO engaged only its own members as performers in their concerts, but because after six or seven annual concerts the repertoire had lost its novelty, they began to invite guest performers. OCO has invited guests from mainland China and Hong Kong through the personal connections of the music director, Bok and the orchestra members. OCO aims to bring Chinese professional musicians to perform on the stages of Toronto. Most of the members of OCO graduated from Chinese conservatories. They are deeply linked with their homeland, and they know famous professors and musicians from China.

The increase of Chinese immigrants in the ethnoscape in Canada has certainly enhanced the Chinese music scene in Canada. Before the 1990s, Chinese associations in Toronto were mostly organized by immigrants from Hong Kong. In 1992, immigrants from mainland China established their own associations (Wang and Lo 2005). Starting in the 1990s, numerous professionals from mainland China immigrated to Canada, including many professional

musicians. Their arrival has improved the overall level of Chinese orchestras in Canada and enabled their repertoire to keep pace with that of mainland China.

In her book *Claiming Diaspora: Music, Transnationalism, and Cultural Politics in Asian/Chinese America*, Zheng Su states that:

in the field of music making, an individual musician's network moves beyond immediate kin to include several other sets of social relations. The primary set consists of the people to whom the individual musician can relate in terms of premigratory homeland experience, such as ex- colleagues, conservatory alumni, people in the same musical circle from the same city, or simply others from the same homeland. (Zheng 2010, 269)

It can be seen from OCO's choice of guest artists that the individual network plays an essential role. For example, in 2018, they invited Liu Changfu, a renowned *erhu* virtuoso, educator, and composer from mainland China, who also happens to be the father-in-law of the resident *erhu* soloist of OCO, Baixue. They also invited Anna Guo, a Chinese Canadian yangqin master and Liu Jiayin, a pianist and daughter of Liu Changfu, to perform for their concert. Liu Changfu performed two of his original works.<sup>25</sup> Through members' networks, the orchestra has continuously invited guest artists from mainland China to perform in Toronto in the past decade.

### **Canadian Chinese Orchestra**

The Canadian Chinese Orchestra supports new repertoire and collaboration in its programming. Founded in 2017, the CCO is a non-professional orchestra with two groups: the Canadian Philharmonic Chinese Orchestra (whose mostly middle-aged members are generally amateurs, with some professional instrumental teachers) and the Canadian Youth Chinese Orchestra (CCOYO). The CCO states that their goal is to

challenge the boundaries of Chinese music making and Chinese music communities from within, to create a healthy environment for both the professional players and the music

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<sup>25</sup> The information is based on the orchestra's 2018 program book.

enthusiasts. It will also serve as a platform for musicians to challenge themselves to new repertoires and ensemble playing. The CCO seeks to improve by collaborating with different organizations in the future to promote Chinese musical culture and arts (Canadian Chinese Orchestra 2019 Concert Program Book).

I primarily focus on the CCO Youth Orchestra because of the availability of the concert program books and live performance. Their repertoire includes both “classical Chinese favorites” and popular music, which allows younger player members to show off their technique and “coolness.” Among these three orchestras, CCO’s repertoire reflects more cultural and musical diversity including, for example, Japanese movie/animation music, Chinese and Korean TV series music, and popular music from mainland China and Taiwan (see table 3).

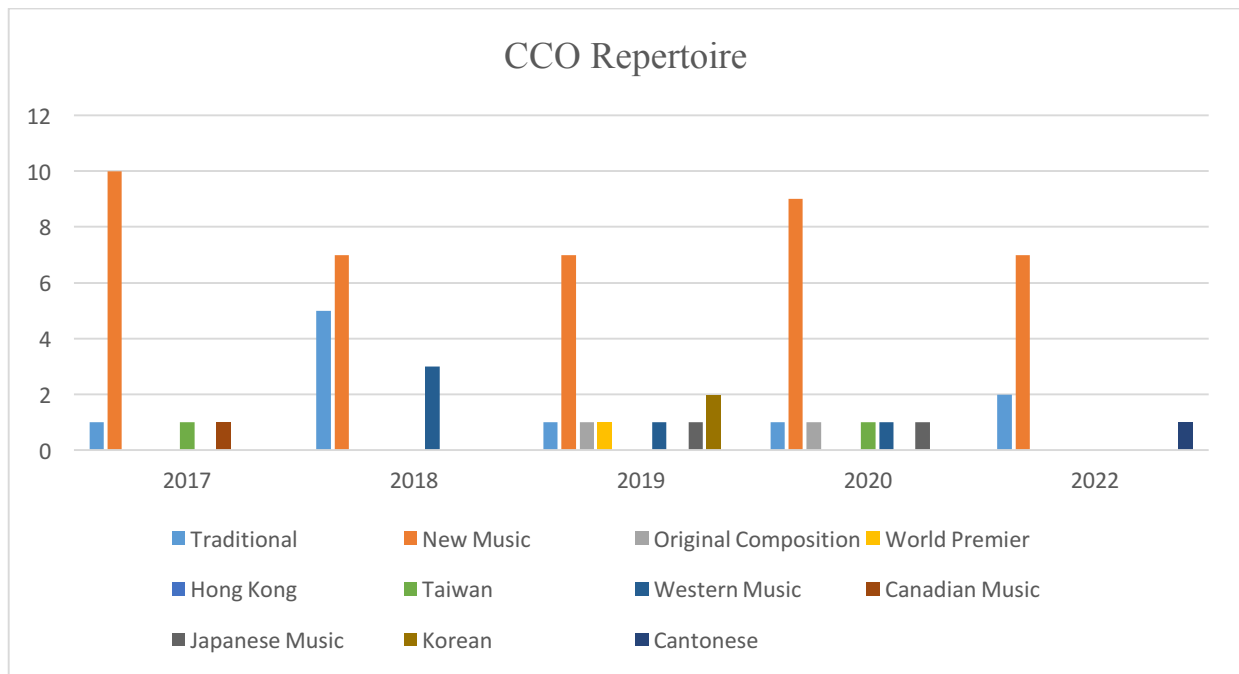


Table 3: CCO’s repertoire

Amely Zhou, the director of CCO, usually decides the repertoire, and she tends to select pieces that are melodically rich and comparatively new (Amely Zhou, personal communication, December 4, 2020). Zhou notes that, under her direction, the orchestra also makes new

arrangements; for example, when some members of the youth orchestra expressed interest in playing the “Star Wars” theme music, Zhou suggested that the members arrange the music themselves, and supervised them in doing so. In this way, the youth orchestra members influence the choice of repertoire to some degree and can show their initiative in choosing and performing music. In recent years, more and more arrangements and original compositions from youth members of the orchestra have appeared in their repertoire.

On October 17th, I was invited to watch their 2020 online live concert, which was held on YouTube at 7 pm. It was a fundraising concert called “Confluence.”

For the purpose of reconnecting everyone through music during this distant time, Canadian Chinese Orchestra presents our first ever virtual fundraising concert - “CONFLUENCE 融”. “Confluence” means merging and rejoining, representing the welcoming and inclusive theme of the concert as well as the aim of reuniting through these distant times. The show presents the audience with a grand music feast featuring a variety of Chinese traditional instruments through solos and duets. All proceeds raised in the concert will go towards supporting Canadian Chinese Orchestra to provide opportunities such as purchasing new orchestra instruments, supporting the scholarship programs, and providing better rehearsal space for the near future. We hope you join us in our cause for a more diverse, inclusive, and culturally-aware community! (Canadian Chinese Orchestra 2020)

This concert demonstrates yet another variable in repertoire correlated to age and level of technique. Since all members of both groups who were interested in this concert were allowed to participate in the performance, the participants were made up of more amateur musicians ranging from teenage to middle-age. This online live concert was internally organized, so the members had the opportunity to choose the music themselves. From this concert, it can be seen that the younger generation tends to play their favorite music, and music that can best reflect their performance level. By contrast, middle-aged and elderly members prefer to play “classic Chinese music.”

Joanna Ng, the conductor of the CCO as well as the Ontario Cross-Cultural Music Society Choir, occasionally is involved in the decision-making process during concerts. For instance, in their 2022's concert, Ng suggested to Zhou that CCO could collaborate with the choir. As a result, Zhou selected and arranged some pieces suitable for the choir and their orchestra, and then let Ng choose the repertoire.

As in the case with TCO described above, Zhou too sometimes invites musicians from different cultures to perform with the orchestra. For example, in 2019, she invited Korean musicians from Toronto to perform with them. She applauds the fact that in Toronto we have such rich resources and opportunities to encounter different cultures and music. Since the youth members are also interested in learning about their own culture, she wants to instill in them the idea that cultures need to work together and communicate with each other.

An interesting fact I found from their repertoire was that in recent years, more and more arrangements and original compositions have been presented. These pieces were composed by members of the youth orchestra. This indicates that the orchestra encourages and supports young musicians to be more creative and have their own ideas.

## **Repertoire Repetition**

Here is the repeating repertoire of TCO, OCO, and CCO:

### **TCO repertoire repetition**

Welcome Guests from Afar	2008, 2013
Night of the Torch Festival	2008, 2012
Moonlight over Spring River	2008, 2011
Flying Apsaras	2008, 2013
Harvest Festival	2009, 2014
Yao Dance (Dance of Yao People)	2010, 2018
Spring over Xiang River	2008, 2011
Flying Dragon Leaping Tiger	2011, 2018

Lament of Lady Zhao Jun	2012, 2015
Layers II	2013
Wild Game	2015, 2017

#### OCO repertoire repetition

Joyous	2015, 2017
Autumn Moon on a Placid Lake	2011, 2015
Beautiful Flowers under Full Moon	2011, 2015
Moonlight over Spring River	2013, 2015

#### CCO repertoire repetition

Chrysanthemum Terrace	2017, 2020
A Stroll at the Embankment Su	2017, 2020

#### TCO, OCO, CCO shared repertoire

Autumn Moon on a Placid Lake	OCO 2011, 2015; TCO 2014
Beautiful Flowers under Full Moon	OCO 2011, 2015; TCO 2014
Moonlight over Spring River	TCO 2008, 2011, OCO 2013, 2015
When the Grapes Are Ripen	TCO 2013; OCO 2015,
Lament of Lady Zhao Jun	TCO 2012, 2015; OCO 2018
New Racing horse, Racing Horse	TCO 2012 CCO 2017
A Stroll at the Embankment Su	OCO 2017; CCO 2017
Spring Arrives at Xiangjiang	TCO 2008, 2011; CCO 2020
General's Command	TCO 2009; CCO 2018
Night of the Torch Festival	TCO 2008, 2012; CCO 2019
Hanging the Red Lantern	OCO 2017; CCO 2019
Dream of Red Chamber Suite, Dream of Red Chamber Overture	TCO 2014, CCO 2019
Moon Reflects on the Second Spring	TCO 2009, OCO 2015, CCO 2017

From the list above, we can see that every orchestra repeats the repertoire to varying degrees. Among the three orchestras, TCO has the highest repetition rate. The reason why TCO in the past has repeated program items so frequently is mainly that it lacked musical scores, and there were few sources and avenues to obtain these. Recently these have increased. In contrast, OCO has rarely repeated music in the past decade. Almost all of the orchestra members graduated from conservatories, and have accumulated many music scores. Additionally, they

also know numerous people in the industry, and can obtain music scores more conveniently and quickly. CCO is the youngest orchestra among these three, with fewer than five years of performing history, so they have not needed to repeat music yet. The repertoire items shared by these three orchestras have been mostly composed before 2000. These titles are “regular” repertoire selections of Chinese orchestras and ensembles in mainland China.

## **Conclusion**

These three orchestras represent the longest-established, professional, and young orchestras in the Toronto area. Each orchestra’s repertoire has its own characteristics that reflect their identities, performance level, generational makeup, and relations to trends of transnationalism, and globalization. The process of selecting a repertoire is challenging for every Chinese orchestra. As the repertoire selections of TCO, OCO, and CCO demonstrate, a variety of factors are considered while selecting a repertoire, including membership makeup, performance levels, members’ and audiences’ preferences, and collaboration partners’ preferences.

Evidence from their repertoire lists shows that each orchestra changes over time. Over the years, these orchestras have frequently cooperated and exchanged ideas with musicians and composers from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, and their main target audience is the Chinese communities within the GTA. However, at the same time, Toronto’s multicultural environment enables these Chinese orchestras to collaborate with musicians and music groups from different cultural backgrounds. Through these twin influences, the repertoires of these three Chinese orchestras have gradually kept up with the pace of change in mainland China, and also that of other countries and regions, while paying attention to original music and

arrangements. As my analysis shows, these orchestras are evolving in separate but related ways in their repertoires. Each provides a window into distinct diasporic musical experience and possibility.

## **Chapter Five: Rehearsal Negotiations in Chinese Orchestras**

### **Introduction**

The complex dynamics of individuals in Chinese musical ensembles in Toronto fall within the wide compass of negotiations and experiences shared by other ethnic minorities in Toronto (e.g., Erol 2012; Pravaz 2013). For example, Ayhan Erol, an ethnomusicologist, explores how Alevis in Toronto preserve their sense of “self-identity” and “communal cohesion” through music and dance practices (2012, 833). Also, Natasha Pravaz, an anthropologist, examines how Brazilian musicians construct diasporic space in Toronto and “reshape their identities and find home” (272) through samba.

In this chapter I compare the internal negotiations within two Toronto Chinese Orchestras – TCO and CCO.<sup>26</sup> The identities and self-positioning of TCO and CCO members are expressed through choices they make in relation to musical notation, competence, membership, and social interaction. I will compare these two orchestras and explore how choices made by individual members influence the direction of specific orchestral communities.<sup>27</sup>

### **A Typical Rehearsal of the Toronto Chinese Orchestra**

Here I provide a composite of several ethnographies that I wrote during my observations of and participation in TCO rehearsals from 2022 to 2023 in order to provide context for my analysis of the internal negotiations within the orchestras. Rehearsals of the TCO take place every Friday evening at 8 pm at the Centre for Immigrant and Community Services (CICS) in

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<sup>26</sup> Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ontario Chinese Orchestra has ceased rehearsals and concerts since March 2020; therefore, I have not been able to attend any rehearsals or concerts.

<sup>27</sup> Because of variances in general membership make-up between TCO and CCO, I discuss negotiations and concerns in relation to TCO more extensively than I do those of CCO.

Scarborough, a facility funded by combined charitable and government sources.<sup>28</sup> The Centre takes as its mission “to empower newcomers in setting and integrating as contributing members of Canadian society through diverse, professional and innovative services” (Centre for Immigrant & Community Services, n.d.). The orchestra rents the hall for rehearsal space and storage space for their equipment.

I arrive at the hall at 7:50 pm. Chatting casually with five members who are also early, I help to prepare the space by arranging chairs and music stands into a semi-circle around the conductor. On the right side of the conductor is one of the bowed string sections including *erhu* and *zhonghu*. The wind section including *dizi*, *suona*, *sheng*, and clarinet is behind this bowed string section. On the left side of the conductor is the other bowed string section including cello and double bass, and behind this section is *guzheng* and *yangqin*, two plucked string instruments. In front of the conductor is the main plucked string section including pipa in the first row, *zhongruan*, *daruan*, and *liuqin* in second row. The percussion section is behind this plucked string section.

By 8 pm, everyone has arrived, and I take my place in the plucked string section on the right side, facing the conductor. There are twenty-five orchestral members who are here this evening, about five probably over age fifty. The rest are a mix of high school students, university students, and young professionals. These are also the members who usually attend rehearsals. They are about evenly split between men and women. Twenty members were born in Hong Kong, three were born in mainland China, and two are non-Chinese. One non-Chinese has been playing the *zhongruan* in the orchestra for eleven years. He told me that he joined the orchestra

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<sup>28</sup> City of Toronto, Employment and Social Development Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Service Canada, The Reginal Municipality of York, and United Way of Greater Toronto (Centre for Immigrant & Community Services, n.d.).

because it seemed like a lot of fun. He could get performing experience and grow as a musician. The other non-Chinese participant is a university colleague of the director who plays the cello and has recently joined the group to provide more bass support.

We all tune our instruments; for the *yangqin*, this can take up to ten minutes. For instruments like the *erhu*, it can be done quickly. Once my pipa is tuned, I practice sections of the pieces that the conductor has identified by email during the week. I notice the person sitting beside me—a young girl about fifteen years old—is having trouble with one of the passages and I offer my help. We go over the four-bar section slowly and then gradually speed it up. After five times, she is playing it cleanly. She smiles at me and says thank you. The conductor spends these first few minutes looking at the music scores. When he thinks that everyone is ready to play, he steps up to the conductor's stand, taps twice with his baton, and calls out the name of the first section, *Red Chamber Suite*, mvt. 5. There is lots of paper shuffling as we find the notation and put it on our music stands.

The *Red Chamber Suite*, taken from the soundtrack of the famous Chinese TV show *Dream of the Red Chamber*, is a musical arrangement that consists of eight movements. During rehearsals, the conductor always begins by working on specific sections or movements of pieces. He will then put them together in the last few rehearsals prior to concerts. In the first half of today's rehearsal, the fifth and eighth movements of the suite are rehearsed. The conductor first leads the orchestra through the fifth movement. Then he points out that the plucked string section should be louder in measure twenty-three, and we should play a decrescendo from piano to pianissimo in the last measure. He also notes that the bowed string section should play ornaments together. After we play this movement two more times for about fifteen minutes total, we move on to the eighth movement. This movement is the last movement of the suite, which features

many changes in dynamics, especially at the end. The conductor stops at measure 110 and reminds the percussion section to pay attention to the forte to fortissimo change in dynamics from measure 110 to the end. The percussionists indicate their understanding. This is the only correction the conductor made. This movement is played two times, which lasts for about fifteen minutes.

The next piece is “The Other Side of the Mountain,” a new composition by Zhimin Yu, a Chinese composer based in Vancouver (see figure 13). The score is written in Western notation but with Chinese notation written on top. We have rehearsed all the sections of this piece before. However, I hear a *pipa* player groan. She is a senior and has been in this orchestra for over twenty years. Her playing level is not high, and this piece demands advanced playing techniques. She told me during a previous rehearsal that this piece was a challenge for her and that she could not play fast. We play through the entire piece first, then the conductor instructs us to play from measures 127 to 190, the most challenging part of the piece. He later stops and says, “We still need to practice more; please take your time to practice this part at home.” We play the entire piece two more times and spend about thirty minutes on this piece.

Pipa

1 = D

# The Other Side of the Mountain

在山的那边

Zhimin Yu  
Suona with Ensemble

The musical score is written for a Pipa instrument. It begins with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. The score is divided into several systems, each containing Western musical notation (staves with notes, rests, and dynamics) and Jianpu notation (numbers and symbols placed above the staves). The Jianpu notation includes numbers 1 through 7, often with dots or lines, and symbols like '3' for triplets and '4' for quadruplets. Dynamics such as *pp*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, and *Lento* are indicated throughout the piece. The score includes measure numbers 12, 22, 34, 46, 59, 73, and 81. The title 'The Other Side of the Mountain' is written in English, and '在山的那边' is written in Chinese. The composer's name 'Zhimin Yu' and the ensemble 'Suona with Ensemble' are also present.

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Figure 13: Part of the TCO's music score "The Other Side of the Mountain" with jianpu added above the Western notation

Around 9 pm, the conductor says it is time for a break. The young woman in the bowed string section sighs and stands up to stretch. “I’m so tired!” she tells me, “I was up very late last night doing homework. I didn’t want to come tonight. I wanted to go to bed early, but my mom made me come.” She goes off to get her water bottle out of her backpack. I join a group of musicians who are examining a *yangqin*. They’re talking about how old the strings are and whether the man who plays it should change them all so they have an even tone, or just the ones that are in the worst condition. The man is lamenting the high price of strings and tells us that it will take him over four hours to change them all. We reassure him that he only needs to change the four strings that show the worst wear. The others will be fine.

Soon, ten minutes have passed and people are returning to their seats. The conductor walks to the stand, taps it twice with his baton, and calls out the name of the piece, *Red Chamber Suite*, mvt. 3. Despite its short length, only twenty-three measures, this movement is the “loudest” in the suite. All the percussion instruments play in forte to fortissimo for almost the whole movement. A young *dizi* player frowned, as she sits in front of the percussion section, and she knows how loud it will become! The conductor first has the percussion section play the movement by themselves and points out that one of the cymbal players should play a bit louder, then the other instrument sections join. We play the movement together three times, taking about ten minutes. Next, the conductor moves on to the next piece “Glowing with Joy,” composed by the famous Chinese composer, Shin-Tsai Huang. The score is written in Western notation with *jianpu* written over the top. We practiced all the sections in the previous rehearsals, but some tricky parts still need more attention. The conductor first goes through the entire piece and then instructs the wind section to pay attention to the dynamics from measure ninety-two to the end. The wind section then plays this section individually. While the wind section is playing, some

members of the plucked string section are also playing quietly, as the section from measure eighteen to forty-six is challenging to some members. They want to take this time to practice. A young girl sitting next to me focuses on practicing measures twenty-three, thirty-six, and thirty-seven repeatedly. After the wind section finishes practicing, the conductor instructs the plucked string section to play from measure eighteen to forty-six. It turns out that the members play well, and I can see the young girl feels relieved from her smiley face. The conductor then instructs all the instrument sections to play the piece from the beginning to the end. However, I feel something is missing in the music sound while I am playing. Later, the conductor expresses regret that the double-bass players and one cellist are not there. Their absence results in a lack of bass support for the orchestra. We then play the piece two more times. It takes about thirty-five minutes to rehearse this piece. Finally, we finish playing it for the last time, and the conductor says, "Thank you everyone for coming to the rehearsal. Please practice these pieces at home. I will see you next Friday."

The rehearsal usually finishes around 9:55 pm. In reverse of setting up, now everything gets packed away, chairs, music stands, and instruments are all safely put back in storage. The sofas are moved back to their original places. After rehearsal, depending on people's schedules or moods, members gather for a late dinner or go home. It is generally the younger players who carry on together to a restaurant, since they may have freer schedules. This account of a rehearsal of TCO reveals key dynamics operating within the arena of the orchestra: those involving music notation, musical competence, membership, social interaction—revealing, in different degrees, variations in identities, means of communication and power relations.

## Discussion

### Notation

The issue of what system of music notation to use in diasporic Chinese orchestras and ensembles involves complex factors of identity<sup>29</sup> and communication. Although in ancient China, oral/aural transmission was the main teaching method for musical education and notation was just used as a reminder, there have been various types of music notation used in China dating back thousands of years; eventually, because these notations were too intricate and not very accurate, they have all fallen into disuse, except for the *gongche* notation, which is still used for some music, such as *nanyin*, a traditional music genre from Fujian province in China.

Western notation was introduced to China by Portuguese Catholic missionaries in the middle of the 17th century, originally only used to record and disseminate liturgy and chants sung in Catholic church. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Western notation continued to spread throughout China through Catholic churches and schools. Today, Western notation plays an important role in the music composition of Chinese professional composers, the performance and singing of professional music groups, the music teaching of professional music schools, and people's learning of Western instruments such as piano and violin (Qi & Zhao 2003, 28).

Meanwhile, in the early twentieth century, a new form of notation, called *jianpu*, was brought to China from France via Japan by Chinese students studying there as one modernizing method of music education. The method of recording the notes for *jianpu* is simpler and more accurate than the *gong che* notation. Therefore, *jianpu* was popularized in China and continues to

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<sup>29</sup> Chinese identity varies greatly, depending on where you are from, how, why, and when you immigrated, what immigrant generation you're in, the demographics of the community in which you live, etc. There is not a pan-Chinese identity, however, I am essentialising a pan-Chinese identity for the purpose of this dissertation.

be used even more broadly than Western notation (Qi & Zhao 2003, 28). Currently, two types of notation are commonly utilized in the study and performance of Chinese music: *jianpu* notation and Western staff notation.

Professor Yi Qi (1997), a well-known ethnomusicologist in China, provides some comparisons between Chinese and Western notation. He notes that in terms of usage, since Western staff notation indicates absolute pitch, it is not too difficult to read no matter how it is modulated, while reading *jianpu*, which only indicates relative pitch, requires going through a series of “conversions” to determine its absolute pitch. It is inconvenient to use *jianpu* for music with complex harmonies and frequent modulations (29). In comparison with *jianpu*, Western staff notation holds more information, so it is better than *jianpu* for writing large, instrumental pieces with a wide range, many voices, and frequent modulations. However, *jianpu* has played an important role in the popularization of music in China, and many people have started to learn music using *jianpu* (30).

Chunlin Yang, a famous Chinese conductor, believes that *jianpu* best suits China’s national conditions for three reasons. First, Chinese music was mainly monophonic until Western music was introduced to Chinese, and *jianpu* works well for writing monophonic music. Secondly, Chinese people who are not educated in Western music basically play or listen to music in the “movable do” system in which the principal tone changes according to the key; again, *jianpu* is well able to work with this system. Thirdly, Chinese music generally does not modulate, and the melody is the most important element, which is suitable to the characteristics of *jianpu*. These are the reasons that *jianpu* has “ruled” the folk music scene in mainland China and neighboring countries and regions for decades (Yang 2016).

Yang then states that although *jianpu* works well for traditional Chinese music, staff notation is, in fact, the most convenient. First, staff notation works best for intercultural communication. The first national orchestra in China to use staff notation is an orchestra directly under the Ministry of Culture. Before, when they visited foreign countries and people asked to see the scores, the scores were all *jianpu*, which was an obstacle to the communication of music. Secondly, the education in Chinese music conservatories is based on the standard notation of staff notation, so all musicians educated in the conservatories communicate through staff notation. Thirdly, the role of notation software can be said to be the last straw to overwhelm the *jianpu*. After using the software, the composer no longer writes by hand, and is able to produce a score, which is undoubtedly good news for major music institutions. In the old days, the full score was written by hand, but there was a procedure to copy the score, although it was also staff notation. With the software, the orchestra can use the staff notation directly to divide the score, but the national orchestra still has to translate it into *jianpu*, so why not learn to use the staff notation in one step, and make the score directly in the software? This has improved the efficiency of the music service. In the end, staff notation was able to integrate all kinds of factors to become popularized in professional national orchestras (Yang 2016).

Yang provides the following opinion on the use of *jianpu* versus staff notation: It is logical for Western symphonic music to use staff notation. He then qualifies further. Chinese national orchestral music can use staff notation or *jianpu*. The Chinese national orchestra and all kinds of small ensembles, duets, solos, etc., which play tonal music and have a strong ethnic style, can use staff notation or *jianpu*, and are encouraged to use *jianpu*. Any polyphonic or non-tonal music can use staff notation. Professional Chinese national orchestras use staff notation, while non-professional national orchestras can use staff notation or *jianpu*. For local music,

opera and religious music, staff notation can be used as a writing method, but for preserving traditional practices, *jianpu* should be used, and it must be handed down orally and from teacher to teacher to be authentic (Yang 2016).

Social, historical and even psychological forces determine music notation choices. As Yang's discussion suggests, in mainland China the majority of non-professional music ensembles and orchestras still use *jianpu* most of the time, and this practice has been imported to overseas contexts. In my personal experience in participating and performing with some university Chinese ensembles in the US, knowing how to read *jianpu* is a required skill for members, and they begin learning it in the first lesson. However, some Chinese orchestras in some Asian countries or districts tend to use staff notation. For example, as ethnomusicologist Shzr Ee Tan, who specializes in the music of Sinophone and Southeast Asia, notes, the Singapore Chinese Orchestra and the Singapore Indian Orchestra have traditionally elected to use *jianpu* or "a form of Tamil solfège" supported by oral instruction. She notes as well the irony that in fact, it is Western staff notation that offers "neutrality, accessibility and readability," facilitating collaborations across musical and cultural boundaries. These advantages of Western notation have reinforced the "position of Western musical literacy and notions of a Western 'standard' in the creation of any new 'Asian,' 'Southeast Asian' or 'Singaporean' music" (278).

Like Chinese music ensembles and orchestras in the United States, the Toronto Chinese music community also mainly employs *jianpu*. While the Toronto Chinese Orchestra *has* been trying to promote the use of staff notation, it has not yet succeeded. At TCO, newer members are required to be capable of reading both *jianpu* and Western staff notation.<sup>30</sup> The importance of

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<sup>30</sup> In 2018, TCO started including staff-notated music scores in the auditions for new members.

being able to read Western staff notation became evident to me from the TCO audition package I received before my audition for the group; it contained scores for three music excerpts. The first one was written in Western staff notation, and on the top of the first score, there was a note: “You may transcribe this into *jianpu*; however, none will be provided for you.” The second and third scores were written in *jianpu*. I had to play the excerpt written in Western notation and then choose between the two written in *jianpu*. When TCO director, Patty Chan, drove me home after rehearsal on a Friday night in April 2022, she said she preferred staff notation because, presently, everyone composes in Western notation, and not just for orchestral pieces but also for individual instrument pieces. For example, she sometimes receives scores from Chih-Sheng Chen, the director of Taiwan’s Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra (LGCCO), and the scores are written in Western staff notation. Until the requirement to read Western notation, she had to transfer them into *jianpu* for TCO members.

In an interview, Chan said she tried to teach her students to learn how to read Western notation so that she would not need to translate the scores from staff notation to *jianpu* (Patty Chan, personal communication, May 6, 2022). Although she is working towards all members being able to read Western notation, I have noticed in rehearsals that many members are still using scores that have the *jianpu* notation above the Western staff notation (see figure 14). Richard Ng, the librarian of the TCO, who has been a member of the orchestra for over twenty years, is in charge of translating Western notation to *jianpu* for those members who need it.

琵琶 6 2 3 6

# 滿面春風

鄧雨賢曲  
黃新財編

The musical score is written on ten staves. The top staff begins with a tempo marking of 104 and a key signature of one flat. The notation includes Western musical notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *p*, *f*, *mf*, and *mp*. Above the Western notation, Jianpu notation is provided, consisting of numbers (1-5, 6, 7) and symbols (accents, dots, lines) that indicate pitch and rhythm. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and articulation marks. The piece concludes with a final cadence on the tenth staff.

Figure 14: Part of the TCO's music score "Glowing with Joy" with jianpu added above the Western notation

I assumed that the two non-Chinese members of the orchestra would prefer to read Western staff notation; however, in a string section rehearsal in April, Lorne MacDonald, a non-Chinese *zhongruan* player, held up scores written in staff notation and inquired if there was a *jianpu* version available. I was intrigued by his preference for reading *jianpu*. I learned that he had joined the Chinese music ensemble at York University in 2011 to try something new. The course director, Kim Chow-Morris, taught him to read *jianpu* when he started to learn the *zhongruan*. Since then, he has become accustomed to reading *jianpu* while playing *zhongruan* and *daruan*. Marko Koumoulas, another non-Chinese former *zhongruan* player at TCO, prefers reading in staff notation; however, he believes that *jianpu* is particularly useful when people first start to learn Chinese instruments since it directly indicates the music scale and makes it easy for players to position their fingers on the instruments (personal communication, May 5, 2022).

Even if Chan expects that members can read staff notation, there is some degree of resistance to utilizing staff notation consistently within the orchestra. After talking to the members in different instrument sections of TCO, I noticed that the resistance is primarily due to the members' habits and preferences for reading *jianpu* or their difficulties in reading Western notation, especially among older generations and musicians who were trained in mainland China. I play the *pipa* at TCO. I received my Bachelor of Arts in *pipa* performance from an art institute in China, where I received formal music training and can read in both Western notation and *jianpu*; however, I still prefer to read in *jianpu* because it is what I have been used to since the first day I learned the instrument. However, only myself and one other musician in TCO received a formal Chinese music instrument training from Chinese conservatories/institutions.

In contrast, CCO almost exclusively utilizes *jianpu*. All of the music scores are written in *jianpu* to accommodate the members of the orchestra who are not required to be capable of reading Western staff notation. Some of these would have been translated from Western notation to *jianpu* by Amely Zhou herself. My surveys and interviews confirm that the CCO orchestra mainly consists of senior and junior amateur musicians who are familiar with *jianpu* since they began to learn how to read *jianpu* when they first started learning their instruments. Furthermore, director Amely Zhou and the instrument *laoshi* <sup>31</sup> were originally from mainland China and received their formal music training from there, so they are also used to reading *jianpu*. Zhou thinks that since *jianpu* is the notation that all the members are familiar with, using any other system would be counter-intuitive.

These TCO and CCO approaches and preferences to music notation testify that the music directors' and members' preferences are based on where they learned their instruments, what instruments they learned, and their generation are all factors influencing the decision of which music notation to use within rehearsal. Not surprisingly, people like to use the musical notation they have been brought up with and are resistant to change. As mature members participating with other mature members, they naturally opt to use the notation system they share—as is the case with any “language.”

### Competence

Another challenge that must be negotiated within rehearsals is that of accommodating the varied playing levels of the members. TCO consists of a few professional and semi-professional musicians, but the majority are non-professional musicians. The professional musicians prefer to play instruments at a high level, but since there is not a huge “supply” of professional Chinese

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<sup>31</sup> The *Laoshi*, who are members of the orchestra, are very proficient in their instruments, and they participate in each rehearsal while acting as teachers to those who are less proficient.

musicians in Toronto some of them may opt to play without being paid together with semi-professionals, such as university students, brought in to help stack the orchestra, thereby improving overall performance. Teenagers do not care so much about playing at a high level because they have little time to practice, and local/community members who have jobs and might once have played at a high level, also do not have much time to practice. Some seniors and community members who play at a lower level find it difficult to improve their playing techniques quickly with advanced age and in particular circumstances. Balancing all these factors and levels is a challenge for the music director.

As Livingston (1993) notes, “the uneven technical ability of the players requires that the conductor work more extensively with each section to ensure that the proper notes and rhythms are played” (124). Likewise, in TCO, in some pieces, there are several parts that are rather challenging for non-professional musicians who are not able to play these well or fast because they lack the necessary techniques or practice. Therefore, the conductor repeatedly reminds them, especially during rehearsals, “Keep the rhythm. Pitch is less important.”

Besides these reminders, from my observation in TCO rehearsals, there was no evidence of special attention to members with lower levels of playing techniques from either the director or other members; they are “on their own” to improve themselves. For example, the senior pipa player mentioned in the ethnography of a rehearsal of TCO has to practice at home. Though she expresses her frustration with her own level of ability and knows she faces limits, she carries on out of interest and passion. Clearly, the orchestra continues to answer some of her needs for maintaining her links with her Chinese ethnicity. In fact, I notice that some musicians with advanced techniques do not regularly come to the rehearsals. One can assume this is because the music is easier to them, and they are reluctant to spend their time with those for whom it is

challenging. Each member seems to make his or her own call about how involved to be in rehearsals, a habit which everyone seems as well to accept without any tension—whether or not this is to the disadvantage of less proficient players. However, if a performance is imminent, they would be motivated to come to prepare and practice. CCO, on the other hand, seldom encounters the issues that TCO has in certain “challenging” pieces. CCO usually selects pieces that are suitable for the members’ overall performance levels. In other words, they select the pieces that are not difficult due to the fact that most of the members are amateur musicians with lower to medium performance levels. In addition, unique to CCO in Toronto and untypical of Mainland China and other overseas Chinese orchestras, they have *laoshi* to assist with rehearsals. If any members have difficulties with techniques during rehearsals, *laoshi* will help them.

### Membership

The TCO and CCO face challenges in negotiating the quality of rehearsals or performance levels due to attendance issues, a shortage of members, and variations in instrument playing levels among members. Since 2018, TCO has utilized an online attendance sheet to track members' attendance in order to identify those who attend rehearsals. But from March 2020 to February 2022, due to COVID-19, the orchestra did not take members’ attendance, and the rehearsals were held virtually. There were also no formal concerts. The rehearsals resumed in person in March 2022. As has been common in many areas and professions affected by the pandemic, only about half of the orchestra has returned and been able to regularly attend rehearsals, which has resulted in a decline in overall rehearsal quality. The online attendance sheet has also been revived at the same time, which the conductor uses as a guidepost for planning rehearsals. Members mark their attendance in advance, allowing the conductor to know beforehand who will be attending.

Actually, although attendance has worsened during and after the pandemic, it has always been an issue for TCO. Because the orchestra is not a professional one, some members do not have time on Friday night; therefore, they do not attend rehearsals. Still, most members *do* tend to show up more frequently before performances. About 30 percent of the members attend rehearsals on an infrequent basis. Of course, they may be uninformed of the conductor's instructions for certain parts of each piece, such as tempo, dynamics, and bowings, resulting in errors and ironically more rehearsal time. They may be contacted by the director to ask if they can attend the last few rehearsals before performances, otherwise their participating may be risky to their being able to perform.

Messages that conductor, Jonathan Wong, sent to members prior to their spring 2022 concert indicate his concern about attendance: “After our April sectionals, we enter May with only 6 rehearsals left before our Vaughan International Music Festival performance! Please fill in your availability below as known from now to the end of the season, especially for all June dates” (email communication, April 21, 2022). Wong delivered another message to members on May 5, 2022, stating,

Welcome back to full rehearsals: only 6 left until our first June performance! Big rehearsal this week—we want maximum attendance and we've called as many of our extra players as possible for our first full run-throughs of Red Chamber Suite and Colourful Dragon Boat. It's also our last chance to rehearse The Other Side of the Mountain with Joshua until June.

If this is your first rehearsal with TCO or if you've been away for a while, welcome (back)! Please make an effort to get markings/bowings/dynamics/etc. from your section leader<sup>32</sup> during setup time **before our 8pm start or in advance**. TCCO rehearsal will end by **7:40** so that we have ample time to get everyone in and ready to go for 8pm tuning and downbeat.

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<sup>32</sup> The section leader, who is a member of the orchestra, is proficient in their instrument. They usually only lead members to practice specific sections of pieces when there is a rehearsal for instrument sections.

Wong's messages to members indicate that the conductor had to encourage members to attend rehearsals and put in an effort. Clearly, the maintenance of cultural forms in a diasporic setting relies very much on highly motivated individual efforts.

CCO has also experienced difficulties with membership shortages and attendance issues. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, CCO's youth orchestra (Canadian Youth Chinese Orchestra) had around thirty members and CCO's elder orchestra (Canadian Philharmonic Chinese Orchestra) had around twenty members. However, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the youth orchestra has seen a significant decline in membership. Over ten members who had strong playing skills graduated from high schools and left for universities. In 2022, the two orchestras were combined with approximately twenty seniors and ten youth orchestra members attending rehearsals regularly. Additionally, some members were sometimes unable to attend rehearsals, leading to a decrease in the quality of rehearsals. For instance, on June 5, 2022, the *zhongruan* part only had one member attend the rehearsal. In order to improve the sound quality, the *pipa laoshi* had to step in and provide support.

The membership issues have a significant impact on internal negotiations within the orchestras. The absence and shortage of members pose challenges in negotiating the quality of rehearsals and the level of repertoire. The changes in the number and playing level of members can make it difficult for orchestras to maintain a consistent performance level.

### Social Interaction

Orchestras can be understood as a “microcosm of society” (Cheah 2009; Gillinson & Vaughan 2003). According to music scholar Tina K. Ramnarine, a “microcosm of society” is a “perception of the institution reflecting the social world in miniature that has led to metaphoric conceptualisations of its inner workings to describe and theories the functioning of different

kinds of collectives and social relationships” (2011, 329). I consider Chinese orchestras’ rehearsals to be a social space in a network of human relationships, governed by shifting dynamics and hierarchies involving age, languages spoken, including fluency in English; where they were born and/or previously lived, and length of time in the orchestra.

The characteristics of specific orchestra members that I examine here are age, language, performance ability and personality (assertiveness, originality/creativity, bravery, shyness, conservative). While the orchestra members are not the decision-makers of their group, the directors do take all the characteristics of the members into consideration in making decisions about how to approach the music and how to communicate within the group. In this sense, the social and cultural practices such as respecting seniors, language usage and hierarchy among the members of TCO function as a microcosm of Chinese communities in Toronto.

In Chinese society and culture, valuing and showing respect to elders is viewed as an important principle. Regarding decision-making procedures, elders in the Toronto Community Chinese Orchestra (the community orchestra of TCO) carry more weight in making decisions than elders do in TCO because the majority of the members in TCCO are elders. Most of them immigrated from Hong Kong to Canada and there are no non-Chinese members in the orchestra. Unlike her decisions about TCO’s repertoire, which she makes without consulting members, for the TCCO, Patty Chan sometimes orally inquires of the members during the rehearsals about which pieces they would like to play. They usually choose their most proficient repertoire. In this manner, the members are able to some degree to determine their own repertoire.

Hierarchies of age are noticeable within the dynamics of the orchestra. In TCCO, some senior musicians are braver and more confident than younger ones, who tend to follow the elders’ decisions. The elders like to express their thoughts and talk loudly. They also like to

correct each other when someone plays the music incorrectly, even though their own playing techniques may not be strong. Traditional respectful attitudes towards seniors therefore strongly influence the dynamics of the group.

Performance level also factors into the dynamics of the groups, often in relation to age. Similar to the senior members at TCCO, a few TCO senior members expressed their difficulty in playing fast in the sectional rehearsal on April 21, 2022; in contrast, some new members or younger members whose playing techniques are also not strong remain silent and do not speak out their thoughts. Musicians with high performance levels often have some privilege, independent of age. The *suona* soloist for “The Other Side of the Mountain,” who is a younger member, asked the conductor to speed up a part of the piece in the rehearsal on May 6, 2022, and the conductor instructed the orchestra to follow the soloist’s tempo. Some young members with lower performance levels would never express their opinions in this way.

For members and conductors, rehearsal is not just a learning process but also a community building process inside the orchestra. For example, last summer in August, members gathered to have a barbeque in a park, where members very successfully and enjoyably bonded. In a further community-building practice, the orchestra has a “group chat.” Before each rehearsal, TCO’s director always sends an email to the members with rehearsal plans or important messages from the conductor, Jonathan Wong. For example, while as noted above, members negotiate their practice requirements by themselves, for planning and coordinating they share this group chat. When the members had the sectional rehearsal playing “The Other Side of the Mountain” from the presto part to the end, Wong suggested in an email sent on April 21, 2022 that musicians who played plucked string and wind instruments “work out ways to simplify passages if too fast” (email communication, April 21, 2022), because this part of the piece has a

fast tempo and requires advanced playing abilities. Since many of the members' abilities do not meet the necessary standards, the conductor instructed the members to simplify the music so that they were playing only some of the notes to be able to keep up with the tempo. These communications function to cement the group members into a whole as a community.

In CCO, although most of the members are amateur musicians, a few professional musicians and high-level non-professional musicians serve as *laoshi* guides for the lower or medium-level amateur musicians (students) during rehearsals and teach them how to play the instruments. *Laoshi* also have the authority to instruct or criticize students about how they perform. For example, when they finished practicing the piece for string instruments on June 5, 2022, the *pipa laoshi* advised the *pipa* players to perform more gently. She told them that they sounded like marching bands were playing. The students then nodded in agreement. When rehearsing, the conductor and other members pay attention to the *laoshi*'s suggestions and ideas.

Of course individual personality plays an important role in communication within the orchestra. Members who are shy or new to the group are less sociable. For instance, one of TCO's *pipa* players is only fifteen years old and just joined the orchestra in early 2022. She almost never talks to anyone during the rehearsal break or after rehearsal, possibly because she is timid and does not feel comfortable approaching strangers. By contrast, sociable people or old members like to talk to each other and hang out after rehearsal to go to eat dinner together or simply catch up. After each annual concert, the members of TCO gather for a post-performance dinner to celebrate the success of the concert. This is a time for them to reflect on their achievements and connect with each other. In this way, the orchestras are clearly serving the function of providing community in the diaspora.

The ensembles are also a microcosm of language in the diaspora. The language usage in

CCO is unique among the Chinese orchestras in Toronto. During the rehearsal, the conductor speaks both Cantonese and English. It is because all of the senior members were originally from Hong Kong and speak Cantonese and the young generation members speak English. The conductor has to take into account the language usage habits of all the members so that she is able to communicate musical details to everyone. I also noticed that Lipeng Wu, a *dizi/xiao* player and a *laoshi* of the orchestra, who is Amely Zhou's husband, and comes to the rehearsal regularly to assist the *dizi* players, also speaks Cantonese with the senior members. I asked him why he speaks Cantonese with them as he was originally from a region that does not speak Cantonese. He responded that before he learned Cantonese, his wife Amely Zhou, a native Cantonese speaker, helped him to interpret Cantonese into Mandarin. He then learned Cantonese slowly in order to communicate with older members of the orchestra, and over time, he was able to speak Cantonese (Lipeng Wu, personal communication, June 5, 2022). Wu's language experience within the orchestra reflects the multiple pressures and opportunities faced in a diasporic context, suggesting that even within one community there are multiple identities—that is, that cultures are never homogenous or monolithic. The orchestra thus operates as a culturally varied entity within the larger Canadian cultural complexity.

TCO and CCO are like small communities. They are spaces for music-making and building personal connections. The orchestras have their own protocols, etiquette, privilege and hierarchies. Only by understanding the orchestras' social rules can members be more integrated into these communities. Being a part of a Chinese orchestra in diaspora, helps one to shape the ideologies and etiquette in the respective culture and learn how to fit into a more multicultural context.

## **Conclusion**

I began this chapter by providing an ethnography of a TCO rehearsal. This ethnography revealed some musical and cultural issues that occur during a rehearsal in the orchestra, which can be addressed through negotiation among the members. I then examined various issues that were revealed to me from my ethnography and that speak to social and cultural interactions within the orchestra, including musical notation, competence, membership and social interaction of the TCO and CCO. This chapter has demonstrated how the members negotiate, compromise and cooperate in meeting the challenges they have encountered in the roles they have played in the orchestra. My detailed examination of TCO and CCO serve as a microcosm of society, revealing how Chinese social and cultural practices in the diaspora operate in Toronto's Chinese communities.

## **Conclusions**

This chapter will summarize the major findings of my research in relation to the objectives and research questions. I also will discuss the study's contribution to ethnomusicological literature on Chinese orchestras/music-making in diaspora and make recommendations for further research.

In my dissertation, I explore the complex and intricate process of how Chinese diasporic musicians navigate and negotiate the internal musical and cultural spaces within orchestras. I sought answers to these questions by examining Chinese music education in Toronto, analyzing the repertoire of Toronto's Chinese orchestras, as well as exploring the cultural and musical negotiation strategies employed by the musicians in the orchestras. In so doing, I have argued that Chinese diasporic musicians engage in complex negotiations of internal musical and cultural spaces within community orchestras.

This dissertation conducts an in-depth study of a specific cultural group within the diasporic context in Toronto, who have maintained their musical traditions while also adapting to new ones within a multicultural environment. My work complements other studies, such as those by Chan (2015) and Chan (2022), who pay attention to the teaching-learning relationships among Chinese orchestra members in the GTA; and Prescott, Li and Lei (2008) and Wang (2013), who describe courses of traditional Chinese instrumental music and the Chinese music ensemble taught at universities in the States. These authors examine Chinese music teaching and learning in specific groups and venues. My study also focuses on Chinese music transmission methods in a specific city, Toronto, and provides a comprehensive history of Chinese music education in the GTA. As more studies of Chinese music education in specific locals are completed, we will gain a fuller understanding of how Chinese music education adapts in different diasporic context.

My research includes an examination of the four main Chinese music transmission methods, including private lessons, community centers and churches/temples, Chinese orchestras, and Chinese music in higher education. More specifically, I examine how Chinese instrument education in the GTA transformed from the “internal” transmission of music knowledge and skills within orchestras into a much broader community engagement, such as the Chinese music summer program, scholarship learning program, and senior’s music learning program. This study also reviews the development of Chinese music education in the higher education system and the impact it has had on Toronto Chinese Orchestras. The transmission of Chinese instruments, especially through community centers, Chinese orchestras, and higher institutions, has received limited attention in the literature before. This study addresses these transmission methods and offers a more extensive overview of the approaches of Chinese instrument transmission than other existing literatures in a particular city in North America. Thereby, this study contributes to our understanding of Chinese music education in North America.

In addition, like Zheng (2000), who focuses on Chinese orchestra repertoire from the perspective of an ensemble’s cultural and social goals, and Jeffcoat (2009), Mei (2014), and Chan (2015), who pay attention to the ensemble members’ generation, event repertoire, and sizes of the ensemble, in my study, I collected, analyzed, and categorized repertoires of TCO, OCO, and CCO from their establishment to the present. By exploring the negotiations that exist between music directors and orchestra members, I examined how these repertoires are chosen (e.g., music directors’ preference and members’ preference) and what factors are taken into consideration by music directors (e.g., membership fluctuation, members’ performance levels, and orchestra’s financial situation). I am unable to locate any other studies that specifically

consider these issues related to repertoire choice. My study, which combines document collection, musical analysis, and ethnographic approaches, complements previous research on the repertoire of Chinese diasporic orchestras and ensembles.

Finally, while other scholars such as Wang (2013) discuss how members use *jianpu* in a Chinese music ensemble of an American university, other aspects of notation rarely receive any attention in the literature. My research focuses on competence (e.g., performance levels), membership issues (e.g., membership shortage and attendance issues), and social interaction (dynamics and hierarchies in age, language, birth origin, length of time in the orchestra, and performance level). These issues have received little attention in previous studies. My research uses an ethnographic approach that provides an insider's perspective on how Chinese orchestras serve as a microcosm of society in the complex negotiations among Chinese orchestra members.

## **Summary of Findings**

Toronto has a thriving Chinese music education system that has been in place since the 1990s. As a result, there is a steady flow of new musicians entering the orchestras through lessons provided by private teachers, Chinese orchestras, and higher education institutions. The primary way to learn Chinese instruments is through private lessons offered by individual musicians, music stores, and music schools. These private lessons provide an excellent opportunity for musicians to improve their performance skills and are the primary method of learning for musicians who want to join Chinese orchestras. One Toronto-based Chinese orchestra is trying new ways to solve the problem of lack of instrumentation: the CCO has established *suona* and *sheng* scholarships to encourage youth to learn about lesser-known Chinese instruments and help cultivate future members for the orchestra and expand its reach.

Chinese music education provided through private lessons and Chinese music ensembles in higher education institutions offers students the opportunity to learn about Chinese music and participate in Chinese music ensembles. This initiative not only exposes a broad range of students to Chinese music in universities, but it also provides a means for community orchestras to recruit new members. In addition, because Chinese music education in both China and Toronto teaches *jianpu*, it can help facilitate collaboration and communication between musicians who prefer reading *jianpu*, and it is easy to find sheet music that everyone in the orchestra can play.

The selection of repertoire by orchestras is a complex and challenging task, requiring a delicate balance between the preferences of audiences, members, and music directors. To cater to a Chinese audience's preferences, a significant portion, typically up to fifty percent, of the repertoire often consists of famous or "old" Chinese music, as these pieces are familiar to Chinese audiences and evoke a sense of nostalgia. However, music directors also strive to push the orchestra to play new pieces/repertoire, so orchestra members will not feel bored by playing old pieces and can catch up with other overseas Chinese orchestras that are at a more advanced level.

The repertoire choices are also influenced by membership fluctuation. Music directors have to see what instrument players the orchestra has, and then decide which pieces are suitable for the instrumentation settings. Some orchestras, such as CCO, sometimes offer concerts where members can choose their favorite repertoire, highlighting the negotiation between the age of performers and their performance level. Younger musicians tend to choose music that will challenge them to improve their performance level, while older musicians who have limited performance abilities may opt for pieces that are less challenging. In addition, the financial

situation is also a factor that orchestras have to navigate in order to obtain music scores.

Orchestras that have a limited budget, such as the TCO, have to use the music director's personal connections and social media platforms to contact composers to obtain scores at no cost.

Orchestra members encounter a variety of musical and cultural challenges within the orchestras, which require negotiation. One of the primary challenges for members is agreeing on a music notation system to use. Preferences for notation can depend on factors such as where members learned their instruments, what instruments they learned, and their generation. For example, those who learned their instruments using *jianpu* notation prefer it, and so may use the score sheets with *jianpu* added above Western notation. Accommodating the varied playing levels of the members is another challenge that must be met within rehearsals. Balancing performance levels is a challenge for the music director. Furthermore, membership issues have a considerable effect on dynamics within the orchestras. The lack of participants poses problems when negotiating the quality of rehearsals and the level of repertoire.

Orchestra members also navigate various dynamics and hierarchies within their orchestra, such as those related to age, languages, birthplace, length of time in the orchestra, and performance level. Elders and senior members have more influence and respect within the orchestras, while members with higher performance levels have more power in the orchestras. Together, these findings offer an overview of several Chinese orchestras and methods of learning in the GTA.

My research provides Chinese orchestras and directors with valuable methods for choosing repertoire; connecting with orchestras, composers, and musicians from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan; engaging with communities by providing scholarships and collaborating with local music schools; and navigating internal cultural and social spaces within

their orchestras. Directors of Chinese orchestras in a variety of diasporic contexts will find models and ideas that can be implemented into their own situations.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The focus of my dissertation is Chinese orchestras in the Greater Toronto Area consisting of members who are both first and second-generation Chinese immigrants to Canada. Future research could look into the dynamics of transmission between second- and third-generation Chinese in Toronto. What role will Chinese traditional music play in their lives? How will repertoire and rehearsals continue to develop as participants are further removed from their cultural homeland? How will diasporic Chinese orchestras develop in relation to orchestras in China? How will Toronto Chinese orchestras position themselves within Toronto's diverse culture and arts scenes? Will Chinese orchestras attract participants and audiences from outside Toronto Chinese communities? Attitudes of non-Chinese communities towards Chinese music would encompass the study of the reception and perception of Chinese music by non-Chinese communities, including any biases and prejudices that exist, as well as the efforts to promote cross-cultural understanding and appreciation of Chinese music.

Exploring the musical traditions of different specific Chinese communities involves encountering the unique expressions of various Chinese groups, such as Cantonese and Mandarin, and understanding how their music reflects their cultural heritage, beliefs, and values. By studying the musical practices and preferences of these specific communities, within the broader lens of Chinese diaspora, we can gain a deeper understanding of the unique contributions of particular ethnicities.

An obvious extension of this dissertation is to examine the interplay between different musical traditions within the multicultural context of Toronto. There are many examples of Chinese musicians in Toronto working across boundaries of musical styles, either as the result of their own expertise in multiple musical traditions or in collaboration with musicians of other musical traditions. These excursions beyond traditional musical boundaries can lead to new and innovative musical styles.

Additionally, a comparative study of American versus Canadian Chinese music education in universities for example could expose salient insights into the ways that “ethnic” musics are taught differently within differing political climates, or still further, could result in a companion paper to that mentioned in Chapter Three looking at Chinese music education in higher education institutions in the United States.

These recommendations for further research place this project squarely at the intersection of interdisciplinary investigations relating to diasporic experience in Canada, including history, sociology, musicology, psychology, and more.

## **Final Reflections**

Through a systematic study of three Chinese orchestras in the Greater Toronto Area of Canada, this study has explored a rich history of Chinese musical involvement in the region that connects homeland to new Canadian contexts. In doing so, this dissertation has shown the musical and cultural complexity engaging Chinese musicians and music in a specific diaspora setting.

In addition, my experiences as a participant/observer Chinese musician and scholar working within the Chinese diaspora myself have provided me with insights into my own

motivations, preferences and research goals. I have come to recognize my own place in the sociological, political, demographic, educational, migration trajectories of the last decades, and the specific linguistic, cultural, professional challenges and opportunities these offer me. As a musician, I have transitioned from being an outsider to being an insider in the Toronto's Chinese music scene—clearly itself a “minority” context. As a young scholar, the distinctive ethnoscape of the Toronto Chinese diaspora has offered many novel and rewarding research areas and methods. In these ways, the project has been an exercise in self-awareness that I trust will enrich and fuel my future roles as teacher, researcher, and performer in addition to contributing to a broader scholarship.

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## **Appendix A: Chinese Musical Groups in North America**

### **Chinese musical groups in North America including orchestras and ensembles**

#### **UNITED STATES**

##### **ARIZONA**

###### **Phoenix**

- Phoenix Chinese Art Ensemble

###### **Tucson**

- Purple Bamboo Ensemble (University of Arizona; est. 2009)
- Summer Thunder Chinese Music Ensemble (夏雷乐团; est. 1999; directors: Andrew Wilt and Paul Amiel; former directors: Janet Sturman 1999-2005, Paul Amiel 2005-2007, Andrew Wilt 2007-2008, and Ashley Dacey 2008-2009; no longer active)
- Tucson Sino Guzheng Ensemble (图桑华韵古筝团; est. 2018; director: Xia Jing)

##### **CALIFORNIA**

- Southern California Chinese Music Ensemble (南加州中国国乐团)
- Southern California Xi Yang Yang Ensemble (南加州喜洋洋國樂社)

###### **Berkeley**

- Dharma Chinese Orchestra (Berkeley Buddhist Monastery; dir. Agis Gan)
- Dharma Realm Ensemble (Berkeley Buddhist Monastery; est. 2020; dir. Agis Gan)

###### **Fremont**

- FCSN Chinese Music Ensemble

###### **Hacienda Heights**

- Hacienda Music Guzheng Ensemble (洛杉矶哈岗古筝乐团; est. 2011; dir. Bei Bei He)
- Sound of China Guzheng Ensemble (唐韻古筝樂團; est. 2012; dir. Cynthia Hsiang)

###### **Irvine (Orange County)**

- A Little Dynasty Chinese School Chinese Children's Orchestra (小時代兒童國樂團; est. 2013 or 2015; dir. Yunhe Liang)
- Morning Glow Guzheng Ensemble (朝霞古筝乐团; est. 2013; dir. Bei Bei He)
- The Vivid China Ensemble (華彩中樂團; est. 2016; dir. Bei Bei He)

###### **Los Angeles**

- Cheng-Hsin Chinese Zither Orchestra of Los Angeles (洛杉磯正心箏樂團; est. 1988; dir. David Chu-Yao Liu)
- Dragon's Daughter (Jie Ma, pipa; and Bei Bei, guzheng; 2011-2013; no longer active)

- Los Angeles Chinese Orchestra (est. c. 1997; formerly known as Chinese Classical Music Ensemble; dir. Zhiming Han; artistic director and board member: Cynthia Hsiang)
- Los Angeles Classical Chinese Orchestra (洛杉磯古箏國樂團; est. 1989; dir. Shufeng He)
- Los Angeles Yue Opera House (洛杉磯越劇之家; est. 2016; founder: George Y. Li; director: Sophy Wu)
- Los Angeles Yue Opera Troupe (洛杉磯越劇團; est. 2006)
- Music of China Ensemble (UCLA; est. 1959; dir. Li Chi [since 1998]; former directors: Tsun-Yuen Lui 1965-1991, and graduate students Guangming Li and Cynthia Hsiang)
- Pacific Trio (太平洋中樂三重奏; est. 1997)
- Silk & Bamboo Project
- Tianshi Chinese Ensemble (天使國樂團)
- ZhongHua Chinese Orchestra - USA (美国中华国乐团; est. 2016; founder: George Y. Li; music director and principal conductor: Dawei Wang; orchestra head: Zhiming Shu; band chief: YunHe Liang)

### **Monterey Park**

- Chinese Kwun Opera Society (美西崑曲研究社; est. 1990)
- Spring Thunder Chinese Music Association (春雷國樂社; est. 1979 or 1980)

### **Novato**

- Chinese Orchestra of North America

### **Oakland**

- California Cantonese Opera Troupe (加州實驗音樂曲藝團; est. 1993; co-founded by Jeffrey K. Wong 黃國山 and Rickson Cheng)
- California Chinese Orchestra (加州中樂團; est. 1993; co-founded by Jeffrey K. Wong 黃國山 and Rickson Cheng; executive director: Katherine Leung; former executive director: Rickson Cheng, [1993-2012]; former music director: Jeffrey K. Wong [1993-2010])
- Great Wall Youth Orchestra (長城樂團; Laney College; est. 1995; dir. Victor Siu 蕭秉綱; former director: Sherlyn Chew)
- Purple Bamboo Orchestra (dir. Victor Siu 蕭秉綱)
- Red Bean Cantonese Opera, Inc. (紅豆戲曲; est. 1996; reorganized 1999; president and artistic director: Jing Liang)

### **Pasadena**

- PCC Chinese Music Ensemble (Pasadena City College, est. 1997; dir. Cynthia Hsiang)

### **Petaluma**

- The Jumping Buddha Ensemble (佛跳牆; est. 1996 or 1997)

### **Sacramento**

- Capitol Chinese Orchestra (首府中樂團; est. 2010)
- Hei Gu Chinese Percussion Ensemble (formerly based in the Bay Area; est. 2002; dir. Jason Jong)

- River City Chinese Music Ensemble (河聲中樂團; est. 2009; dir. David An 安慶徵)

### **San Diego**

- Bohua Academy of Chinese Musical Arts (博華民樂團; est. 2005; Conductor and Chair, Artist's Committee: Lianxiang Liu; President: Pin Ding)
- San Diego Chinese Music Ensemble (est. c. 2001; dir. Minghuan Ren)
- Yue Chinese Music Ensemble (樂; UCSD; est. 2009; no longer active)

### **San Fernando Valley**

- San Fernando Valley Chinese Cultural Association Chinese Music Ensemble (est. 1988; Roger Fan; director; Guang-Ming Li, founding director and head teacher)

### **San Francisco**

- China's Spirit Music Ensemble (華韻樂團; est. 2003; dir. Winnie Wong; former co-director: Wei Hou)
- Flowing Stream Ensemble (流水音樂社; est. 1973; artistic director: Betty Wong; co-manager: Shirley Wong-Frentzel)
- Gold Mountain Music Ensemble (members: Valerie Samson, zhonghu; Fred Fung, yangqin)
- Melody of China (漢聲樂團; est. 1993; artistic director: Yangqin Zhao; assistant to the artistic director: Eric Myers; former musical director: Dawei Wang)
- Music Gathering (Cantonese ensemble, est. 1998; dir. Lawrence Lui)
- Purple Orchids (one of the youth groups within the San Francisco Gu-Zheng Music Society; 4 members; est. 2006; dir. Weishan Liu)
- San Francisco Gu-Zheng Music Society (舊金山古箏樂團; est. 1983; dir. Weishan Liu)
- San Francisco Gu-Zheng Music Society Youth Ensemble (the first of four ensembles was established in 1990, the second in 1998, the third in 2003, and the fourth in 2006; the first and second disbanded when the members went off to college; all dir. Weishan Liu)
- San Francisco Li Hong Beijing Opera Troupe
- Six Golden Flowers (六朵金花; one of the groups within the San Francisco Gu-Zheng Music Society Youth Ensemble; 6 members; est. 2003; dir. Weishan Liu)
- South Bay Chinese Orchestra (南灣中華國樂團)

### **San Jose**

- Chinese Classical Music Ensemble (late 1960s through 1970s; dir. Lou Harrison; members included Lou Harrison, William Colvig, and Richard Dee; no longer active)
- Firebird Youth Chinese Orchestra (火鳳青年國樂團; est. 2000; founder: Gordon Lee)

### **Santa Clara**

- California Youth Chinese Symphony Orchestra (加州青年國樂團; est. 2007; music director and conductor: Jindong Cai; executive director: Yongping Tian, artistic director: Phil Young; deputy executive director: Zhang Yu; former music director and conductor: Jian Ding)
- California Youth Chinese Symphony Faculty Ensemble (加州青年國樂團教師)
- California Youth Chinese Symphony Orchestra Junior Orchestra (加州青年國樂團學生樂團)

### **Stanford**

- Stanford Chinese Music Ensemble (est. 2011; conductor: Jindong Cai)
- Stanford Gu-Zheng Ensemble (dir. Daisy You)

### **Sunnyvale**

- Cantonese Opera Association - Silicon Valley (矽谷粵劇研究會; est. 2001)
- Chiffon Fu Guzheng Ensemble (傅旭芳古箏樂團; est. 1998; dir. Chiffon Fu)

### **Thousand Oaks**

- The Thousand Oaks Chinese Folk Ensemble (千橡民乐坊; leader: Ze Cong; conductor: Xing-Zhong Xia)

### **Tustin (Orange County)**

- Galaxy Youth Art Performing Group (美国银河少年艺术团 or 銀河少年藝術團; est. 2004; dir. Yu-Ning Pu)

### **Ukiah**

- Dharma Realm Buddhist University/Developing Virtue Secondary School Chinese Orchestra or Developing Virtue Youth Chinese Orchestra (City of Ten Thousand Buddhas) (培德青年國樂團; est. 1996; dir. Agis Gan)

### **Walnut (Los Angeles County)**

- String and Bamboo Music (絲竹國樂社, est. 2002; Jiangli Yu and Bin He, directors)

## **COLORADO**

### **Denver**

- The Erhoopla Ensemble (Brian Mullins and Mike Fitzmaurice, erhu and other Chinese instruments; est. c. 2009)

## **CONNECTICUT**

- Echo Chinese Ensemble (回声乐团; est. 2011; dir. Yihan Chen)
- Silk Trio (Wang Guowei, erhu; Chen Yihan, pipa; and Yao An, guzheng)

### **Danbury**

- Jasmine Performing Arts Instrument Team (茉莉花艺术团管弦乐队; western Connecticut; est. c. 2010; dir. Naijie Zhang)

### **Middletown**

- Wesleyan Chinese Music Ensemble (Wesleyan University, est. c. 1980; co-directors: Po-wei Weng and Joy Lu; former director: Wang Guowei)

### **New Haven**

- Yale Chinese Ensemble (Yale University)

## **West Hartford**

- Hartt Chinese Music Ensemble (哈特中国民族乐团; Hartt School Community Division, University of Hartford, est. 2019; formerly known as Hartt Community Division Chinese Music Ensemble; director: Esther Shuyue Cao)

## **FLORIDA**

### **Orlando**

- Si Xian (1998-2010; based at the China Pavilion of the Epcot theme park; no longer active)
- Si Zhu (1993-1998; based at the China Pavilion of the Epcot theme park; no longer active)

### **Tallahassee**

- Florida State University Chinese Music Ensemble (est. 1989; dir. Haiqiong Deng; former directors: Yi Yi Wang, Li Ming, and Cynthia Po-Man Wong)

## **GEORGIA**

### **Atlanta**

- Spring Music Ensemble (春蕾; est. 2002; dir. Spring Yang; affiliated with Spring Music School and comprising Yang and her students; sometimes referred to as "Chinese Music Ensemble of Atlanta" because it is the main Chinese music ensemble in Atlanta, although this is not its official name)
- Emory Chinese Music Ensemble (Emory University; est. 2008; former director: Yang Chun)

### **Marietta**

- Magic Eastern Ensemble (魔力东方箏乐团; est. 2018; dir. Yao Lu)

### **Norcross**

- Yisian Guzheng Ensemble (逸弦箏樂團; est. 2008; dir. Shu-Fang Chen)

## **HAWAII**

### **Mānoa**

- Jingju Resident Training Program and Production (Asian Theatre Program, Department of Theatre and Dance, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa; est. 1984; dir. Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak)
- University of Hawaii Chinese Ensemble (University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa; dir. Frederick Lau)

## **ILLINOIS**

### **Chicago**

- Chicago On Leong Cantonese opera troupe (芝加哥安良曲藝團)

- Jennifer & Isabelle (琪羽濛濛乐团; est. 2012)
- UChicago Chinese Music Society (University of Chicago; president: Yuwei Lei; vice president: Tiantian Zhang)
- Yang Ying Ensemble (dir. Yang Ying)

### **DeKalb**

- NIU Chinese Music Ensemble (formerly known as Chinese Orchestra; Northern Illinois University, 1975-2003; reinstated in 2010; originally part of the Asian Music Ensemble; director: Yang Wei; former conductor: Yung-Hsin Chen; former directors: Han Kuo-Huang and Alex Chuan-Yuan Wang)

### **Urbana and Champaign**

- UIUC Chinese Silk-and-Bamboo Ensemble (丝竹乐团; Robert E. Brown Center for World Music, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; c. 1991-2011; dir. Priscilla Tse; not currently active)

### **Woodridge**

- Chinese Classical Orchestra (est. 1976; dir. Shen Sin-yan; no longer active)
- Silk & Bamboo Ensemble (est. in the early 1980s; dir. Shen Sin-yan; no longer active)

## **INDIANA**

### **Hammond**

- PUC Chinese Ensemble (Purdue University Calumet)

### **Indianapolis**

- Indianapolis Chinese Orchestra (印第安纳波利斯中乐团; est. 2010; dir. Leung-Ching [Luke] Ka)

### **Valparaiso**

- Mei Feng Traditional Chinese Orchestra (美风; formerly known as Valparaiso University Traditional Chinese Music Ensemble; est. 2010; dir. Meng Jianyun)

## **IOWA**

- Valley Chinese Instrument Ensemble (West Des Moines)

## **KENTUCKY**

### **Bowling Green**

- WKU Chinese Music Club (Western Kentucky University; est. 2011; dir. Ting-Hui Lee)

### **Lexington**

- University of Kentucky Chinese Ensemble (est. 2004; dir. Han Kuo-Huang; probably inactive after c. 2008)

## MARYLAND

### Baltimore

- UMBC Chinese Music Ensemble (University of Maryland, Baltimore; dir. David Mingyue Liang; est. c. 1980; no longer active)

### College Park

- University of Maryland Chinese Music Ensemble

### Potomac

- Chinese Opera Society of Greater Washington DC

### Silver Spring

- The Society of Kunqu Arts (崑曲藝術研習社; est. 1995)
- The Washington Chu Shan Chinese Opera Institute (est. 1991; founded by Chu Shan ZHU and Judy Huang; probably no longer active)

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Acton

- Boston Yue Opera House (波士頓越劇之家; est. 2018; dir. Emilie Ying)

### Boston

- Berklee Chinese Traditional Music Club (伯克利国乐社; Berklee College of Music; est. 2018)
- Boston Chinese Chamber Music (波士頓中国民族室内乐团; est. 2001)
- Boston Chinese Drum and Dulcimer Ensemble (波士頓揚琴鼓樂團; est. 1994; dir. Zhang Zhentian)
- Boston Erhu Ensemble (波士頓二胡演奏團; est. 2008; dir. Zhantao Lin)
- Boston Guzheng Ensemble (波士頓古箏樂團; est. 2002; dir. Shin-Yi Yang)
- Boston Silk Bamboo Music School (波士頓丝竹音乐学校; est. 2002 or 2004; dir. Ching-San Cheung and Elisa Cheung, residents of Newton, Massachusetts)
- Boston University Chinese Music Ensemble (波士頓大學華樂團; est. 2013)
- Greater Boston Chinese Cultural Association Chinese Music Ensembles (大波士頓文協國樂團; est. 1984; dir. Tai-Chun Pan; conductor: Chi-Sun Chan)
- Gwan Jee Lau (君子樓; Cantonese opera club)
- Gwong Dong (廣東音樂社; Cantonese opera club)
- Mass Pike Towers Tenant Association (公路村文娛組; Cantonese opera club)
- New England Conservatory Preparatory School Chinese Music Ensemble (est. 2015; dir. Hui Weng)
- Ngon Leung (安良; Chinatown Merchants Association; Cantonese opera club)
- Que Shing Chinese Music and Opera Group (僑聲音樂劇社; est. 1939; Cantonese opera club and company)
- SamSing (心聲; Cantonese opera club)

- Sin Ngai (仙藝; Cantonese opera club)

### **Burlington**

- Boston Beijing Opera Association (波士頓京劇協會; est. 2007; president: Weishan Liu)

### **Cambridge**

- Harvard Chinese Music Ensemble (哈佛大學民樂隊; Harvard University; est. 2005; co-founders: Jason Pan and Joyce Chang)
- MIT Chinese Ensemble (Massachusetts Institute of Technology; est. 2008)

### **Malden**

- Chinese Dulcimer Guzheng Youth Band (中國揚琴古箏青少年樂團; part of the Society for Chinese Instrumental Music)
- The Society for Chinese Instrumental Music Youth Band (美國華樂學會青少年樂團; est. c. 2007; part of The Society for Chinese Instrumental Music; dir. Li Ping; probably changed its name to Chinese Dulcimer Guzheng Youth Band)
- Volunteer Performing Group (part of the Society for Chinese Instrumental Music)

### **Melrose**

- Focal Chinese Music Ensemble (符客华乐团; est. 2011)

### **Newton**

- Chat Yin Ngok Yuen (七絃樂苑; Cantonese opera club)
- Silk Bamboo Youth Ensemble (丝竹青少年乐队)

### **Quincy**

- Canton Music Association (廣東音藝研究社; Cantonese opera club)
- Ngai Ching (藝青; Cantonese opera club)

### **Somerville**

- Boston Beijing Opera Amateur Association (波士頓京劇愛好者協會; est. 2009; president: Elaine Zhang; probably no longer active)

### **South Hadley**

- Mount Holyoke Chinese Ensemble (name also given as Mount Holyoke Chinese Music Ensemble; Mount Holyoke College; est. 2016; director: Bingyao Liu; former artistic director: Yihan Chen)

### **Tewksbury**

- Xi Yang Yang Music Ensemble/Xiyangyang Music Ensemble (喜洋洋乐队 or 波士顿喜洋洋乐队; est. 1999)

### **Waltham**

- Brandeis Traditional Music Club

**West Newton**

- Boston Synchrony Chinese Percussion Ensemble (波士頓水底魚打擊樂團; est. 2012; dir. Chi-Sun Chan)

**Williamstown**

- Williams College Chinese Music Ensemble (est. 2014; dir. Wang Guowei)

**MICHIGAN****Ann Arbor**

- Ann Arbor Chinese Traditional Music Ensemble (安娜堡國樂團; est. 2004; founder: Mouchi Cheng; director: Eric Lin)
- Residential College Chinese Music Ensemble (Residential College, College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, University of Michigan, est. c. 2011; music advisor: Xiao Dong Wei)
- Spring Bamboo Ensemble (University of Michigan, est. 2005; founder: Mei Han)

**Kalamazoo**

- Kalamazoo Chinese Music Ensemble (est. 2008; founder and director: Xiaochun Lu)

**Lansing**

- Silk Road Chinese Orchestra (丝绸之路乐团; Michigan State University; est. 2012)

**MINNESOTA****Maplewood**

- Minnesota Chinese Music Ensemble (明州国乐社; est. 1987; dir. Carleton Macy; no longer active)

**Minneapolis**

- The Spirit of Nature (天之韵; est. 1997; founder: Gao Hong; members: Chen Tao, Gao Hong, Liu Li, Wang Hong, Yang Yi, and Zhao Yangqin)

**Northfield**

- Carleton College Chinese Ensemble (formerly known as Carleton College Chinese Silk and Bamboo Music Ensemble; est. 2003 or 2004; dir. Gao Hong)

**Saint Paul**

- Macalester Asian Music Ensemble (Macalester College; dir. Chuen-Fung Wong)

**MISSOURI****Kansas City**

- Kansas City Chinese Music Ensemble (est. 1999)

## **Springfield**

- MSU Chinese Ensemble or MSU Chinese Music Ensemble (Missouri State University, est. 2007; dir. John Prescott)

## **NEVADA**

### **Las Vegas**

- Beijing Trio (est. 2012; dir. Wang Hong)
- Li Linhong Chinese Music Ensemble (李琳虹民乐队; est. 2008; dir. Li Linhong)

## **NEW JERSEY**

- Yang Yi Guzheng Ensemble (dir. Yang Yi)

### **Holmdel**

- Celadon Youth (少年才情组; est. 2007; president: Anchi Lin)

### **Plainsboro**

- Zizhu Ensemble (紫竹民乐团; est. 2006; dir. Yang Yi)

### **Princeton**

- Princeton University Chinese Music Ensemble (ChiME; 普林斯顿大学中国乐团; est. 2011; dir. Yang Yi)
- Rider University's Chinese Instrument Orchestra/Westminster Choir College Chinese Orchestra (founded by Eric Hung in 2011; conductor: Wang Guowei; coaches: Susan Cheng and Abby Kuo)

### **South Plainfield**

- New Jersey Buddha's Light Youth Chinese Orchestra (紐澤西佛光青少年國樂團; est. 2002; dir. Chien-Kuo Wei)

## **NEW YORK**

### **Alfred**

- Alfred University Guzheng Ensemble (阿尔弗莱德大学古筝乐团; est. 2011; dir. Daisy Wu)

### **Annandale-on-Hudson**

- Bard Chinese Ensemble (巴德民乐室内乐; est. 2019; dir. Chen Tao, with additional support from graduate-level US-China Music Fellows and the directors of the US-China Music Institute)
- Bard College Chinese Ensemble (est. c. 2008; dir. Mercedes DuJunco; no longer active)
- Bard Youth Chinese Orchestra (巴德青少年中乐团; est. 2018; artistic directors: Jindong Cai and Yu Hongmei)

### **Binghamton**

- Binghamton University Chinese Music Ensemble

## **Ithaca**

- Cornell Eastern Music Ensemble (康乃爾華樂團; est. 2009; formerly known as Cornell Chinese Music Ensemble; dir. Yen-Chu Chen)

## **New York City**

- Ba Ban Chinese Music Society of New York (紐約八板中樂團; Fresh Meadows, Queens; est. 1999)
- Bamboo Breeze (Xiao Xiannian and Julie Tay; est. c. 2005)
- Changyuan Wang Gu-zheng Ensemble (紐約海外中樂團 or 王昌元箏藝術中心; dir. Changyuan Wang)
- Chinese Music Ensemble of New York (紐約中國民族樂團; est. 1961; dir. Jing-qiang Guo; former director: Tsuan-nien Chang [founder])
- Chinese Performing Arts of North America (北美中乐团; president: Hu Jianbing; artistic director: Bao Jian)
- Chinese Theatre Works (中国戏剧工作坊; Long Island City, Queens; est. 2001; est. in 2001 by Kuang-Yu Fong and Stephen Kaplin, who currently serve as Co-Artistic Directors; the company was created out of a merger of Chinese Theatre Workshop, which was founded in 1995 by Ms. Fong, and another small non-profit theater troupe, the Gold Mountain Institute for Traditional Shadow Theater, also known as Yueh Lung Shadow Theater, which was founded in 1974 by Jo Humphrey; the current CTW carries forward, and expands on, the missions of its two parent organizations)
- EastRiver Ensemble (東河樂團; est. 2001; officially evolved as the EastRiver Ensemble in 2003 under the auspices of the Mencius Society for the Arts; artistic director: Xiao Xiannian; executive director: Julie Tay)
- Fuzhou Opera Group of the Eastern American Fuzhou Association (美国美东闽剧团 or 美东闽剧团; Manhattan; est. 2008) - performs Minju, a form of local opera from Fuzhou, Fujian province
- Jade Bridge (no longer active)
- The Kunqu Society (海外崑曲社; Whitestone, Queens; est. 1988)
- Melody of Dragon (神州中乐团; Fresh Meadows, Queens; est. 1998; dir. Chen Tao)
- Melody of Dragon & the Youth (Fresh Meadows, Queens; formerly known as Chinese Music Youth Ensemble Team)
- Mencius Youth Chinese Orchestra (MYCO / 孟藝少年中樂團; under the auspices of the Mencius Society for the Arts; est. 2009; dir Xiao Xiannian)
- Min Xiao-Fen's Chinese Music Ensemble (dir. Min Xiao-Fen)
- Music From China (長風中樂團; est. 1984; executive director: Susan Cheng; artistic director: Wang Guowei; music director: Zhou Long)
- Music From China Youth Orchestra (長風少年中樂團; est. 2004; dir. Wang Guowei)
- New York Chinese Opera Society Youth Troupe (紐約梨園社青年團; est. 2006; dir. Bin Ma and Tianlu Xue)
- NYU Chinese Music Ensemble (New York University, c. 2005-2008; dir. Wang Guowei)
- StringsW

- Tong Xiao Ling Chinese Opera Ensemble (纽约童小苓剧坊; est. 2005; dir. Charlene Tong Shaw)

### **Rochester**

- Chinese Music Ensemble of Rochester (est. 2014)

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

### **Asheville**

- Min Xiao-Fen (閩小芬, formerly of Forest Hills, Queens, New York) - pipa, sanxian, zhongruan, voice

### **Chapel Hill**

- Sinfonia-The Carolina Chinese Orchestra (北卡沁香新民乐; est. 2002 or 2003; music director: Jennifer Chang; president: Lu Xiaochun; former directors: Jiuping Pan, Xiaochun Lu, Aiguo Hu, and Anru Zhou [founder]; formerly known as NC-RTP Chinese Traditional Instrument Ensemble and NC-RTP Chinese Music Instrument Ensemble 北卡三角区中国民乐团)

### **Durham**

- Duke University Chinese Music Ensemble (est. fall 2018; dir. Jennifer Chang)
- NC Chinese Opera Society (北卡戏曲联谊会; formerly known as Triangle Area Peking Opera Association, 三角区京剧研习社, which was established in 1997; it was renamed the NC Chinese Opera Society in 2015)

## **OHIO**

### **Athens**

- Ohio University Chinese Ensemble (est. c. 2012; only percussion)

### **Cincinnati**

- Cincinnati Chinese Music Ensemble (辛辛那提中国民乐团)
- North American First Youth Chinese Drum Band (北美第一少年鼓队)
- Cincinnati Youth Chinese Music Ensemble (辛辛那提少年中国民乐团)

### **Cleveland**

- Cleveland Chinese Music Ensemble (克里夫兰民族乐团; est. 2008; dir. David Badagnani; former co-director: Rosa Lee)
- Five-Lake Chinese Music Orchestra (1989-1993; dir. Rongchun Zhao; no longer active)
- Four Rivers Chinese Music Ensemble (四河合奏; est. 2015; a cross-state collaboration between musicians from Northeast Ohio and western Pennsylvania)

### **Columbus**

- Chinese Folk Music Orchestra at OSU (韶華民樂團; Ohio State University; est. 2016; dir.

Han-Wei Shen; former director: Alice Siqi Yuan)

- OSU Chinese Traditional Music Club (Ohio State University; 2013-2015; no longer active)

### **Dayton**

- Dayton Chinese-Music Ensemble (德頓國樂隊; dir. Daijian Wang 王岱堅; no longer active)

### **Gambier**

- Kenyon Chinese Music Ensemble (Kenyon College; 2013-2015; dir. Mei Han; no longer active)

### **Kent**

- Kent State University Chinese Ensemble (1987-2005; dir. Terry E. Miller, with co-directors Chia-chun Chu, Lu Guang, Luo Qin, and Wang Min, and Wah-Chiu Lai; reconstituted in the 2015-2016 academic year under the direction of Priwan Nanongkham)

### **Oberlin**

- Oberlin College Chinese Ensemble (c. 1980-1981; dir. Alan Thrasher; no longer active)

### **Oxford**

- Miami University Chinese ensemble (est. c. 2016)

### **West Chester**

- Bing Yang Chinese Performing Arts Center Drums Team (杨冰中国表演艺术中心)

## **OREGON**

### **Portland**

- Portland Orchids and Bamboo Chinese Ensemble (est. 2007; dir. Jiyu Yang)
- Yat Sing Music Club (粵聲音樂社; est. 1941)

## **PENNSYLVANIA**

### **Lewisburg**

- Bucknell Chinese Music Club (est. c. 2013)

### **Philadelphia**

- Chinese Music Society (中国音乐协会; University of Pennsylvania, est. 2003; founder: Yiguang Zhang)
- Peter Tang's Chinese Ensemble (est. 2002; dir. Peter Tang)

### **Pittsburgh**

- Four Rivers Chinese Music Ensemble -- see under "Ohio"
- Jasmine Dynasty (2005-2006; no longer active)
- New Moon Orchestra (新月樂團; 2004-2006; artistic/executive director: Colin O'Donohoe; managing director: Bill Updegraff; no longer active)

- Purple Bamboo Chinese Ensemble (est. 2015)
- String Bouquet (絃香; Mimi Jong, erhu; and Yang Jin, pipa; est. 2018)
- University of Pittsburgh Chinese Music Ensemble (c. 1994; no longer active)

### **State College**

- Asian Classical Music Club (Pennsylvania State University; president: Shuya Li)

## **TENNESSEE**

### **Murfreesboro**

MTSU Chinese Music Ensemble (Middle Tennessee State University; est. 2016; dir. Mei Han)

## **TEXAS**

### **Arlington**

- Four Seasons Chinese Orchestra (四季國樂團; est. 2002; director: Zixia Feng)

### **Austin**

- Austin Chinese Chamber Orchestra (University of Texas at Austin; part of the University of Texas CSSA Music Club)
- Austin Traditional Chinese Music Band (奧斯汀華人藝術界聯合會民樂隊)
- Texas Guzheng Music Band (德美箏樂; est. 2015; dir. Jingqun Shao)

### **Dallas**

- Dallas Chinese Music Society (est. c. 1995; dir. Joanne Chen; founder and former dir.: Cheng-Hua Sun)
- Dallas HuaYun/Sino-Rhythm Chinese Orchestra (華韻樂社; est. 2011 or 2012; dir. James Wang; formerly known as Confucius Institute Chinese Folk Music Band and Dallas HuaYun Traditional Chinese Music Orchestra, Confucius Institute at The University of Texas at Dallas)

### **Denton**

- University of North Texas Traditional Chinese Music Ensemble (name also given as University of North Texas Chinese Ensemble and UNT Chinese Ensemble; est. c. 2016; dir. Yuxin Mei)

### **Houston**

- Houston Chinese Orchestra (dir. Changlu Wu; probably inactive)
- Houston Chinese Traditional Music Group (休士頓中華民樂團; est. 2008; dir. Xin Zhang)
- North America Youth Chinese Orchestra (北美青少年國樂團; est. 2012; dir. Changlu Wu)
- WeCare (a sub-organization of North America Youth Chinese Orchestra; est. 2014; dir. Changlu Wu)

## **San Antonio**

- The HuaSheng Chinese Orchestra of San Antonio (华声中国民族乐团; formerly known as Chinese Orchestra of San Antonio; est. 1998; music director: Grace Li; executive director: Gary Wang; manager: Jerry Jin)

## **UTAH**

### **West Valley City**

- Utah Chinese Folk Orchestra (猶他華人民樂團; formerly 猶他州中國民樂團; conductor: Fan Kwan 關麗芬)

## **VIRGINIA**

### **Charlottesville**

- V Major (V 大调民乐团; University of Virginia; est. 2010; president: Sophia Shen; vice presidents: Lemon Guo and Jie Gao)

### **Tysons Corner**

- Alice Gu-Zheng Ensemble (嬋鳴古箏團; est. 2002; dir. Alice Kan)

## **WASHINGTON**

### **Bellevue**

- Lingyu Guzheng Ensemble (dir. Lingyu Li)
- Seattle Hwa Sheng Chinese Opera Club (西雅圖華聲社; est. 1967)

### **Seattle**

- Northwest Chinese Gu-Zheng Orchestra (美國西北古箏樂團; est. 2006; dir. Buyun Zhao)
- Northwest Chinese Drum Ensemble (美國西北鼓樂團; est. 1996; dir. Buyun Zhao)
- Seattle Chinese Orchestra (西雅圖中樂團; est. 1986; dir. Warren Chang)
- US China Music Ensemble (文龙中国室内乐团; formerly known as the Warren Chang Music Ensemble; est. 1989; dir. Warren Chang)
- Washington Chinese Youth Orchestra (华州少年国乐团; est. 1993; music director: Warren Chang; director: Buyun Zhao)

## **WASHINGTON, D.C.**

- DC Beauty of Beijing Opera Ltd (华府“京剧之花”; est. 2013)
- GWU Chinese Performing Arts Team (George Washington University)
- Washington Chinese Traditional Orchestra (华盛顿中国民族乐团; est. 1999; director: Xuezhong Hou; associate director: Haiying Jiao; composer, conductor and chief art officer: Duke Tang; emeritus director: James Xu)

## WISCONSIN

### Madison

- Asian Musical Instruments Community (琴识明月; University of Wisconsin-Madison; est. 2015; co-directors: Xue Mingyu and Ruosi Yu; former directors: Danna Bi and Joe Anderson)
- Madison Chinese Ensemble (麦城中乐; est. 2006; dir. Xiaoli Wu)

### Milwaukee

- Milwaukee Youth Chinese Orchestra

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## CANADA

### ALBERTA

#### Calgary

- Calgary Chinese Music Development Association (卡城中樂推廣曲藝社; est. 1998; features an adult orchestra, a youth orchestra, and a youth guzheng ensemble)
- Calgary Chinese Orchestra (卡城中樂團; est. 1998; chairman: Ming Lee; former director: David Yin [1998-2008])
- CCO [Calgary Chinese Orchestra] Suona Band (est. 2020; dir. Zhongxi Wu)
- Harmony Guzheng Ensemble (快樂古箏樂團; est. 2009; dir. Shirley Wong)

#### Edmonton

- ECHO Ensemble
- Edmonton Chinese Philharmonica Association (愛城民樂團, est. 2001; music director and conductor: Jason Wong)

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

### Vancouver

- B.C. Chinese Music Ensemble (est. 2002)
- B.C. Chinese Orchestra (庇詩中樂團; est. 1995)
- B.C. Ruan Ensemble (庇詩阮樂團; est. 2011; dir. Geling Jiang)
- B.C. Youth Chinese Orchestra (庇詩青年中樂團)
- Cloud Bell Ensemble (云鈴二重奏; Geling Jiang and Yun Song)
- Orchid Ensemble (蘭韻中樂團; est. 1997)
- Pentatonics (est. 2008)
- Red Chamber (紅庭; est. 2006)
- Sincere Lam Guzheng Ensemble (est. 1989; dir. Sincere Lam)
- Sound of Dragon Ensemble (龍吟滄海樂團; est. 2015; artistic director: Lan Tung)

- 21 Strings + (21 弦加; est. 2017; dir. Geling Jiang)
- 2+4 Strings - Erhu & Pipa (Vancouver; est. 2015)
- UBC Chinese Ensemble (University of British Columbia; 1983-2014; director: Alan Thrasher; former director: Mei Han; no longer active)
- UBC Chinese Guzheng Ensemble (University of British Columbia; est. 2015; dir. Kate Pang)
- UBC Chinese Music Ensemble (University of British Columbia; est. 2015; dir. Fred Wang)
- UBC Chinese Orchestra (University of British Columbia; est. 2015; dir. Fred Wang)
- Vancouver Cantonese Opera (燕鳳鳴粵劇團; est. 2000; artistic director: Rosa Cheng)
- Vancouver Chinese Music Ensemble (溫哥華中華樂團; est. 1989; artistic director: Jirong Huang; general manager: Diane Kadota)
- Vancouver Oriental Strings Chinese Music Ensemble (加拿大溫哥華東方琴韻樂團; est. 2011; dir. Annie Xudong Gao)
- Vancouver Senior Citizens' Association Chinese Music Ensemble (溫哥華老年華人協會民樂隊)

## **NEW BRUNSWICK**

### **St. John**

- Red Silk (紅絲綢; est. 2011; dir. Wenmei Li)

## **NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR**

### **St. John's**

- Light Wind Ensemble (清風樂團; est. 2019; dir. Jing Xia)

## **NOVA SCOTIA**

### **Halifax**

- Nova Scotia Chinese Culture and Arts Club (Saint Mary's University)

## **ONTARIO**

### **Markham**

- Chinese Music Orchestra of Canada (加拿大中國樂團; c. 1992-1993; no longer active)

### **Mississauga**

- Chinese Opera Group Toronto (多倫多國劇社; est. 1974)
- Chinese United Dramatic Society (聯僑劇社; est. 1933)
- Kaleidoscope Chinese Performing Arts Society Chinese Instrumental Ensemble (楓彩藝術團民樂合奏; est. 2010; dir. Ted Li)
- Millennium Chinese Music Workshop (千禧雅樂坊; est. 2008; musical director: Bill Ko)
- Yuanyin Music (元音琴社; dir. Feihong Nan)

### **Ottawa**

- Ottawa Chinese Arts Troupe (est. 1998)

## **Richmond Hill**

- Ontario Cross-Cultural Music Society Chinese Instrumental Orchestra (est. 2000; dir. Ken Zheng)

## **Toronto**

- Apex Drumming Team (領峰打鼓隊; est. c. 2010; dir. Bobby Ho; formerly based at the Apex Martial Arts Academy)
- Canadian Philharmonic Chinese Orchestra (红枫爱乐华乐团; est. 2017; conductor: Wang Yi)
- Canadian Youth Chinese Orchestra (红枫青年华乐团; est. 2018; music director and conductor: Amely Zhou)
- China Court Trio (古韻三重奏; est. 2006)
- Chinese Instrumental Music Group of Toronto (多倫多中國民族器樂團; 1969-1992; founded by Ming S. Chan 陳明生; no longer active)
- Dim Sum Ensemble (點心絲竹樂團; 2012-2017; artistic director and composer: Tony K.T. Leung; executive director: Patty W. M. Chan; no longer active)
- Dunhuang Chamber Ensemble (敦煌室樂團; est. 1997)
- Toronto YueFang Ensemble/Musique Chinoise Toronto (多倫多青年女子樂坊, 2013-2015; dir. Wendy Wen Zhao; no longer active)
- North America Chinese Orchestra (北美中樂團; est. 2011)
- North America Chinese Orchestra Youth Orchestra (北美中樂團青少年樂團)
- Starlight Chinese Opera (寶新聲劇團; est. 2000)
- Toronto Chinese Orchestra (多倫多中樂團; est. 1993)
- Toronto Sparkling Springs Youth Band (多倫多清泉青少年民樂隊)
- University of Toronto Chinese Music Ensemble (2004-2005; dir. Kim Chow-Morris; also active in 1990; no longer active)
- Yellow River Ensemble (2003-2010; dir. Kim Chow-Morris; no longer active)
- York University Chinese Orchestra/Chinese Classical Ensemble (est. c. 2003; director: Kim Chow-Morris; substitute director: Patty W. M. Chan)

## **Waterloo**

- UW Chinese Music Club (University of Waterloo)
- Waterloo Chinese Traditional Music Orchestra (滑鐵盧民樂團)

## **QUEBEC**

### **Montreal**

- Gu-Zheng Ensemble of Montreal (est. 2002; artistic director: Chih-Lin Chou)
- McGill Students Chinese Music Society (McGill University, est. 2013)
- Montreal Chinese Orchestra (蒙特利爾民族室內樂團; est. 2018; dir. Vivian Yang Li)
- Montreal Confucius School Music Band (蒙特利爾孔子學校民樂隊), also called Montreal Confucius School Art Troupe Music Band (蒙特利爾孔子學校藝術團民樂隊)
- Trésors de Chine au Canada (京劇魁北克; est. 2016; formerly known as Jingju Québec; dir. Aurore Liang)

## Appendix B: Interviews

Interlocutors	Orchestras/Affiliation	Time	Location
Amely Zhou	CCO	18-Mar-20	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Amely Zhou	CCO	4-Dec-20	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Amely Zhou	CCO	15-Dec-20	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Amely Zhou	CCO	10-Dec-21	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Amely Zhou	CCO	23-May-22	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Amely Zhou	CCO	1-Jun-22	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Amely Zhou	CCO	3-Jun-22	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Amely Zhou	CCO	14-Jun-22	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Amely Zhou	CCO	5-Jul-22	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Amely Zhou	CCO	26-Sep-22	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Amely Zhou	CCO	25-Jan-23	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Lipeng Wu	CCO	5-Jun-22	In rehearsal (casual interview)
Naomi E. Norquay	York University Professor	3-Mar-21	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Frederick Yiu	TCO	3-Mar-21	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Patty Chan	TCO	28-Feb-21	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Patty Chan	TCO	19-Dec-21	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Patty Chan	TCO	8-Apr-22	Before and after rehearsal (casual interview)
Patty Chan	TCO	22-Apr-22	Before and after rehearsal (casual interview)
Patty Chan	TCO	6-May-22	Before and after rehearsal (casual interview)
Patty Chan	TCO	27-May-22	Before and after rehearsal (casual interview)
Patty Chan	TCO	10-Jun-22	Before and after rehearsal (casual interview)
Patty Chan	TCO	24-Jun-22	Before and after rehearsal (casual interview)
Patty Chan	TCO	2-Dec-22	Before and after rehearsal (casual interview)
Patty Chan	TCO	25-Dec-22	Brunch at a Chinese restaurant (casual interview)
Patty Chan	TCO	9-Jan-23	Dinner at a Chinese restaurant (casual interview)
Patty Chan	TCO	25-Jan-23	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Sophy Li	TCO	20-Dec-22	Zoom (in-depth interview)

Markos Koumoulas	Former TCO member	5-May-22	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Peter Bok	OCO	23-Dec-20	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Wendy Zhao	Pipa teacher	12-Jul-22	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Moly	York University Chinese Music Ensemble	15-Mar-20	Zoom (in-depth interview)
Yan Kai	York University Chinese Music Ensemble	15-Mar-20	Zoom (in-depth interview)

### **Appendix C: Questionnaire**

1. When were you born (e.g., teenage, 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s etc.)? Where were you born?  
When did you move to Canada (if you were born outside of Canada)?
2. What instrument(s) do you play? Why did you learn to play this/these instrument(s)?
3. When and why did you decide to join this orchestra?
4. Please describe the music education you received. (when, where, for how long, what kind, by whom, and what – if any – music theory did you learn?)
5. Do you prefer Chinese music notation (numbered notation) or Western music notation (staff notation)? Why?
6. What else do you do musically besides play in/direct the orchestra?
7. Who is the primary audience that supports the orchestra? How do you feel the orchestra communicates with that audience? Does it provide what they are looking for? In what ways?
8. Do you think making non-Chinese audiences appreciate Chinese music should be a goal?  
If so, how to make it better? If not, why not?
9. What changes would you like to see to the orchestra in the future? Do you have any suggestions for the orchestra? Or, if you were able to make some changes to the orchestra (how it's run, what it plays, etc.), what would they be?
10. What makes TCO unique? Have you ever joined or participated in another Chinese orchestra or Chinese music ensemble? If so, what are the differences between TCO and other Chinese Canadian orchestras/music ensembles?
11. In what ways is the orchestra a positive and/or negative experience for you?

12. What do you think are the goals of the orchestra? How well do you feel the orchestra meets those goals? In what ways? Do you think that the goals of the orchestra should be changed? In what ways?
13. What do you think of the repertoire the orchestra plays? How do you feel the orchestra's repertoire has changed since you joined? Do you have any suggestions for the orchestra's repertoire? Does the repertoire contribute to meeting the orchestra's goals?
14. How do you feel about the orchestra inviting professional musicians from outside the orchestra to perform at your concerts? What can they contribute to a concert that orchestra members themselves cannot?

Appendix D: Repertoire Lists

TCO								
2008 Spring Concert (May 18) 丰收聯歡舞揚								
Marikham Theatre for Performing Arts								
	Composer	Arrangement	Time	Genre	Performer			
Harvest Gongs and Drums	Xu wen Peng/Hui qian Cai	Cheng long Zhou	1972	New music	Orchestral ensemble			
Welcoming Guests from Aiar	Ding Mai		Ori 1953	Vi ethnic folk song	Orchestral ensemble			
Night of the Torch Festival (zhongruan solo)	Jun sheng Wu		1979	New music	Felix Yeung			
My Heart Yearns to Sing a Mountain Song	Yu Hu Yong	Ming Wong	Ori 1959	New music	Small Ensemble by TCO Youth Group			
Romance on the Grassland	Luo bin Wang	Patty Chan	Ori 1961	New music	Small Ensemble by TCO Youth Group			
Spring Arrives at Xiangjiang (dai solo)	Bao sheng Ning		1976	New music	Chun jie Wang			
Busy Carting Grain (dai solo)	Xian zhong Wei		1970's	New music	Orchestral ensemble			
Zhuang Dance	Ding Xia			New music	Orchestral ensemble			
Village of Sanshilipu		Yong chang Chang	arr 1942	Shanbei folk song	Orchestral ensemble			
Dragon Boat Festival (pipa solo)		Trans. Zheng qu zhi ori late Qing dynasty	arr 1980	Traditional	Wendy Zhao			
Send Me a Rose (pipa solo)		Fan di Wang	1961	Xinjiang folk song	Wendy Zhao			
Moonlight over Spring River (pipa & lute duet)	Peng zhang Qin		arr 1978	Ancient melody	Wendy Zhao and Lucas Harris			
Flying Asparas	Jin xin Xu/Da wei Chen		1982	New music	Orchestral ensemble			
Fisherman's Journey	Composed collectively by	Wen jin Liu/Wen xi 1970's		New music	Orchestral ensemble			
2009 Spring Concert (May 16) 詩意云南								
Marikham Theatre for Performing Arts								
General's Command (Orchestral Ensemble)		Guaren Gu	arr 1980's	Traditional	TCO			
Harvest Festival (Orchestral Ensemble)	Naizhong Guan		1983	New music	TCO			
Moonlight over Er Quan (Western String Ensemble)	YanJun Hua	Jiugang Wu	arr 1970's	Traditional	Western string ensemble			
Happy Soldiers (Plucked String Ensemble)	Mingxin Du/Yanqiao Wan Fubin Li		orig 1969, arr after 1990's	New music	Plucked string ensemble			
Flower Drum Melody (Small Ensemble)		Zhenghu Wu	1990's	New music	TCO Small ensemble			
Ancient Melody from the Zhongnan Mountain (Daruan Solo)	Xing Lu	Ning Yong	1980's	New music	Xiaoyun Miao			
Memory of Yunnan(first movement)Zhongruan Solo		Pingxin Xu	1986	New music	TCO			
Beautiful Fengweizhu (Orchestral Ensemble)	Chunlin Yang		1980's -1990's	New music	New music			
Rain from the North West (Orchestral Ensemble)		Jingxin Xu	1980's -1990's	New music	New music			
Squabbling Ducks (Percussion Ensemble)	Zhishun An		1982	New music	Percussion ensemble			
A Night in Dong Village (Tribus Solo)	Ming Yang	Kim Chow-Morris	1980's -1990's	New music	Kim Chow-Morris			
Fisherman's Song (Bawu Solo)	Tieming Yan		after 1970's	New music	New music			
A Guide to the Chinese Orchestra (Orchestral Ensemble)	Chusheng Ng		1990's-2000's	HongKong composer	TCO			
Taiwan Folk Songs Rhapsody (Orchestral Ensemble)	Hua Wu		1992	Taiwan Folk song	TCO			
TCO								
1993 Chinese Music Concert 鼓竹管弦夜								
Marikham Theatre								
Victory Command	Composer	Arrangement	Time	Genre	Performer			
The High Green Mountain	Anonymous	Hoi Lee		Ancient theme	Orchestral ensemble			
General's Command		Hoi Lee		Ancient theme	Zheng ensemble			
Su Wu Tending Flocks		Ju-hua Xiang		Ancient theme	Vivian Xia (yangqin solo)			
Lotus				Traditional Han-yue tune	May Ng (zheng solo), Patrick Cheng (yehu accompaniment)			
On the Grasslands	Ming-yuan Liu		1950's		Hing-yan Chan			
Tiger in Anger		Jyh-shuen An	1982	Xian drums music	Percussion ensemble			
The Yao's Dance	To-shan Luk, Yuan Mao	Xu-wen Peng	1950's, arr 1960's	Orchestral ensemble	Orchestral ensemble			
The Reservoir Victory Song	Anonymous		1964	Guangdong Provincial Music	Patrick Cheng (leading gochu)			
Regret	Shi-ye Zhang	Patrick Cheng	1925	Shindong folk tune	Hing-yan Chan (erhu solo), Vivian Xia (yangqin accompaniment)			
A Spray of Flower	Guang-yi Jian & Zhi-wei Wang		1983		Ying-fai Tsui (dai solo)			
Herdman Song	Anonymous		1966	Orchestral ensemble				
Fishermen's Song of the East China Sea	Sheng-long Ma & Guan-yan Gu		1959					
TCO								
1994 A Concert of Chinese Music 鼓竹管弦夜								
North York Performing Arts Centre Recital Hall								
Dragon Boat Racing	Composer	Arrangement	Time	Genre	Performer			
Dance of the Zhuang Tribe	Ho Lai-tong	Lau Chung-man	1920's					
Jackdaw Gambol Water				Traditional Chaoshou Zheng	Orchestral ensemble			
Homecoming My Lover	He Hua-jun & Yuan Ye			Ng May (zheng), Cheng Patrick (yehu), Tam Sam (kiao)				
Sorrow of Lady Zhao-jun			1958	Guangdong Ancient Tune	Chan Hing-yan (banhu)			
Parting of Newly-Weds	Zhang Xiao-feng & Zhu Xiao-gu	Cheng Patrick	1920's	Erhu Concerto	Cheng Patrick (erhu), Sato Evelyn (yangqin), Ng May (pipa), Tam Sam (kiao), Ki			
Emperor Qin Routng the Enemy			1980's	Ancient Tune				
Scene by River on the Qin-Ming Festival	Liu Wei-guang	Zhang Zhi-liong	1970's or 1980's		Luo See-wang (zheng) and orchestra			
Horses Galloping on the Grassland	Wang Guo-tong & Li Xiu-qi		1972		Erhu Ensemble: Chan Hing-yan, Chan Patty, Cheng Patrick, Lee Hoi, Goh Kiah-mo			
Dance of the Yi Tribe	Wang Hui-ran		1965		Tang Lam-hing (pipa)			
			1972	Ancient Tune	Tang Lam-hing (pipa)			
Ambush			1920's		Orchestral ensemble			
Colorful Clouds Chasing the Moon	Ran Guang	Peng Xiu-wen	1972					
Harvest Gongs and Drums	Peng Xiu-wen & Cai Hui-quan			Orchestral ensemble				

Table 1.1: TCO’s repertoire (1993-1994)

Table 1.2: TCO’s repertoire (2008-2009)

2012 Fundraising Concert to Benefit Centre for Information & Community Services Boundless songs of Love (Jun 30)									
Marham Theatre for the Performing Arts									
Spring Festival Overture	Huanzhi Lu	1956		New music	TCO				
Lament of Lake Zhao Jun		arr after 1980's		Traditional	TCO				
Along Yi Li River	Zhenhao He, Lingfang Wang	1980's		New music	TCO				
Happy Yi People (Plucked Strings Ensemble)		1959		Yi folk tone					
Air (Bowed Strings Quartet)	J. S. Bach	1731		Western Classical Music					
Orchid Blossoms	Zhenfen Huang	Maybe 2000's		Bowed string quartet					
Night of the Torch Festival (Pipa and Ensemble)	Jursheng Wu	1979		Shanbei Folk Song					
Reborn	Amely Zhou, Wendy Zhou	2011		New music	Spire				
Towards the Edge	Lan-Chee Lam			New music	Spire				
Language of Love	Wendy Zhou			New music	Spire				
Flower Festival (Pipa Duo)	Xuan Ye	1960		New music	Amie Ning, Kae Tian				
New Racing Horses (Erhu Ensemble)	Yaoxing Chen, Jung or 1960 arr. 1996			New music	Amely Zhou, Sabrina Chau, John Chen, Della Dong, J.				
Boundless Songs of Love (Orchestra)	Hahuai Huang	Tony K.T. Leung		New music	TCO				
Chinese Movie Themes	Xiaoqu Zhu	1958 and after		New music	TCO				
Guardians of the World	J. Hsishih, J. Zuckerman, B. Matthew Van Driel	arr after 2010's		Western music	TCO				
2013 20th Anniversary Concert 歡華正茂二十年 (Jun 22)									
Chinese Cultural Center of Greater Toronto, P.C. Ho Theater									
Legend of Jade Dragon (Percussion Ensemble)	Booby Ho			New music	Percussion ensemble				
Ultraped Overture	Lianghui Lu (Taiwan)	2010		New music	TCO				
Scenic Jiangnan (Small Ensemble)	Chunquan Qu	arr 1960's		New music	TCO Small ensemble				
Layers II	Ying Lee (Taiwan)	2007		New music	TCO				
Beautiful Africa (Yangqin and Ensemble)	Qizhu Yu	After 1980's		New music	Yangqin: Pingxin Xu				
The Grapes are Ripe (Erhu and Ensemble)	Wei Zhou	1980's		New music	Erhu: Tao He				
Communal Celebration (Suona and Ensemble)	Libao Ge, Kaixian Yin	1980's		New music	Suona: Yazhi Guo				
Do You Know I am Waiting for You? (Erhu, Saxophone and O	Hongliang Zhang	Guangzhao Mei or 1989		New music	Erhu: Tao He Saxophone: Yazhi Guo				
Welcoming Guests from Afar	Ding Mai	Chenglong Zhou or 1953		New music	TCO				
Snow Lotus	Chenglong Zhou	after 1970's		New music	TCO				
Flying Apparars	Jingxin Xu, Dawei Chen	1982		New music	TCO				
The Straits(Mr. J) Yangqin Concerto	Kuangping Mao, Zuhua Xiang	1980's		New music	Yangqin: Pingxin Xu				
Yellow River Boat Tracker (Guanzi and Orchestra)	Chenglong Zhou	1980's		New music	Guanzi: Yazhi Guo				
In Stillness (Guanzi, Erhu, Yangqin and Orchestra)	Tony K.T. Leung	2013		New music	Guanzi, Erhu, Yangqin and TCO				
One Night in Beijing (Suona, Jinghu, Yangqin and Orchestra)	Booby Chen	Guanhua Wei or 1992		New music	Suona: Yazhi Guo, Jinghu: Tao He, Yangqin: Pingx				
2010 Concert Sparks of Youth (May 15) 青春, 鋼琴, 中乐团									
Marham Theatre for the Performing Arts									
Tiger Grinding Teeth Overture (Orchestra) ☆☆	Zhishun An	Tony K.T. Leung (cor Or 1980's		New music	TCO				
Yu Mode (Orchestra)	Lianghui Lu	1977		Taiwan composer	TCO				
Yao Dance (Orchestra)	Tishan Liu, Yuan Mao	Xiwen Peng Or 1950's		New music	TCO				
Condor Heroes (Orchestra) ☆☆	Fuqiang Huang	Stephen Lam Or 1989		New music	TCO				
YouthPiano Concerto (Piano and orchestra)	Shikun Liu, Yilin Sun, Yiming Pan, Xiefei Huan	1961		New music	Piano: Ken Yang				
Dream of Fenghuang (Percussion and dance) ☆☆	Wojin Lu	Tony K.T. Leung (composer-in-residence)	2010	New music	Dancer: Yan Lam				
Sammen Gorge Rhapsody (Erhu Solo)	Shenglong Ma	1960's		New music	Erhu: Amely Zhou Piano: May Chow				
Battling the Tiger Up the Mountain (Plucked String Ensemble)	Shaojin Yang	arr after 1980's		New music	TCO				
Weaving the Rainbow (Orchestra)	Jingxin Xu	1970's		New music	TCO				
Last Train station (Orchestra)	Jingqing Xu	Tianjin Song and Dia 1970's		New music	TCO				
Red Blossoms (Orchestra)									
☆☆☆ World Premiere									
2011 CICS Annual Fundraising Concert 綠竹飄飄, 龙腾虎跃 耀华亭 (Apr 30)									
Marham Theatre for the Performing Arts									
Yi Drinking Song (Orchestra Ensemble)	Liang-Hui Lu	after 1990		New music	TCO				
Everlasting Friendship (Orchestra Ensemble)		Cheng Long Zhou or 1960's, arr 1980's		New music	TCO				
Moonlight over Spring River (Orchestra Ensemble)		arr. Peng zhang Qiu arr. 1925		Ancient Melody	Pipa soloist: Wendy Zhou				
Spring arrives at Jiang River (Du Solo)	Bao-Sheng Ning	1976		New music	Liping Wu				
Sichuan General's Command (Orchestra Ensemble)				Ancient Melody	TCO				
Dragon Dance (Orchestra Ensemble)	Chi-Man Yoo			New music	Yangqin Soloist: Man-Nok Chan, Leung Sing Tak S				
Shanghai Man (Band)	Joseph Koo	or 1980's		New music	Spire				
Rose Tango (Band)	Monti, Actor Piazzolla, ant Spire	or 1980's		Multicultural song	Spire				
Jay Chow's Medley (Band)	Jay Chow	or 1. After 2000		Taiwan pop	Spire				
Lark! Lark! (Choir)	Guang Ren	Wal-Hong Yip or 1935		Xinjiang folk song	CICS Ah-Mazing Choir				
Roy Cloud Chasing the Moon (Choir)	Tung K.T. Leung	Guang dong music		Guang dong music	CICS Ah-Mazing Choir, Toronto Chinese Orchestra				
Magical Train Ticket (Orchestra Ensemble)	Liang-Hui Lu	1980's-1990's		New music	Toronto Chinese Orchestra, Leung Sing Tak School C				
Harvest Festival Dance (Orchestra Ensemble)		1980		New music	Toronto Chinese Orchestra, Leung Sing Tak School C				
Flying Dragon Leaping Tiger (Orchestra Ensemble)	Min-Xiong Li			New music					

Table 1.3: TCO's repertoire (2010-2011)

Table 1.4: TCO's repertoire (2012-2013)

<b>2017 Concert Canada 150: A Chinese Mosaic (Apr 30)</b>									
<b>The Music Gallery</b>									
Medley of Hakka Folk Songs		Liang-Hui Lo	folk song						
Layers II	Ying Lee (Taiwan)		2007		Hakka folk songs	TCO			
Um i no Mieru Machi	Joe Hsiao (Japanese)	Tan Kah Yong	or 1989		New music	TCO			
Wild Game	Bobby Ho (composer-in-residence)				Japanese composer	TCO			
Sketches of Northern Nationalities	Xilin Lu	Liang-Hui Lo	or 1970's		New music	Bobby Ho + Apex Drumming Team			
(Boundless Songs of Love) A la claire fontaine (French; Quebec)		Tony K. T. Leung			New music	TCO			
Lullaby: Song to Hiawatha (Algonquin; Ontario)					Canadian folk song	TCO			
When the Moon Comes Up (Cree; Saskatchewan)					Canadian folk song	TCO			
(I Give My Love an Apple (English; Nova Scotia)					Canadian folk song	TCO			
She's Like the Swallow (Newfoundland)					Canadian folk song	TCO			
Love Song of Kangding (China)					Chinese folk song	TCO			
<b>2018 concert 25th Anniversary Concert New Horizons (Jun 24)</b>									
<b>Chinese Cultural Center of Greater Toronto</b>									
Emperor Qin Muentering Soldiers	Jianhu Jing Baocan Wang		1987		New music	Apex Drumming Team			
Redemption: The Chan Kai Nidre	Patty Chan		2015		New music	Eru: Patty Chan, Cello: Jamie Chan			
Dance of the Yao People	Tiehan Liu, Yuan Mao	Xuwen Peng	Or 1950's		New music	TCO			
Chasing Heart	Qinglin Bruce Bai				World Premiere	TCO			
Beijing Opera Tune		Guaren Gu	arr 1960		New music	Chamber ensemble			
Stargazing's End	Lucas Oickle				World Premiere	Chamber ensemble			
Spring River (Piano concerto)	Jingxin Xu		1989		New music	Ken Yang			
Soaring Dragon and leaping Tiger	Minxiong Li		1980		New music	TCO, Inner Truth Taiiko Dojo, Apex Drumming Team,			
<b>2019 Concert Butterfly Lovers (Jun 9)</b>									
<b>Markham People Community Church Auditorium</b>									
Princess Miao Shan	Jon Lin Chua				Composer-in-residence World Premiere				
Butterfly Lovers (erhu concerto)	Zhenhao He, Gang Chen		1958		New music	Eru: Yang Li			
Night Mooring by Maple Bridge (Guzheng concerto)	Jiamin Wang		2001		New music	Guzheng: Lin Cao			
Madam Su Ho (Concerto for Janggo, Super Janggo and Chinese Orchestra)					Canadian Premiere	Janggo & Super Janggo/ Yoonsang Choi, Myongno Y			
<b>2014 Esquisite Flavours 臻饌之音 (May 17)</b>									
<b>Toronto Center for the Arts</b>									
Beautiful Flowers under Full Moon	Yi Jun Huang	Xuwen Peng	or 1930's		Traditional	Toronto Chinese Orchestra + Little Giant Chinese Ch			
Spring Breeze					New music	Toronto Chinese Orchestra			
Harvest Festival	Naizhong Guan		1983		New music	Toronto Chinese Orchestra + Little Giant Chinese Ch			
Kavalan	Wan-Cheng Su (Taiwan)		2008		New music	Toronto Chinese Orchestra + Little Giant Chinese Ch			
Spring in Eulashi	Liang Hui Lu (live in Taiwan)		after 1990's		New music	Toronto Chinese Orchestra + Little Giant Chinese Ch			
The Ancient Capital	Ning-Chi Chen (live in Hong Kong)		1984		New music	Toronto Chinese Orchestra + Little Giant Chinese Ch			
Dream of Red Chamber Suite	Liping Wang 王立平	Wen-xiang Liu	1987		New music	Toronto Chinese Orchestra + Little Giant Chinese Ch			
Taiwanese Folk Song Suite	Xunli Yu, Zhengyuan Peng		1981		Taiwan folk songs	Toronto Chinese Orchestra + Little Giant Chinese Ch			
Moonlit Lake in Autumn					New music	Toronto Chinese Orchestra			
<b>2015 Concert Ancient Poetry, New Melodies 古诗词新韵采 (June 28)</b>									
<b>Toronto Center of the Arts</b>									
Wild Game	Bobby Ho (composer-in-residence) World Premiere				New music	Toronto Chinese Orchestra Percussion Ensemble + A			
Fragrance of Jasmine Bloom	Tony K. T. Leung				New music	Toronto Chinese Orchestra			
Lament of Lady Zhaojun	Peidong Xu	arr after 1980's			Traditional	Toronto Chinese Orchestra			
Song of Yi Village (dizi concerto)	Hong Kei Kwok (Hong Kong)	1970's-1980's			New music	Ulipang Wu			
慕蘭的草原我的家	A la teng so le (music)/huo hua (lyrics)	1970's			New music	Tsinghua Alumni Performing Arts Group Choir			
Ma Yi la	Luo bin Wang	1940's			New music	Weiyu Xiao, Tsinghua Alumni Performing Arts Group			
Romance of Luyou and Tangwan	Zhan hao He	1990's			New music	Roy Cheng (recitant), TCO			
Song of the Pipa	Guaren Gu	1990			New music				
Thoughts	Hang Kei Kwok (Hong Kong)	2001			New music				
<b>2016 Concert (July 3rd) Virtuosos</b>									
<b>George Weston Recital Hall Toronto Centre for the Arts</b>									
Orchestra: 台灣送禮曲 Capriccio "Taiwan"	Wen cheng Su		1997		New music	TCO			
Pipa concerto: 新翻羽調綠絳曲 New Variation of Luyao Dance	Jie ming Yang	Guaren Gu	1982		New music	Wendy Zhou 周曉濤			
Guzheng concerto: 龍劍風 Fighting the Typhoon	Chang yuan Wang		1965		New music	Cynthia Qin 秦子雲			
紅梅隨想曲 Red Plum Capriccio (erhu concerto)	Hou yuan Wu		1980		New music	Amely Zhou 周嘉韻			
Qi Qi	Tony K. T. Leung				Composer-in-residence World P	TCO			
Tangdun concerto: 滿城盡說 滿江紅	Han li Liu		1986		New music	Di Zhang 張迪			
Luyao concerto: 滿漢風情 Chant of the Manchus	Xilin Lu		1996		New music	Felix Yeung 楊曉庭			
Vocal: That's me (Soprano and orchestra)	Jian Fen Gu		1984		New music	Xiao Ping Hu 胡曉平			
Auf Flügeln des Gesanges (Soprano and orchestra)	Mendelssohn	M. Fournier	1834		Western	Xiao Ping Hu 胡曉平			

Table 1.5: TCO's repertoire (2014-2016)

Table 1.6: TCO's repertoire (2017-2019)

TCO					
2022 Lift 昂揚	Composer	Arrangement	Time	Genre	Performer
PC Ho Theatre, Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto					
	Glowing With Joy	Huang Shin-Tsai	2004	New Music	TCO
	Other Side of the Mountain	Zhimin Yu	2021	New Music	TCO with Joshua Zung
	Colourful Dragon Boat	Qu Chunquan		New Music	TCO
	Bright Moonlight	Kenny Kwan		Cantonese Folk Music	TCO/TCO with CMST and Diane Kolin
	Every Little Voice	Marjolaine Fournier	2014	Western Popular Music	TCO/TCO with CMST and Diane Kolin
	Infinite Waves		2007	New Music	Apex Drumming Team
Deam of the Red Chamber Suite	Mellow Drumatic		1988	New Music	TCO
Golden Snake Dance	Nie Er		1934	Traditional	TCO/TCO

Table 1.7: TCO's repertoire (2022)

<b>2015 Concert (Nov 13) Full Moon Love 月滿情</b>									
<b>Chinese Cultural Center of Greater Toronto, Scarborough</b>									
Moonlight Lake	Cheng long Zhou								
Joyous Song									
Distance Song (pipa solo)	Wen jie Chen	Qing dynasty	New music	OCO (ensemble)					
Moon River (trio)	Henry Marchal	1980's	Jiangnan sizhu Traditional	Xiao yun Miao					
When the Grapes are Ripen (erhu solo)	Wei Zhou	1960	New music	Dere! Xu, John Lin, Jiazheng Kuang					
Shaand Mulberry Melody (guzheng solo)	Yan jia Zhou	1980's	Western	Lin Wang					
Moon Reflects on the Second Spring	Hua Yan Jun	1979	New music	Calla Tan					
Autumn Moon at the Han Palace		after 1911	Traditional	Dong hua Feng					
Autumn Moon over Ping Lake	Wen cheng Lv	late Qing dynasty	Guangdong Music	John Lin, Derek Xu, Calla Tan, Jia zheng Kuang					
Moonlit over Spring River	Peng zhang Qin	1930	Guangdong Music	John Lin, Derek Xu, Calla Tan, Jia zheng Kuang					
Good Flower and Full Moon	Xuwen Peng	arr 1978	OCO (ensemble)	OCO (ensemble)					
	Yi jun Huang	or 1930's	Ancient Tune	OCO (ensemble)					
			Traditional						
<b>2016 Concert (Nov 11) A Decade of Togetherness with Qin and String Ensembles 十載琴、弦、聚首齐会</b>									
<b>The City Playhouse Theatre, Vaughan</b>									
Creative Song of Jasmine Theme									
Dance of the Horse-drawn Carriage Coachman (Duet)									
Dripping of the clear Creek (Quartet)	Yi gong Yin	Xu ran Ye	Chinese Folk Song	OCO					
Spring to Qin River (yangqin solo)	Cheng long Zhou	Or 1947, arr after 1970's	Xing jiang Folk Song	Ye Lan, Calla Tan					
Dragon Boat (yangqin and accompaniment)	Liu Wei kang	after 1980's	New music	Miao Xiao Yun (Ruan), Ye Lan (pipa), Calla Tan (zheng), Agnes Chan (cello)					
Showcase of Shaoqin Erhu (shaqin solo)	Trans. Zhang Zheng qu	or late Qing dynasty, arr 1980	New music	Anna Guo					
Erhu Capriccio No.5 Nakhi (erhu solo)	Tian Ke jian	2013	Traditional	Anna Guo, Miao Xiao Yun, Calla Tan, Agnes Chan					
Medley of Chinese Film Music	George Gao	or 1958, 1982, 1952, 1964, 1961	New music	George Gao					
Battle Horse Gallop	Zhu Xiao gu	or 1936, 1982, 1952, 1964, 1961	New music	George Gao, Dane ko (piano)					
	Chen Yao xin	1976	New music	OCO					
	George Gao		New music	George Gao, Bai Xue, Feng Dung hua, Wang Lin lin, OCO (accompaniment)					
<b>OCO Repertoire</b>									
<b>2011 Concert (Nov 4) Concert of Chinese Musical Instrument</b>									
<b>Chinese Cultural Center of Greater Toronto, Scarborough</b>									
	Composer	Arrangement	Time	Genre	Performer				
Dance of the Ah Mei Tribe									
Autumn Moon on a Placid Lake	Wen cheng Lv	Senglong Zhao	arr 1991	Taiwan Folk Song	OCO				
Joy & Peace	He chou Qiu		1930's	Guangdong Music	OCO Members (5 members)				
Writer Crows Playing in the Water (pipa solo)			1920's	Guangdong Music	OCO Members (5 members)				
Snow Capped Mountain in the Spring Morning (guzheng solo)	Shang-e Fan/Ge sang da ji		Late Ming Dynasty early Qing Dynasty	Traditional	Prof Qiong Wu				
Ballad of Yu bei (erhu Solo)	Wen jin Liu		1981	New music	Prof Lei Zhu				
Raining in the Banana Forest	Liu tang He		1958	New music	Prof Zai li Tian				
Everlasting Love	Fu lin Huang		1917	Guangdong Music	Zai li Tian, Qiong Wu, Lei Zhu				
Old Shanghai	Joseph Koo		or 1961	New music	OCO				
Beautiful Flowers & Moon	Yi jun Huang		or 1980	New music	OCO				
	Xuwen Peng		or 1930's	New music	OCO				
<b>2013 Concert (Nov 1) Our Beautiful Country Concert of Chinese Musical Instruments presented by Virtuosi from China &amp; Canada with Standard Grade Exam Showcase</b>									
<b>Good Shepherd Community Church, Scarborough</b>									
Scenery of Guilin	Jiang Yulin		1950's	New music	OCO (ensemble)				
Fishermen's Song (Gaohu solo)	Lou Shu hua			Guangdong Music	Ri zhang Lin, Zheng accom: Calla Tan				
Mountain Stream (Zheng solo)				Ancient/traditional music	Visiting Prof Teng Chun jiang				
On the Frontier (Pipa solo)				Ancient music	Pro Hao Yi fan				
Spring on the Moonlit River		Peng zhang Qin	arr 1978	Ancient Music	OCO (ensemble)				
Village in an Early Spring Morning	Qiao fei		1972	New music	OCO (ensemble)				

Table 1.8: OCO’s repertoire (2011, 2013)

Table 1.9: OCO’s repertoire (2015-2016)

2017 Concert (Nov 17) Rhythm of the Autumn Wind 秋风笛韵									
The City Playhouse Theatre, Vaughan									
A Stroll at the Embankment Su	Gu Guan ren	1986		New music	OCO				
Joyous Song		Qing dynasty		Jiangnan Ensemble	OCO				
Hanging the Red Lantern (Dizi solo)	Feng Zi cun	1950's -1960's		Northern Chinese Folk Music	Yu Fei				
Autumn Meditation by the Dressing Table (dizi solo)	Du Ci wen	On late Qing dynasty, arr 1980		Ancient melody	Dora Wang, Calla Tan (guzheng)				
Wu Bang Zi (dizi solo)	Feng Zi cun	1950's -1960's		Northern Chinese Folk Music	Yu Fei, Calla Tan (yangqin)				
Medley of Guangdong Music (3 Pieces) Sad Autumn, Red Candle Tears, Buddhist Temple Bells		Unknown, 1954, 1939		Guangdong Music	Jia zheng Kuang, Derek Xu, Calla tan				
Maple and Maple Bridge (Dizi and Bass)	Yu Fei			New music	Yu Fei, Christopher Jones				
Demonstration of Wind Instrument: Xun, Bawu, Hulusi					Yu Fei, Calla Tan (yangqin)				
Busy with Whipping Horse in Carrying Grains (dizi solo)	Wei Xian Zhong	1969		New music	Yu Fei, OCO				
Roam in Gusu (dizi solo)	Jian Xian wei	1962		New music	Yu Fei, OCO				
Chants of Birds	Yin Ming shan	1940's		New music	Yu Fei, OCO				
Herdsmen's New Song	Jian Guang yi	1966		New music	Yu Fei, OCO				
2018 Concert (Oct 12) Passion of String Melody presented by Erhu Maestro Prof. Liu Changfu 二胡大师刘长福教授独奏音乐会									
The City Playhouse Theatre, Vaughan									
Marital Art	He Bin	1950's		New music	OCO				
Qiantong Riverside	Zhao Yi	1950's		New music	OCO				
New Herdsmen in the Grassland (erhu ensemble)	Liu Chang fu	1970's		New music	Liu Changfu, Snow Bai, Feng Donghua, Derek Xu, Amely Zhou				
Laments of Lady Zhaojun (yangqin solo)		late Qing dynasty		Traditional	Anna Guo, Accompanists: Feng Donghua, Amely Zhou (Erhu), Miao Xiaoyu				
Hands with a Happy Spring (yangqin solo)	Ding Guo shun	1973		New music	Anna Guo, Accompanists: Feng Donghua, Amely Zhou (Erhu), Miao Xiaoyu				
The Lost Promise	Angus	1984		New music	Erhu: Feng Donghua Guzheng: Calla Tan Ruan: Miao Xiaoyu Pipa: Ye Lan >				
Let Moonlight Send My Lovesickness	Jin Liu	1948		New music	Erhu: Feng Donghua Guzheng: Calla Tan Ruan: Miao Xiaoyu Pipa: Ye Lan >				
The First Erhu Rhapsody (erhu solo)	Wang Jian min	1980's		New music	Snow Bai, Liu Jia yin (piano)				
River of Sorrow (erhu solo)		arr 1962		Northeast Folk Song	Liu Chang fu, Anna Guo (yangqin)				
A Longing for the Frontier (zhonghu solo)	Liu Chang fu	1980's		New music	Liu Chang fu, Liu Jia yin (piano)				
Medley of Guangdong Music (9 pieces)				Guangdong Music	OCO				
The Great Wall Capriccio: Movements 3 & 4 (erhu solo)	Liu Wen Jin	1980's		New music	Liu Chang fu, Liu Jia yin (piano)				

Table: 1.10 OCO's repertoire (2017-2018)

2019 Concert Music Passion Destiny 琴情緣 (Jun 20)						
Dance of Festivities	Lianghui Lu (Taiwan)		after 1990	New music	Canadian Chinese Orchestra	
Hanging Red Lantern (dizi solo)	Chenglong Zhou		1986	New music	Dizi Soloist: Lipeng Wu, Canadian Youth Chinese Or	
Night of the Torch Festival (pipa)	Jun sheng Wu		1979	New music	Pipa Soloist: Lilian Yang, Canadian Youth Chinese Or	
The Loess Plateau (suona solo)	Dong chao Zhao		1992	New music	Suona Soloist: Huiming Li, Canadian Youth Chinese O	
Fragrance of Jasmine Blossom (Guzheng Solo)	Zhan hao He		1991	New music	Guzheng Soloist: Lina Cao, Canadian Youth Chinese C	
The Beauty of Yunnan		Sha Yuan		folk music	Lina Cao (Guzheng), Roa Lee(Gayageum), CCO Youth	
Star Wars Medley	John Williams	Sky Yang and Kimberly Yip or 1977		Western movie music	Canadian Youth Chinese Orchestra	
Dream of Red Chamber Overture	Li ping Wang	Lie Zhang or 1987		New music	Dance Soloist Michelle Tian, Canadian Chinese Orch	
Summer	Joe Hsialshi	Junyi Chow or 1999		Japanese movie music	Canadian Chinese Orchestra	
Bracing the Chill	Xuan Tan	Breana Tingie or 2017		Chinese TV series music	Angela's Performing Arts Youth Dance Group, Canad	
The Legend of Shadow Runner (Gayageum solo)	Bong-chun Gang	Roa Lee & Hyun Young or 2005		World Premier	Gayageum Soloist: Roa Lee, Canadian Chinese Orche	
Dae Jang Geum (Daegum and Gayageum)	Im Se-hyeon	Jiaorong Chen or 2003		Korean tv series Music	John Lee (Daegum), Roa Lee (Gayageum), Canadian	
2020 Concert Confluence 漣 (Oct 17)						
Youtube Live Stream						
Percussion	Anna Long, Anita Xie			Original composition	Anna Long, Anita Xie	
春到湘江	Bao sheng Ning		1976	New	Lavina Cheung	
A Scroll at the Embankment Su	Quan ren Gu		1986	New	Mark Luo	
平游牧月	Wen cheng Lv		1930's	Traditional music	Dolores Chung	
梨花吟	Li ping Wang		1984-1987	New	Simon Yung, Jennifer Tong	
良宵	Tian hua Lu		1928	New	Maria Fong	
霍拉舞曲		Orl 1906		Romania folk song	Nicholas Chan	
Detective Conan	Katsuo Ono		1994	Japanese animation music	kimberly Yang, Sky Yang	
塔斯尔波舞曲	Cong wang Li		1950's	New	Cindy Tao	
幻想曲	Jian min Wang		1991	New	Alvina Cheung	
新乡村				New	Sireta Leung	
民湖风				New	Simba Tao	
兰花花叙事曲	Ming Guan		1981	New	Jade Fong	
Chrysanthemum Terrace	Jay Chow		2006	Taiwan pop	Juvelly Chan, Ashley Chan	
CCO						
2017 Concert Music Passion Destiny - A Benefit Concert						
	Composer	Arrangement	Time	Genre	Performer	
Dragon Dance						
Plum Flower Chant				New music	Canadian Chinese Orchestra	
Youths as Beautiful as Flowers	Zhong lu Zhu, Bing lv		1956	New music	Canadian Chinese Orchestra	
Canadian Folk Tunes				New music	Millennium Chinese Music Workshop	
Variations on the Flower Drum Tune				New music	Youth Erhu Ensemble	
Lao Lidian Capriccio		Xin Tong	1990's	New music	Youth Dizi Ensemble led by Lipeng Wu, Diane Lin, Si	
Stroll on Suli	Guang en Gu		1986	New music	Erhu: Patty Chan, Donghua Feng, Pipa: Ian Ye, Wen	
Axi Jumping the Moon		Wen xiu Peng	arr. 1950's	New music	Erhu: Patty Chan, Donghua Feng, Pipa: Ian Ye, Wen	
Racing Horses	Hai hual Huang		1964	New music	Erhu Led by Patty Chan, Amely Zhou, Ivy Feng and E	
Moon Reflected on the Erquan River	YanJun Hua		1930's	Traditional music	Soloist: Amely Zhou, Patty Chan, Canadian Chinese t	
Kangding Love Song, The Green All Mountain, Love Warns the Heart, Blossoming Flowers Full Moon	Jay Chow		2006	New music	Vocal: Joyous Singing Group of Carol, Yeehong Singi	
Chrysanthemum Terrace				Taiwan pop	Canadian Chinese Orchestra, Millennium Chinese M	
Osmanthus Blossoming in August			arr. After 1960's	New music	Canadian Chinese Orchestra, Millennium Chinese M	
2018 Concert Music Passion Destiny 琴情緣 (Jun 17)						
Sky is Dark, Jasmine Flower, Happy Mother's Day						
Libertango *guzheng solo)	Astor Piazzola	Hui si Xiong	or 1974	New, Traditional, New	Canadian Philharmonic Chinese Orchestra	
Tune from Yimeng Mountain	Guang zong Li, Yin quan Wang, Rui yun Li		1953	New music	Guzheng Soloist: Lina Cao, Zhongquan, Lei LiuSheng	
The Heart Asks Pleasure First	Michael Hyman		1993	Western music	CCO Youth Erhu Ensemble, Piano: Yi Wang	
Little Apple, Billie Jean	Tai li Wang, Michael Jackson		2014, 1982	New, Western pop	Piano: Yi Wang, Pipa: Xiaohui Yang, Erhu: Amely Zhou	
General's Command		Trans. De cai Li, De yuan Li		Ancient tune	Angela Performing Arts Youth Dance Group, Canadi	
Barcarole on the Water (dizi solo)	Guo ji liang		1975	New music	Canadian Youth Chinese Orchestra	
Thunder in a Drought (ruan duet)		He liang Qiu (edrf)	before 1921	Guang dong music	Dizi Soloist: Lipeng Wu, Canadian Chinese Orchestra	
Blossoms on a Moonlit Lake in Spring (pipa solo)	Shi lin Ju		1736-1820	Traditional Chinese music	Zhongquan, Lei Liu, Daruan: Alexandr Nabokov, Can	
Nine Hundred Ninety-Nine Roses (suona solo)	Zheng xiao Tai		1994	New music	Pipa Soloist: Xiaohui Yang, Canadian Chinese Orchest	
Shepherd's Song, Flower Drum Tune	Li ping Wang, unknown		1981, Ming dynasty	New, Traditional	Suona Soloist: Huiming Li, Canadian Chinese Orches	
					Canadian Chinese Orchestra	

Table 1.11: CCO’s repertoire (2017-2018)

Table 1.12: CCO’s repertoire (2019-2020)

CCO						
2022 Summer Concert Sound .Resonance 乐·声小聚						
The Chinese Nation	Chaosheng Wu					CCO
Flower Festival	Xuran Ye		1960	New Music		CCO
The Cresting Moon				Chinese Ancient Music		Trio
The Joy of A Snowflake	Zhimo Xu, Xinquan Zhou			New Music		The OCMS Choir
Dance of Kuche	Jing Yang		1993	New Music		Trio
Lotus Blossoming under the Rain	Rui Wang			New Music		Zheng Solo Lina Cao
Spring Comes To Xiang River	Baosheng Ning		1976	New Music		Flute Solo Lipeng Wu
OST Unsullied	Hongyi Jian	Amely Zhou		New Music		CCO
Dance of the Yi Tribe	Huiran Wang		1965	New Music		Pipa Solo Lilian Yang
Heart Warming Love	Zhan Huang, Jiahui Gu	Amely Zhou	1981	Cantonese Popolar Music		CCO and The OCMS Choir
A River of Blossoms		Amely Zhou		Chinese Ancient Music		CCO and The OCMS Choir
Kangding Love Song				Traditional		CCO and The OCMS Choir

Table 1.13: CCO's repertoire (2022)