

CD Insert – English and Chinese

Crossings: Contemporary Music for Chinese Instruments

For over 150 years in East Asia, Western and Asian musical traditions have existed in intimate relationship with one another. Borders have been often crossed and contested; intercultural fusions—both conscious and subconscious—are the norm; and hybridity is inevitable. This musical interculturality has multiple histories, from music education to stage performance, from concert music to rituals, from popular music to opera. Some intercultural musical practices have been institutionalized through education and have evolved in a particular geopolitical historical context. Just as often, intercultural music encounters happen inadvertently and serendipitously, resulting in experiences of crossing aesthetic, national and many other kinds of boundaries. With the intensity of today's global circulation, intercultural music fusion is a way of life.

Yet, how has the global network of composers stretching across continents engaged with interculturality in the 21st century? How have intercultural musical practices been applied differently to compositions, performances, and productions? How is compositional interculturality inseparable from the large network of composers, performers, teachers, government officials, producers, directors, audiences, critics, et cetera? How does the legacy of interculturality leave its mark in today's practices long after its historical processes have apparently been completed?

In March 2015, Shih-Hui Chen hosted a three-day music festival, "Common Practice 21C: Classical, Contemporary, and Cross-Cultural Music," at Rice University in Houston. The festival included three concerts, eight academic lectures, and Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra (gCO) performances that reflected classical and modern culture and their artistic fusion. It provided a rare platform for critical engagement with cultural fusion in both theory and practice.

Born out of the 2015 festival, *Crossings: Contemporary Music for Chinese Instruments* offers an interesting set of compositions, performed by the gCO, that embody the 21st century interculturality in distinctive ways. It features works by six composers who came into contact with Chinese cultural traditions and responded compositionally to that contact in different ways. Two composers (Shih-Hui Chen and Lei Liang) were born in Taiwan and China respectively; although they have spent the majority of their compositional life in the United States, they have also endeavored to learn and immerse themselves in the traditional music of their mother tongue. The remaining four composers are American-born and non-Chinese and were trained in North American universities, yet each has had varying degrees of engagement with traditional Chinese music: living in Taiwan or China for a period of time, mentored by Chinese American composers, participated in workshops with Chinese ensembles, et cetera. Thus, the album offers a glimpse into what has become a global network of composers.

The gCO, or Little Giant Chinese Chamber Orchestra, is a group from Taiwan whose members actively perform new music on Chinese instruments. On this recording, the group is represented by an eight-piece ensemble comprising two winds (dizi, or transverse flute, and sheng, or mouth

organ), one two-stringed bowed fiddle (erhu), three plucked lutes (pipa, ruan, liuqin), a zither (zheng) and a dulcimer (yangqin), all of which are typical of the “silk and bamboo ensemble” that has a long tradition in many areas of southern China, including Fujian and Taiwan. “Silk” refers to the traditional material from which strings were made, and “bamboo” refers to the traditional materials for the wind instruments. As ethnomusicologist Lawrence Witzleben notes, a silk and bamboo ensemble comes to “imply music of relatively low volume that is usually played indoors.” It is also associated with traditional musical genres characterized by a sophisticated relationship among multiple melodic lines and nuanced multi-part texture. Some consider the ensemble to have more global appeal than other traditional Chinese music. While maintaining a connection to this tradition, gCO, an avid advocate, has commissioned and performed new works throughout East and Southeast Asia, as well as North America. Embodying the phenomenon of cultural movement in the global age, the gCO is engaged in both attachment and detachment. When musical cultures such as the silk and bamboo ensemble move through the world, they retain aspects of the cultures rather than the whole. The entity that emerges through such a process is inevitably a new product and a manifestation that makes reference to a range of prior and seemingly disparate cultural fragments. Through such continuous movement of cultures, the whole set of cultural elements become just the background for the emergence of a new space. The new emergent culture “calls out” elements that refer to the existing cultural tradition. As such, past expressions of culture can only be hinted at. They are hauntingly alluded to, without being fully present. Through this process, the emergent new sonic space takes on the role of bringing forth cultural elements from the past into existence for the future.

In nearly every work recorded in the album, the silk and bamboo instruments of the gCO are joined by additional sonority. Cello and percussion are added in both Chris Walczak’s *Into the Changing Light* and Shih-Hui Chen’s *Fantasia on the Theme of Guanglingsan*; electronics are used in Timothy Roy’s *Behind the Back*, Robert McClure’s *the edge of still*, and Kurt Stallmann’s *Callings*. Lei Liang, on the other hand, omits erhu but retains a six-piece silk and bamboo ensemble in his *Lakescape IV*. In each case, the instrumentations both point back to the tradition of silk and bamboo ensemble (as well as the historical context of the added sonorities) and project forward their new meaning. The rich and varied emergent new expression is the essence of *Crossings*.

In her unique approach to *Fantasia*, Shih-Hui Chen forms a fascinating relationship with a famous traditional masterwork, *Guanglingsan*, from which most of her compositional materials are derived. *Guanglingsan* is one of the ten Chinese classical masterpieces for guqin (also commonly performed on zheng or pipa). It depicts a legend from the Warring States Period: The son of a swordsmith assassinated the draconian King of Han to avenge his father’s murder. Fearing for his mother, he disfigured and then killed himself to keep anonymity. Yet, the grieving mother identified her son, insisting instead that his legend is greater than her life. It was a grand, moral piece. Beginning in a pensive, lyric (“civil”) style that evokes a feeling of melancholy, the classic work moves on to robust and vigorous (“martial”) style, finally ending with lyric style again, in a lament. For Chen, the two distinctive emotions made a deep impression. “The meditative character in the melody’s opening and ending provides a strong contrast to the fast, energetic music flanked within. Together, they suggest a rich, full range of musical expression and vitality.” The concerto follows the narrative loosely, beginning quietly

with fragments of the classic tune, then moving to the warrior-like section, and finally the full elegant melody from the original work.

Chen's use of the traditional Guanglingsan in the *Fantasia* is highly nuanced. In the manner of what I would call "reverberation," it moves through the mood and materials of the classic guqin work while releasing new meaning from the classic. At the center is the interaction between the notably different aesthetics of "civil" and "martial" styles, each being characterized by distinctive texture and timbre, as well as gestures and a sense of vocality and narrativity. From the civil style Chen develops individual, private, and pensive characteristics. With rests separating individually articulated gestures, Chen reaches for the inner reflective voices. In contrast, the martial style is thick in texture, profuse in color, tight in structure, and full-bodied in sound. Its musical character vividly reflects a realism, with chords articulating animatedly the ups and downs of a dramatic process. While the civil style expresses emptiness and blankness, the martial style expresses fullness and groundedness. The dynamic progress moves between the hollow versus the solid, the vacant versus the substantial.

Tellingly, Chen noted that while she always conceptualizes the intercultural aesthetics from the perspective of Western instruments and genres, writing this fantasia for Chinese ensemble prompted her to conceptualize, for the first time, the interculturalism from the perspective of Chinese instruments. Through the classic piece, she gestured to the tradition without replicating it. In other words, it is through both her attachment to and detachment from the masterpiece that the new meaning is released and new work emerges.

Not all composers recorded here lean as heavily on tradition. On the opposite end of the spectrum, Walczak treats the intercultural encounter as an opportunity to explore new sonic possibilities, in particular for sheng and zheng. His philosophical stance recalls that of Henry Cowell as represented in his seminal *New Musical Resources* (1930). It is interesting that, in aiming to create a piece of "pure music," Walczak chooses a subject just as abstract and theoretical: the "primal allure and attraction" of light, from its "radiant, warm, and spiritually enlightening" to its "blinding or even terrifying" quality. His conscious effort to untether the two instruments (sheng and zheng) from their tradition and to free the listeners from expectation is reflected by a strong musical narrative. The cello is the lead, its lyrical line spun by the bottom string in a continuous melody. Its timbral quality is distinctive, as if it were a ray of light. Meanwhile, the reedy sound of the Chinese mouth organ, sheng, emerges as an interlocutor of sorts, sometimes adding new shades of timbral quality, sometimes adding a separate contrapuntal line that rubs against the cello and percussion lines, and at other times going full-force to create an eerie effect mixing with other instruments, adding momentum to the dynamic force, as if a full flush of light.

Three composers on this recording incorporate electronics in their work, yet the fundamental difference in their approaches sets them apart. Timothy Roy's is somewhat similar in spirit and sonority to the reverberation of Chen Shih-Hui's *Fantasia*. His *Behind the Back* features the traditional lyricism and virtuosity of pipa to narrate and reflect on the ancient drawings of pipa musicians performing while dancing and flying through the air on the walls of Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, China. The elaborate lines and colors, as well as vivid figures in the painting of the ethereal world, are well depicted musically through the sophisticated timbre of

the pipa, whose virtuosity and lyricism make it one of the most powerful and well-loved solo instruments in contemporary Chinese music. Throughout the piece, the electronics provide additional layers, punctuations, and sound mass for the expressive gestures of pipa virtuosity. Overall, however, a fine balance is achieved to preserve the distinctive timbre and character of the pipa.

If the beauty and grace of solo pipa in *Behind the Back* is otherworldly and heavenly, an opposite extreme of sensibility is the earthly world expressed in Kurt Smallman's *Callings* for erhu and electronics, a work inspired by human voices he heard in the streets of Taipei. Through the solo erhu's distinctive timbre—one that many describe as sharing an uncanny resemblance to the human voice—*Callings* features soulful expression in a monologue, as if pleading, pressing, and soliciting. Against the subtle backdrop of sustained chords on the electronics, the erhu plays short melodic fragments in the form of a dialogue with itself, each fragment subtly shaped by different sliding, glissandi, pitch inflections, microtonal bending, and other techniques. What sounds spontaneous and improvisatory is in fact a well-crafted study in nuance of timbral inflection and wavering. The intervallic range of each melodic fragment is never large, at most a fourth, but mostly within the major and minor seconds, with plentiful use of quarter-tones. Two-thirds into the piece, a man's voice joins the electronics—a peddler's street calls from everyday life in Taipei. This non-descript street call, subdivided into three parts, has a tonal ending. The erhu repeatedly emulates the tri-part street call, sounding ever closer to the peddler's voice, and eventually the two fuse together into a homogenous whole. The division between the human voice and instrument fully disappears in the electronics fusion, turning inward the natural affinity between erhu and human voice. The street call has been morphed into the erhu itself, and vice versa.

The sense of everydayness is also explored in another work, though in quite a different direction. Robert McClure in *the edge of still* focuses on sounds that can be produced with minimal effort or action, and in particular “those we would ignore or not hear at all in our daily life.” Whereas his colleagues are drawn to the “silk” part of the silk and bamboo ensemble, McClure chooses the “bamboo” part, namely the transverse flute and the mouth organ, to create the soundscape of “still”. With ample air-tone or merely air on dizi, as well as tongue fluttering and tongue trills on sheng, the sonority of the piece begins with a web of fragmented, nearly incidental sound of the everyday environment. It could be rustling of leaves, cracking of wind, or surfacing of bubbles. Though in sequence, they give the sense of being dispersed in the musical space vertically, rather than linearly. Midway through the piece, however, the dizi begins a sequence of short melodic lines, initiating the linear motion in the work. Interestingly, by staying mostly within the lower range, its sonority is more akin to the Korean traditional flute, daegeum, rather than the brighter timbre of the Chinese dizi.

Similarly depicting nature is Lei Liang, who chooses to make nearly full use of the silk and bamboo ensemble in his *Lakescape IV*, omitting only the bowed two-stringed fiddle, erhu. Also a quiet work at the start, the piece's depiction of a lake is derived from the continuous and multi-part tremolos on yangqin, zheng, pipa and lute. The homogeneous though multi-part tremolos emulate the motion of endless ripples on a lake. Yet ripples cannot be heard, so it is in fact a sonification of the visual ripple effect. Moving onto the bamboo instruments, the ripple effect is imitated by various tonguing techniques on sheng and dizi. They gradually accrue

momentum and become a propelling force moving forward in a passionate way, until the tremolos appear on all six instruments. Leaving behind the quiet ripple effect of the lake, the music instead sounds agitated, with the tension building up into a sound mass. Here Liang makes use of extended techniques and indeterminacy to create a labyrinth of timbre and texture. Finally, the soundscape of pentatonicism takes over the musical space and leads to closure. The sonic elements depart from the previously atmospheric and allude to the familiar territory of Chinese traditional music.

The works on *Crossings* offer a dazzling array of new emergent sonic expression for instruments of the silk and bamboo ensemble. While myth and longstanding tradition have an important role in the aesthetics of Chen and Roy, they are left unexplored in the search for the atmospheric of Walczk and Liang. Stallmann and McClure, on the other hand, use the opportunity to explore a space and expression closer to the human core and natural self, as an antithesis to life in the modern world. Together these six works signal the move of this silk and bamboo ensemble beyond the narrowly defined label of “ethnic/national style” into a chamber ensemble of the world stage.

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跨越：古樂今曲

跨國的音樂文化交流及中西文化融合，在中國的社會裡已經有相當深遠的歷史，不論在音樂教育系統的建立上，還是舞臺演出的形式；是宗教儀式化的音樂，還是通俗的流行音樂，從現代歌劇到地方戲曲都有很多實際的例子。有些中西文化融合是已經相當制度化了，例如中樂團的樂器編制、小學教育的音樂課程；但也有許多中西文化融合是在偶發式的文化碰撞後擦出的火花，再逐漸發展，最後超越了國界及美學藩籬。隨著當今急速全球化的影響，音樂文化上的中西融合已經是一種現代的生活方式。

然而，遍佈全球各大洲的二十一世紀作曲家們如何看待文化融合的現象？音樂上的中西文化交流對他們的作品有何種的影響？他們對音樂文化融合的實踐上又採取何種的態度？再者，作曲家在文化融合上是如何與表演者、教師、政府官員、製片人、導演、聽眾、批評家等所構成的大網路不可分割的？除此之外，文化遺產如何在它所參與的歷史過程已結束後，仍留下了其特有的印記？

2015年3月，作曲家陳士惠在休士頓的萊斯大學主辦為期三天的音樂節《古樂今曲》。透過三場音樂會、八場學術演講及小巨人絲竹樂團演出，為體現古典、現代、跨文化的藝術融合提供了難得的實踐交流平台。各國種族、傳統不同的作曲家，盡管文化底蘊不同，卻都能巧妙運用、融合中西音樂的元素，將中國的傳統文化藝術與西洋音樂創作手法相結合，獨創音樂的思維模式。

這張專輯《跨越：古樂今曲》是2015年音樂節的延伸，收集了六位作曲家的作品，由小巨人絲竹樂團擔任演奏，每曲皆以獨特的方式呈現了二十一世紀的文化融合。六位作曲家各以不同的方式展現他們與中國文化傳統的接觸，及各種不同面相的領略。其中，兩位作曲家，陳士惠和梁雷，分別出生於臺灣和中國。他們三十餘年的作曲生涯卻以美國為主，期間也汲汲於中國音樂、采風的學習與探尋，對傳統文化都有相當的涉獵。其餘的四位美國作曲家雖非華裔，然而每一位作曲家對於中國傳統音樂都有不同程度的接觸：有的曾在臺灣或中國，學習或任教過；有的曾師承美籍中國作曲家，或曾參加中樂的工作坊及研習會等。整體而言，藉由作曲家的多樣性，這張專輯展現了文化融合的各式可能性。

來自臺灣的小巨人絲竹樂團是由一群青年樂手組成，除了演奏古典曲目，也十分擅長演奏現代作品。歷史悠久的絲竹樂在江南流傳，於香港、臺灣等地都發展出其特殊風格。「絲」指的是各種拉弦彈撥的弦樂器，「竹」則為管樂器。長期研究上海絲竹樂的學者韋慈朋指出：絲竹樂即是「音量不大且於室內演奏的小型合奏。」它以不超過十人的合奏為主，但也可以因應實際情況改變合奏的人數和樂器，甚至獨奏；音樂織體以支聲複調為主。在本專輯中，小巨人樂團採用典型的傳統絲竹樂器：吹奏部的笛子與笙；拉弦彈撥的二胡、琵琶、阮、柳琴、古箏及揚琴。小巨人絲竹樂團在編制上保持著傳統的特色，然而在新作委約及首演上的求新不遺餘力，時常在東北及東南亞、和北美洲演出。

小巨人絲竹樂團與傳統音樂既密切又疏離的關係，是當今文化全球化的一個寫照。當傳統音樂文化（如絲竹樂）傳入一個不同的文化體系內，其所促生的絕非是整體傳統文化原型的一種複製，而僅只是其局部性的保留。因此在這文化流傳過程中，必定會有新文化的誕生，不可避免的使得傳統文化原型只成參考。通過這樣的流傳過程，傳統文化所有的元素都成了新文化誕生的背景。由此產生的新文化只能在某種程度上「呼喚」且「凸現」傳統文化，而不能代表傳統文化的整體。也就是說，過去的文化只能作為被影射的對象而非能被模仿或複製的。在這一過程，傳統文化固然是有回顧性的，但也同時是前瞻性的，它將過去帶到了未來，在未來文化的發展上發揮了積極的作用。

這專輯裡展現了各種擴展傳統絲竹樂音響的方式。大提琴和打擊樂在沃爾查克的《沐浴在靈光中》和陳士惠的《廣陵散幻想曲》裡各佔重要的角色。電子音樂則為羅伊的《反彈琵琶》、麥克盧爾的《靜止的邊緣》和史特丞的《招喚》，勾勒出各式的音響效果。只有梁雷的《湖面風景IV》完全的使用六件傳統絲竹樂器，獨捨二胡不用。在這些新的融合方式下，每件作品都表達絲竹樂的傳統某些特色，但是也同時賦予了新穎的涵義。以傳統絲竹樂團展現出如此豐富多樣的新面貌，正是《跨越》一輯的精髓所在。

陳士惠的古箏協奏曲《廣陵散的迴響》是以古曲為靈感的創作，其音樂素材來自中國十大古曲之一《廣陵散》。這首在東漢就已經流行的旋律，除了是古琴名曲之外，也常見於古箏的演奏。廣陵散敘述的是戰國時，一個鑄劍工匠之子報恩復仇的悲劇，曲調中包含了兩種截然不同的情緒和風格，情韻深遠的《文曲》及沛武精神的《武曲》，淋漓盡致的表達出了豐富完整的音樂性。《廣陵散的迴響》跟原古曲相似：有沈思緩慢的開始——這時曲調只有動機點綴、輕輕暗示——然後進入了雄偉的快板中段，最後，完整悠長的廣陵散旋律以複音的方式結束整曲。作曲家對這兩種截然不同的情感有深刻的感受，特別是其強烈

的反差之下所表達出豐富的表現力和生命力。曲名中的《迴響》很巧妙的點出作曲家對古曲的運用：她根據經典作品之意境和素材來寫作，得以重新詮釋《廣陵散》古曲，且更進一步的發掘其新意。《文曲》和《武曲》不僅是美感上的對比，更反映在音樂織路紋理和音色上，及歌唱性和敘事性的不同特色。《文曲》的部分以斷續的短小音型勾勒出個人的、私密性的、沉思性強的樂段，反映出內心深處的聲音。相形之下，《武曲》的樂段則以質地厚實、色彩豐富、結構緊湊、聲音醇厚為特色，並生動地反映了跌宕起伏的戲劇性過程。

專輯裡其他的作曲家並不是如陳士惠一般的運用傳統。最極端相反的是沃爾查克。他藉由為中國傳統樂器的作曲來探索這些樂器合奏共鳴的可能性，目的是追求能不被傳統風格束縛的「純音樂」，或獨特的嶄新音樂。這追求「純音樂」的觀念，與美國現代音樂的先驅，前衛作曲家亨利考威爾在1930年所出版的《新音樂資源》提出的訴求不約而同。有趣的是，以「純音樂」為重的沃爾查克竟也選了同樣純粹與抽象的「光」為作品主題。在為笙、古箏、大提琴、與打擊樂作的《沐浴在靈光中》一曲中，他將笙與古箏的音響融入大提琴的線條，或對位，或積蓄張力來表達「光」的吸引力：「光，可以解讀為光采、溫暖、以及給予人精神上的啟發；但是，它同時也具有令人目盲的力量。在這過程中，光不只是轉變著，它也是這轉變的表徵。」

專輯裡三位作曲家採用電子音樂，但是運用了十分不同的手法。羅伊的作法與陳士惠的《廣陵散迴響》較為相似。他的《反彈琵琶》是為琵琶與電子音樂而寫，其靈感來自於他「對中國敦煌莫高窟壁畫的著迷與熱愛。這些壁畫以描述音樂家演奏時，猶如在空中飛翔般輕盈自在著名。」本曲的重點是以琵琶的精湛技巧與抒情敘述來表達琵琶音樂家演奏的生動精采，採用了許多琵琶演奏的傳統。電子音樂細緻的音響雖豐富音樂的層次，但也同時保持琵琶音色的獨特性格。相對於《反彈琵琶》中獨奏琵琶所表達的超凡脫俗的敦煌古畫的境界，史特丞在他為二胡和電子音樂寫的《招喚》裡所表達的卻是道地的柴米油鹽，屬於日常生活的律動。以在臺北街頭聽到的小販叫賣聲為靈感，他用二胡獨特的音色來表達人聲模擬的獨白，似召喚、似懇求、又好似舊情。在電子音樂微妙的音響襯托下，二胡重複著演奏片段的旋律，以滑音、微分音、顫音、拖腔等變化，將人聲的叫喚摹擬得細膩入微。曲子後半真正的小販叫賣聲也入曲，切切的重複著，這小販叫賣聲可細分為三小段，結尾有個終止式。二胡呼應似的重複模仿這三段式的小販叫賣聲，人聲與二胡的音色愈來愈接近，最終融合為一。史特丞特意以二胡來重建已經逐漸式微的人聲交流與溝通，其寓意不但是重新接近自然，也是為現代社會裡，簡訊文字逐漸取代人聲交流的一個註腳。

重新接近自然也是麥克盧爾所關心的議題。在他的《靜止的邊緣》裡正是希望能用最接近自然常態，也就是一般在日常生活中容易忽略、甚至聽不到的聲音來作曲。他期望以最少的精力與動力來發聲，也就是幾近於徘徊在靜止的邊緣。雖然本專輯其他作曲家都採用拉弦撥彈的樂器，他卻與眾不同的單好吹奏樂器，用笛子和笙來表達他「靜止」似的聲景。曲中笛子用了許多的氣音或僅是吹氣，笙則採用了多種的顫音及其他演奏技巧，音響上，可能是樹葉的沙沙作響、風吹呼呼聲音，抖動紙時刷刷的聲響，泡沫咕嘟的聲音。這些徘徊在靜止的邊緣的聲響，好似在音樂空間中垂直而非水平線式的開展分佈。後段笛子演奏

旋律性較強的樂段，以強調張力，有趣的是，以其在低音域迴轉的演奏方式，其音響的效果更近似于韓國傳統長笛，*daegeum*，而非音質明亮的中國笛子。

梁雷同樣描寫大自然，他的《湖景之四》充分的利用絲竹樂的樂器：以琵琶、揚琴、箏和中阮演奏多聲部的顫音，描繪湖面上無盡的漣漪。現實裡，漣漪是視覺上的效果，無聲的。所以梁雷的寫景，實際上是將視覺上漣漪的紋波效應轉換成了的音響，造成音景的效果。逐漸的，管樂的笙和笛子也以繁複多聲部的顫音加入，構成更豐富的漣漪效應的音響。累積勢頭向前推動，造成了激情的樂段。最後，多聲部的顫音為一片綿密的音型形取代，以五聲音階造成熟悉的聲景。

陳士惠指出，她以往總是從西方樂器的角度來思考文化融合交流的相關議題，直到開始撰寫這首為絲竹樂團所譜的現代作品時，才第一次從中國音樂演奏的角度來思考文化融合交流的可能性及議題。這個觀點的改變可謂是一個轉捩點，極有代表性，值得作曲家借鏡。

《跨越》一輯裡提供了一系列的絲竹合奏樂器的新作品，表現出令人目不暇給的創作力及音響的盛宴。豐富的文化傳統，如優雅古曲敦煌壁畫，在陳士惠和羅伊的作品中扮演著重要的角色或靈感，但它並未對在尋找純音樂及抽象音響的沃爾查克及梁雷有太多的影響。另一方面，史特丞和麥克盧爾都利用文化融合的機會來探索一個更能接近人類和自然根本的表達方式，以與現代都會生活相抗衡。總之，這六件新作展現出絲竹樂合奏的美學，已超越了狹義的「民族/民族風格」的標籤，而進入世界舞臺的室內樂之一。

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