Chen Yi's Song Set As in a Dream:

The Merging of Chinese and Western Musical Idioms

by

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#### ABSTRACT

In an interview with the author, composer Chen Yi shared thoughts regarding her inspiration to compose the piece *As in a Dream*. She composed the first version in 1988 for soprano, violin, and cello. Left unpublished, this work was re-done in 1994 with the Chinese instruments *zheng* and *pipa* in place of the violin and cello. *As in a Dream* is a setting of two linked poems of six lines each by Qingzhao Li, one of the earliest female poets in China. Chen Yi kept the voice part the same in the two versions, but adapted the accompaniment to suit the Chinese instruments.

This study of *As in a Dream* focuses on the 1994 version, and especially on the first song, with a view to introducing the singer to its Chinese elements. To help performers to understand better the text of the set, a translation and transliteration of the two poems by Qingzhao Li are offered with line-by-line interpretation. An introduction to the history and characteristics of the *zheng* and the *pipa* is supported by examples of the uses of these instruments in the songs. Drawing upon information provided by Chen Yi in the interview with the author, a discussion follows of Mandarin speech tones and their effect on the melodic design of *As in a Dream*, with music examples. An examination of traditional Beijing Opera styles of singing, with insights provided by Rao Lan, the soprano for whom the work was written, leads to a description of the fusion vocal technique required for performance of *As in a Dream* and some of the rules for diction in Mandarin Chinese.

Intended as an introductory guide for the soprano contemplating performance of Chen Yi's *As in a Dream*, this study also reveals the combination of Eastern and Western

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musical characteristics in these songs and gives examples of how the music interprets the veiled meaning of the poetry.

#### DEDICATION

Since I first performed a work by Chen Yi with the Arizona State University Symphonic Chorale, I have been amazed and inspired by how the composer could merge two distinct musical cultures and compositional techniques, bringing together not only two different styles, but also creating a brand-new musical language not spoken before. I would like to dedicate this research paper to my parents, Mr. Pak Yen Ip and Ms. Ying Kan, who have inspired me to begin my delightful journey between Western and Chinese music, and who supported and encouraged me to come to the United States so I could see and experience both cultures. My parents also opened my mind to seek the limitless happiness that music brings in life. I would also like to dedicate the research paper to my first voice teacher, Ms. Ella Kiang, as well as my keyboard teacher, Ms. Mayana Ma, who are both musicians in Hong Kong. I sincerely appreciate their efforts in helping to prepare me with a solid foundation in music and inspiring me to keep on traveling and exploring. Last but not least, I would like to thank Professor David Britton for mentoring and guiding me through all kinds of hardships and challenges during the completion of this Doctoral of Musical Arts degree.

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I would also like to thank my committee members, Professor David Britton, Dr. Amy Holbrook, and Professor Russell Ryan, for their caring guidance and for patiently leading me to a better understanding of these songs. The time I spent at Arizona State University helped me to build upon what I had learned earlier on the path of my musical career begun in Asia. A special thanks goes to the music conservatory I attended in Hong Kong. I now have had a rather solid Chinese and Western musical education given to me by the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts; thank you to the music instructors I have studied with, who undoubtedly gave me the ability to comprehend and see through the mysteries within the art of music. Special gratitude also goes to many friends, who at all times, during the ups and downs in my life, remind me that I will always have their love and support even beyond these years of academic endeavor.

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## CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

It is always the responsibility of performers to study their repertoire thoroughly. There are ample sources available to the singer regarding text translations, story lines, poetic background, musical analysis, and vocal practices for the most performed classical songs in the West, but there are few sources concerning contemporary compositions with Asian elements. Chen Yi's song set *As in a Dream* is an example of an Eastern work without extensive performance guidelines. Many works by Chen are more Westernsounding, but in preparing *As in a Dream*, one might wonder if the composer intends it to be sung in the style of traditional Beijing Opera, the famous genre that first inspired her to write the piece, and what vocal techniques would be needed if so.

As an international student and singer who has had the honor to interview both the composer and the performer of the premiere, I am pleased to write about this unique composition, which combines musical characteristics of both Chinese and American cultures. As a young musician who was raised in Hong Kong, a city that had once been a British colony, I witnessed a high level of cultural exchange between the two communities who resided there. American culture was familiar to the people of Hong Kong and to those from southern China. British culture had been deeply rooted thanks to 156 years of British reign, enabling the people of Hong Kong and the surrounding areas of China to learn about Western culture.

The composer Chen Yi (traditional Chinese: 陳怡), and the soprano Rao Lan (traditional Chinese: 饒嵐), who premiered *As in a Dream*, are both from this region. They are professional Chinese musicians who have been greatly influenced by their

Western musical education and have taken Chinese traditional musical elements to the United States and to other countries. Chen Yi's blending of Chinese music practices into Westernized compositions has created an innovative art form that draws from two musical styles and traditions.

Chen Yi, born April 4, 1953, and her spouse, Zhou Long, also a composer are immigrants who came to the United States after the Cultural Revolution of 1966-1976. She is one of the most recognized composers in the United States. Her works and those of other Chinese-born composers residing in the United States reveal new cultural influences, and they are gaining more and more audiences worldwide.<sup>1</sup> Chen was the first Chinese woman to receive a Master of Arts degree in music composition from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Later on she studied composition with the Argentine-American composer Mario Davidovsky (b. 1934) and the Chinese-American composer Chou Wen-Chung (b. 1923) while she was studying at Columbia University for her Doctor of Musical Arts degree (where she graduated with distinction). She is currently the Lorena Searcy Cravens/ Millsap/ Missouri Distinguished Professor of composition at the Conservatory of Music and Dance at the University of Missouri, Kansas City.<sup>23</sup> Before teaching at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, she was also a member of the composition faculty at the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University (1996-1998). Chen has contributed much to choral and chamber music repertoire. Recipient of the prestigious Charles Ives Living Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2001 and elected to the American Academy of Arts and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Jiang Jiamin, "China Rising: Music of Chinese Composers Increasingly Heard in U.S," *Post* <u>http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20150525/PC2106/150529504/1147&</u>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Chen Yi, interview by Hoi Lam Ip (Kansas City, March 15, 2014)

Sciences in 2005, she has become one of the most significant and prolific representatives of Chinese-Western compositional style.<sup>4</sup>

Chen was born into a musical family: her father was a violinist and her mother played the piano professionally. She was born and raised in Guangzhou, the largest city in the Canton province of South China. Chen has an older sister who was a child prodigy, and a younger brother who is also a musician. She started studying piano when she was three and says she has always been influenced by the music of Mozart and Bach.<sup>5</sup>

The Chinese Cultural Revolution started when the former Chairman of the People's Republic of China, Mao Zedong, re-defined the goals of the Communist Party at an elaborate meeting held by the Politburo on May 16, 1966.<sup>6</sup> Mao announced on his seventy-third birthday to the members of the Chinese Communist Party, "Let us toast to the unfolding of a nationwide all-round civil war!"<sup>7</sup> Lasting through 1976, it was a movement directed by the Communist Party against the upper middle class, targeting bureaucrats, artists, and academics. The Red Guards serving as a half-military for Mao destroyed Western and other cultural icons, including music, poems, paintings, and monuments.<sup>8</sup> Though Chen's education was halted during those ten years of Cultural Revolution, she still managed to practice Western music by stuffing a blanket into her

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Jesse Russel and Ronald Cohn, *Chen Yi (Composer)* (Scotland, United Kingdom: LENNEX Corp, 2012), 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Hong Yung Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: A Case Study* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Michael Schoenhals, *China's Cultural Revolution, 1966-1969: Not a Dinner Party* (Armonk, NY: M E Sharpe, 1996), 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> "Cultural Revolution," *The Sage Glossary of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2009, accessed February 21, 2015,

 $<sup>\</sup>label{eq:http://literati.credoreference.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/content/entry/sagegsbs/cultural_revolution /0?searchId=7d6b7111-689f-11e5-9891-12c1d36507ee&result=0$ 

piano to dampen the sound, and she played her violin with a mute. Nonetheless, she was sent to the countryside and forced to farm and labor for two years. Before entering the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, she learned to appreciate Chinese traditional and folk musical culture and to adopt it in her own music during the time she was laboring in the countryside.<sup>9</sup> Studies of the relationship between the Chinese Cultural Revolution and Chen Yi's music suggest that her blended compositional style began with her bicultural musical education and matured during those years of internal political pressure.<sup>10</sup>

Chen is married to Zhou Long, (traditional Chinese: 周龍), born July 8, 1953, who is a Pulitzer prize-winner for his opera *Madame White Snake*. He and Chen both went to the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing following the years of the Cultural Revolution and later continued their studies in composition in the United States. He also attended Columbia University and studied with the same composition professors: Mario Davidovsky, Chou Wen Chung, and one other American composer, George Edwards.<sup>11</sup> He is currently the music director of the organization Music from China in Brooklyn, New York, founded in 1984, whose aim is to bring ancient, folk, and contemporary Chinese music to audiences mainly in the New York area.<sup>12</sup> The goal of this organization is to "encompass contemporary Chinese works that reflect both Chinese and Western

http://infoweb.newsbank.com/resources/doc/nb/news/0EAF491031BC4C5E?p=AWNB.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Russell and Cohn, Chen Yi (Composer), 5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Paul Horsley, "Woman of two worlds UMKC's chen yi survived china's cultural revolution to become a world-famous classical composer," *Kansas City Star*, March 18, 2001, accessed November 18, 2015,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Russel and Cohn, Chen Yi (Composer), 21.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> "Music From China: Ancient, Folk, and Contemporary Chinese Music Live in NYC." *Music From China*, accessed June 4, 2015, <u>http://www.musicfromchina.org</u>.

sound worlds and musical languages."<sup>13</sup> This statement is not only a definition of what the organization Music from China does, but it also summarizes Zhou's musical style and compositional approach. The cultural intentions of his compositions are closely related to those of Chen Yi, and both have had works performed through the Brooklyn association.

Chen Yi's importance as a composer in the United States is indicated by the large number of dissertations and articles published about her. A few concern the combining of Eastern and Western choral idioms and are presented as conductor's guides to her prolific choral works.<sup>14</sup> Studies of her vocal and instrumental compositions suggest that the main influences on her musical style are Chinese folk songs, Impressionism, and Nationalism.<sup>15</sup> Many of the studies of her works relate them to what she had been through during the Cultural Revolution in China.<sup>16</sup> The presence of Chinese folk and traditional music in her style has been attributed to this experience.<sup>17</sup> As for solo vocal music, Chen Yi is known for the kaleidoscopic musical designs of her original, but yet folk-like, creations inspired by ancient poetry, rural scenery, and traditional Chinese calligraphies. Beijing Opera is also identified as an influence on Chen's vocal

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Allan Kozinn, review of *Mixing and Matching China and the West*, New York Times, 2004. Accessed March 9, 2014,

http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9804EFDE113CF933A25752C1A9629C8B63. <sup>14</sup> J. Carlton Monroe, "A conductor's guide to the choral works of Chen Yi" (D.M.A diss.,

University of Cincinnati, 2009). Po Kwan Law, "The a cappella choral music of Chen Yi: 1985-2010" (D.M.A diss., University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2013). Hin-Kei Yeung, "Chen Yi and her choral music: A study of the composer's ideal of fusing Chinese music and modern western choral traditions" (D.M.A diss., University of North Texas, 2006).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Wen Zhang, "An infusion of eastern and western music styles into art song: Introducing two sets of art song for mezzo-soprano by Chen Yi" (D.M.A diss., University of Nevada, 2015), 20. Xin Guo, "Chinese musical language interpreted by western idioms: Fusion process in the instrumental works by Chen Yi" (D.M.A diss., The Florida State University, 2002), 49.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Zhang, "An infusion of eastern and western music styles into art song," 8. Cheryl Ann Melfi, "An investigation of selected works by Chen Yi" (D.M.A diss., The University of Arizona, 2005), 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Qing Nadia Feeken, "The Complete Solo Piano Works of Chen Yi: A Recording, Analysis, and Interpretation" (D.M.A diss., Arizona State University, 2012), 3.

composition.<sup>18</sup> Because Chen grew up in China, some researchers explore how Western musical elements came to be included in her works.<sup>19</sup>

Chen has written only a few works for solo voice. These are *Meditation* (1999), two songs for mezzo-soprano and piano on poems from the Tang Dynasty, and *Bright Moonlight* (2001), for mezzo-soprano and piano, on Chen's own lyrics. Studies of *Meditation* and *Bright Moonlight* have focused on pitch organization, text-music relationships, and the appropriate vocal technique for the songs.<sup>20</sup> These two works were composed later than *As in a Dream*, which was Chen's first solo vocal composition.

There are three versions of *As in a Dream*. Two of them are for voice and Chinese instruments (version II: pipa and zheng, and version III: zheng). Version I for violin and cello, is in a more-Western style. It was not published until after version II was published in 1994. Version I was premiered by the Inoue Chamber Ensemble at the Weill Recital Hall in New York in 1988, and version II (soprano, pipa and zheng) was premiered by Zhou Long's organization, Music from China at the Premiere Works IV Concert at Merkin Hall in 1994. Version III (soprano and zheng) was adapted for the UMKC Musica Nova concert in 2010, and it has not yet been published.<sup>21</sup>

This study will focus on version II of *As in a Dream*.<sup>22</sup> Its two songs are settings of two linked poems of six lines each by Qingzhao Li, one of the first female poets in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Zhang, "An infusion of eastern and western music styles into art song: Introducing two sets of art song for mezzo-soprano by Chen Yi," 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Xiang He, "Selected works for violin and piano by chen yi: Western influences on the development of her compositional style" (D.M.A. diss., University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2010), 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Zhang, "An infusion of eastern and western music styles into art song: Introducing two sets of art song for mezzo-soprano by Chen Yi," 38.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Chen Yi, e-mail message to author, November 19, 2015.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Chen Yi, As in a Dream, poems by Qingzhao Li, (Theodore Presser Company; U.S.A, 1994).

China. The first poem is generally a description of the protagonist's state of mind of the narrator's difficult boat ride home from a party late at night. The second poem conveys indirectly her memory of the incident of the previous night as she wakes up, still feeling tipsy, remember everything as though it was in a dream.

The total duration of the two songs is about 8 minutes. The first song lasts approximately 3 minutes, with a tempo indication of J = 60. The introduction consists of five measures in 5/4 and is followed by a series of regular and irregular time signatures 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, and 7/4. These frequent changes of time signature imply a free reciting of the text.

In the following chapters, a brief biography of the poet will be accompanied by a detailed translation and transliteration of the two poems. The Chinese instruments, the pipa and the zheng, will be examined next; after description of their history, construction, and technique, their use in *As in a Dream* will be discussed with music examples from song 1. Chen Yi has indicated that the relationship between the Mandarin Chinese speech-tones system and her melodic design is essential to her compositional style, and so this aspect of *As in a Dream* will be examined next. The Beijing Opera vocal style and its historical background will also be introduced and discussed in relation to the vocal techniques needed for the songs. An interview with soprano Rao Lan provides further guidance for the performer, and a performer's guide will also illustrate the importance of vocal diction rules in Mandarin Chinese. The central concern of this study is to provide potential vocalists a view of the cultural, linguistic, and musical origins of *As in a Dream*, and to help them prepare and perform it.

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# CHAPTER 2

# AS IN A DREAM: TRANSLATION AND TRANSLITERATION

Qingzhao Li (traditional Chinese: 李清照, 1083-1149) was one of the first and most well-known female poets in China. She was born into a family that belonged to the upper echelons of society in Shandong province during the northern Song Dynasty (960-1279). She was married at age 17 to Zhao Mingcheng, the son of a royal minister in the court of the Song Emperor. Her most famous poems and lyrics express the bliss of her married life through descriptions of art collecting and artistic endeavors, especially from the time her husband was sent away on a mission as court emissary after the fall of Bianliang (Kaifeng). Many of her best-known works are actually letters between husband and wife. When Mingcheng died in 1129, she became even more prolific, expressing her love and thoughts of him.<sup>23</sup> Li's early works depict her carefree living as a daughter of a family of officials and scholars in high society. However, in the year 1129, when her husband died, her works all of a sudden changed and became darker in tone, and they portray almost only her grief over his death.<sup>24</sup> She wrote the set As in a Dream, one of her most famous works, during her early production period. It belongs to a free Chinese poetic form called *Ci* (prose), while the *Shi* (poem) has a more fixed format and rhyming scheme associated with it.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Nirmal Dass, "Li, Qingzhao." *Berkshire Encyclopedia of China: Modern and Historic Views of the World's Newest and Oldest Global Power* (Great Barrington: Berkshire Publishing Group, 2009), accessed 22 Feb 2015,

http://literati.credoreference.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/content/entry/berkchina/li\_qingzhao/0?sea rchId=63ac4b75-68a0-11e5-870b-0aea1e24c1ac&result=0

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Jean Elizabeth Ward, *Li Ch'ing-chao: Remembered* (San Bernardino, CA, 2008), 4.

Li was one of the most prolific writers of *Ci* during the Song Dynasty. *Ci* is a perfect form for the creation of songs and accompaniment; the lyrics are rhythmically flexible and so it provides more freedom when set to music. *Shi* (poem) limits the number of characters in each line, which together with the rhyming scheme result in an exceptionally limited musical form. Li's poetic style is rather free and prose-like. Most of her works are in highly romantic language, and thus *Ci* would always be her preferred form of literary creation. *Ci* can be divided into three main categories, as shown in Table 1.0.

Xiao Ling	A short prose composition with fewer than 58 characters
Zhong Diao	Middle-sized prose composition with approximately 59-90 characters
Chang Diao	Long prose composition with more than 91 characters

 Table 1.0: Categories of Ci

*As in a Dream* belongs to the *Xiao Ling* category, as each part of it contains 33 characters. The Chinese characters of the title *As in a Dream*, 如夢令, are pronounced as *Ru Meng Ling*. The word *Ling* already gives readers a hint that the prose is of small size

and therefore suitable for being set in two short songs. Because the *Ci* form is flexible and free, *As in a Dream* gave Chen Yi the same space and flexibility to be expressive without the limit of a poetic structural frame.

Each line of poetry in Western poetic tradition can be described by the number of iambic feet contained (an iambic foot stands for a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable). This measuring system applies only to stressed-languages such as English, German, and some other Romance languages. However, for non-stressed languages like Chinese and French, poetic measurement can be determined only by the number of syllables. In Chinese poetry there are other rules and poetic standards related to the meaning of texts, such as parallelism or antithesis, but these are more evident in *Shi* than in Ci.<sup>25</sup>

The exact year of composition of the poetry *As in a Dream* is unknown, but the study of its existing texts suggests that it is one of the earlier works Li Qingzhao composed. Later on, after the death of the poet's husband, all works subsequently created are darker and more obscure in tone. This particular piece, however, celebrates life, implies her love life, and generally the good times she had had when she was younger.<sup>26</sup>

The following is a Chinese-English translation of both poems (Tables 1.1 and

1.2).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Derek Attridge, *Poetic Rhythm: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 24.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> "As in a Dream." *Overseas Chinese Language and Culture Education Online*, accessed February 23, 2015,

http://big5.hwjyw.com/zhwh/ctwh/zgwx/779/liqingzhao/200803/t20080317\_14266.shtml.

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	Translated by Hoi Lam Ip
	As in a Dream
如夢令二首	
李清照 	Li Qingzhao
()	(1)
常記溪亭日暮,	Always remembering those days and
<sup>仲</sup> 叱厌了 日春,	nights at the pavilion by the river,
沉醉不知歸路。	I am drenched in wine and forgetting the way home
興盡晚回舟,	I returned home late on a boat, after
	having the most fun,
誤入藕花深處。	But wandered lost among the lotus
	flowers.
爭渡,爭渡,	Rowing and rowing,
驚起一灘鷗鷺	Water splashes while the seagulls and
	egrets flinch.

# Table 1.1: As in a Dream (song 1) Chinese-English Translation

CHINESE	ENGLISH
	Translated by Hoi Lam Ip
(二)	
昨夜雨疏風驟,	Wind and storm swept through the night,
濃睡不消殘酒。	Sleep cannot take away the "wine" left within my mind.
<b>試問卷簾人</b> ,	Try to ask my maid who rolls my curtains a question,
卻道海棠依舊。	But was told that the begonias stay the same.
知否?知否?	Are you sure? Are you sure?
應是綠肥紅瘦。	I assumed the red flowers should have withered, leaving there only the green after the stormy night.

# Table 1.2: As in a Dream (song 2) Chinese-English Translation

*Pinyin* is the standard system for transliterating the Chinese language into Romanized spelling. The system was adopted in 1979 for the pronunciation of Mandarin Chinese in Beijing, considered to be the standard dialect in China.<sup>27</sup> The Chinese *Pinyin* transliteration not only shows how it should be pronounced, but the dash lines also show the regular groupings of the words. The two poems in *As in a Dream* are in the same poetic structure, following the syllabification of 6-6-5-6-4-6 in the six lines. In Chinese poetry, even though the tone pitches could create a sense of stressed and unstressed syllables, each word and syllable has a different meaning and is equal in importance, resulting in a fixed syllabic design.<sup>28</sup>

The following is the Chinese word-to-word *Pinyin* transliteration of the poetry, which will help with the pronunciation and syllabification of the text.

#### As in a Dream (song 1)

Line 1: 常記溪亭日暮 Chang-ji xi-ting ri-mu, Line 2: 沉醉不知歸路。 *Chen-zui* bu-zhi gui-lu. Xing-jin Line 3: 興盡晚回舟, wan-hui-zhou, Line 4: 誤入藕花深處。 Wu-ru ou-hua shen-chu. Line 5: 爭渡, 爭渡, Zheng-du, zheng-du, Line 6: 驚起一灘鷗鷺 jing-qi ou-lu. yi-tan

As in a Dream (song 2)

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> "Pinyin" *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, March 2015), accessed 4 June 2015, <a href="http://www.oed.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/view/Entry/144348?redirectedFrom=Pinyin#eid">http://www.oed.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/view/Entry/144348?redirectedFrom=Pinyin#eid</a>
 <sup>28</sup> Stephen Adams, *Poetic Designs: An Introduction to Meters, Verse Forms and Figures of*

Speech (Peterborough, Ont: Broadview, 1997), 3.

Line 1: 昨夜雨疏風驟, Zuo-ye yu-shu feng-zhou,

Line 2: 濃睡不消殘酒, nong-shui bu-xiao can-jiu,

Line 3: 試問捲簾人, shi-wen juan-lian-ren,

Line4: 卻道海棠依舊。 que-dao hai-tang yi-jiu.

Line5: 知否, 知否, Zhi-fou, zhi-fou,

Line6: 應是綠肥紅瘦。 ying-shi lu-fei hong-shou.

The two poems set in *As in a Dream* display two distinctly different emotions. The first poem reveals the good times the poet had had before her marriage. She recounts the events of visiting a pavilion by the river all day, becoming intoxicated by the wine, and forgetting her way home. The second poem concerns how she felt when she woke up the next morning. The scenery is poetically described and the text portrays an episode from the young poet's life. The following is a thorough line-by-line interpretation of both texts.

As in a Dream (song 1)

**Interpretation of Line 1:** 

常記 溪亭 日暮,

Chang-ji xi-ting ri-mu,

#### (Always remembering those days and nights at the pavilion by the river)

*Chang-ji*, translated into English as *always remembering*, indicates that the poet had been recalling the event for some time already. The poet emphasizes *chang*, which means *at all times*, and implies that the event had happened quite a long time ago and that it was worthy of remembering. *Xi-ting* can be translated into English as *pavilion by the*  *river*, or it could also be interpreted as *The River Pavilion*. In the first line of the poem, *ri-mu*, which means *days and nights*, implies that the protagonist was possibly there everyday for a reason or with a person. With only a few words, the poet precisely depicts what, where, and when the event happened and suggests a beautiful scenery of the pavilion by the river. The protagonist would go to the pavilion everyday, and it was worth remembering indicates that the events at the pavilion could be meaningful to her.

### **Interpretation of Line 2:**

沉醉 不知 歸路。 *Chen-zui bu-zhi gui-lu.* (I am drenched in wine and forgetting the way home.)

*Chen-zui* can be translated into English as *drunk/ a drunk person*, and it implies that the protagonist herself was drunk. *Chen* in Chinese means *deep*, which here the poet says that the protagonist is extremely intoxicated. *Bu-zhi* means *do not know*, which simply states that all went blank in her mind at that moment. *Gui-lu*, means *the way to return*, and it also implies *the way to go home* here. This line describes the mental status of the protagonist at the time when she was about to leave for home. The protagonist could be drinking for a variety of reasons however, *forgetting the way home* could suggest either she was really drunk and could not recgonize the way home, or that she was not willing to go home. Although the poet was considered a woman of higher social status with more freedom, female in ancient time were told that they should always stay

in their own feminine inner quarters, and they were not allowed to travel around.<sup>29</sup> Through this line, it could be interpreted that the protagonist is only imagining the trip, and *forgettin the way home* could be an irony suggesting that she was reluctant to go home.

# **Interpretation of Line 3:**

興盡 晚回舟,

Xing-jin wan-hui-zhou,

# (I returned home late on a boat, after having the most fun,)

*Xing-jin* means that the protagonist had *the most fun ever*, and *wan-hui-zhou* means *she returns late at night on a boat*. This line provides the information that she stayed long, departing after dark.

# **Interpretation of Line 4:**

誤入 藕花 深處。

Wu-ru ou-hua shen-chu.

# (But wandered lost among the lotus flowers.)

*Wu-ru* can be translated as *wander* or *by mistake* in Chinese. It also implies that intoxication caused by alcohol consumption mentioned in line 2 interfered with the protagonist's decision-making in choosing the correct route home. *Ou-hua*, which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Yanning Wang, Reverie and Reality (Lexington Books, 2013), 18, accessed November 25, 2015, <u>http://lib.myilibrary.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/Open.aspx?id=559475</u>

translates as *lotus flowers*, and the following *shen-chu*, which means *deep place*, describes the many lotus flowers she saw floating on the water on her way home. The whole sentence says that her boat was off-course. Any kind of flower in Chinese also implies the meaning of *relationships*. Hence, this line could also hint that the protagonist is probably troubled by relationship problems. After these four lines knowing that the protagonist would always drink and have fun at the pavilion, it hints that she might have met someone special at the pavilion, leading to the alluding of *relationship* by the word *flowers* in this line.

## **Interpretation of Line 5:**

爭渡, 爭渡,

*Zheng-du, zheng-du,* (Rowing and rowing,)

*Zheng-du* is repeated in line 5 here, and it means *rowing the oars*. The repetition of the text suggests the anxious act itself.

**Interpretation of Line 6:** 

驚起 一灘 鷗鷺

jing-qi yi-tan ou-lu.

(Water splashes while the seagulls and egrets flinch.)

*Jing-qi* means *frightened*, *yi-tan* means *a whole bunch of*, and *ou-lu* means *seagulls* and *egrets*. This last line is saying that the increase of anxiety in the rowing eventually frightened all the egrets and seagulls away.

As in a Dream (song 2)

**Interpretation of Line 1:** 

昨夜 雨疏 風驟,

Zuo-ye yu-shu feng-zhou,

# (Wind and storm swept through the night)

*Zuo-ye* can be translated directly as *last night*, giving a specific time for the incident. *Yu-shu* and *feng-zhou* describe last night's weather, which was rainy and stormy. This first line sets up a mood in describing the bad weather, which may be symbolic of the narrator's state of mind.

## **Interpretation of Line 2:**

濃睡 不消 殘酒,

nong-shui bu-xiao can-jiu,

# (Deep sleep cannot take away the "wine" left within my mind)

*Nong-shui* means *deep sleep*; *bu-xiao* is translated as *not eliminating* or *not making something go away*; *can-jiu* means *the remaining wine*, or more specifically, *veisalgia* (medical term for hangover). The poet is describing that sleep has not removed the drunken feeling of the night before. The poem starts with a bad, stormy night and the consumption of alcohol. The specific adjectives the poet uses here are all rather negative, giving the reader the sense that the protagonist is troubled.

#### **Interpretation of Line 3:**

試問 捲簾人,

shi-wen juan-lian-ren,

# (Try to ask my maid who rolls my curtains a question)

Shi-wen means attempting to ask, while juan-lian-ren means maid or, more specifically, the person who rolls the curtains up (which was one of the duties of a maid). Here the protagonist is trying to ask the maid if she knows how it is looking outside of the windows.

# **Interpretation of Line 4:**

卻道 海棠 依舊。

que-dao hai-tang yi-jiu.

## (But was told that the begonias stay the same)

*Que-dao* could be translated as *she replied*, *however*; *hai-tang* is a kind of flower named Malus Spectabilis; and *yi-jiu* means *stays the same*. In the previous line, the protagonist asks the maid a question, and the maid answers that the flowers are looking the same as always. The word *however* suggests that the poet expected a different answer. The implication is that she expected the outsude world to have changed because something has changed within herself, and it could have been changed after the events at the pavilion.

## **Interpretation of Line 5:**

知否, 知否,

Zhi-fou, zhi-fou,

# (Are you sure, are you sure?)

*Zhi-fou* can be translated as *are you sure*? The poet repeats line 5 here as in the first poem (*rowing*, *rowing*), suggesting a similar kind of anxiety or eagerness. In this line she asks the maid if she is sure about what she sees outside. The poet apparently had difficulty believing that the flowers survived the stormy night intact, perhaps because symbolically she did not.

# **Interpretation of Line 6:**

應是 綠肥 紅瘦。

ying-shi lu-fei hong-shou.

(I assumed the red flowers should have withered, leaving there only the green after the stormy night)

*Lu-fei* and *hong-shou* literally mean *a lot of green but not enough red*. Here *lu*, which means *green*, implies *grass*, while *hong*, which means *red*, implies *flowers*. *Ying-shi* means *should* be. If the red flowers allude to relationships, this final line hints at the source of the poet's anxiety.

# CHAPTER 3

# AS IN A DREAM: THE CHINESE INSTRUMENTS AND THEIR ROLE

Chen Yi has said that the main differences among the three versions of *As in a Dream* are in the musical design of the instrumental parts, while the vocal part remains the same. The accompaniment of version II reflects the nature as well as the limitations of the two Chinese instruments used.<sup>30</sup>

Two traditional instruments, the pipa and the zheng, accompany both songs in version II. The pipa (traditional Chinese: 琵琶) is a short-necked, pear-shaped lute that has been played in China since the Han Dynasty. It should be held upright, resting on the player's lap.<sup>31</sup> The zheng or guzheng (traditional Chinese: 筆 or 古箏) is a zither-like instrument, which emerged during the Warring States period (475-221 BCE), with strings suspended on adjustable bridges.<sup>32</sup> Chen's use of these specific instruments to accompany the voice could be meaningful: each is associated with social status and specific occasions in stage presentations (and more specifically, to the performances of the Beijing Opera). Plucked-string instruments like the zheng and the pipa are regarded as lyrical and are usually used together with the bowed instruments erhu, yueqien, and jinghu to accompany lyric voice types. Instruments like the suona, which is a blown

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Chen Yi, interview by Hoi Lam Ip (Kansas City, March 15, 2014)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> "Pipa," Berkshire Encyclopedia of China: Modern and Historic Views of the World's Newest and Oldest Global Power, ed. Linsun Cheng (Great Barrington: Berkshire Publishing Group, 2015), accessed Oct 1, 2015

https://login.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/login?url=http://literati.credoreference.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.ed u/content/entry/berkchina/pipa/0 <sup>32</sup> John Myers, "Musical Instruments" *Berkshire Encyclopedia of China: Modern and Historic* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> John Myers, "Musical Instruments" *Berkshire Encyclopedia of China: Modern and Historic Views of the World's Newest and Oldest Global Power* (Great Barrington: Berkshire Publishing Group, 2009), Credo Reference, accessed 23 Feb 2015

 $<sup>\</sup>label{eq:http://literati.credoreference.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/content/entry/berkchina/musical_instrume nts/0?searchId=5c20e63e-6c63-11e5-a541-0aea1e24c1ac&result=0$ 

instrument, are associated with special occasions such as weddings, funerals, and other formal processions, mainly accompanying male and other more-dramatic voice types.<sup>33</sup> The songs of *As in a Dream* are composed for lyric-soprano, which, according to tradition, requires the use of plucked-string instruments.

The zheng, or guzheng, spans a history of over 2,500 years. In the definition given by a Chinese dictionary, Shuwen Jiezi, in the 2nd century, the zheng was a plucked string instrument with five strings and a bamboo body.<sup>34</sup> In the 1970s, some twelve-and thirteen-string zhengs of the 6th and 7th century were unearthed in Guangxi and Jiangxi provinces, revealing the range of styles of the instrument. During the Han, Sui, Tang, and Song dynasties, the zheng was played as one of the court musical instruments to accompany Xianghe Ge (The Harmonious Song), Yanyue (The Banquet Music), and QingShang Yue (The Mountain Music). The zheng was originally a folk instrument, but to the people who are familiar with the history of Chinese musical instruments, the zheng gives an impression of royalty or nobility. It was played as one of the court orchestral instruments, and in ancient times it would always be played during royal banquets, feasts, and the entrance of the Emperor and the royals.<sup>35</sup> Although the calligraphy of the word depicts the shape of the instrument, it is so named for another reason. According to a statement from the Shuwen Jiezi dictionary, the pronunciations of Chinese instrument names are often associated with the actual sounds they produce. For example, in ancient

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Wichmann, *Listening to Theatre*, 237.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Han Mei, "Zheng," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online.* Oxford University Press, accessed August 10, 2015

http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/46543.

Mandarin Chinese, people described the sound of zheng as *zheng zheng*.<sup>36</sup> To play a zheng one uses a combination of artificial fingernails and fingertip flesh. The left hand is usually responsible for tone embellishments such as *vibrato* and *portamento*, as well as the change of pitches, while at times it joins the right hand to play the melody. The open strings are fixed to a pentatonic scale with the lowest string tuned to D1 on a 21-string zheng. The range of a zheng depends on the number of strings, usually from sixteen to twenty-one, and a zheng with twenty-one strings presents four complete octaves.<sup>37</sup>

In the Han to Tang dynasties, the pipa was a category of plucked-string instruments rather than a name of a specific instrument. Later on, the construction of this pear-shaped instrument merged with other instruments of similar structural design. The modern pipa was not only a musical instrument from ancient China, but it was known also in India and Persia during 346-353 CE. During the Sui and Tang dynasties, like the zheng, it was also a musical instrument in courtly ensembles, mainly responsible for accompanying singing, dancing, and solo music. The number of strings and frets and the playing position of the pipa have been established and then modified down through the years. The pipa was a folk instrument like the zheng, and using these two instruments together creates a folk-like yet noble impression for the listeners. There are three octaves in a pipa, while there are two higher pitches in a 16-fret pipa than in a 14-fret pipa. A

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Cao Zheng and Yohana Knobloch, *Asian Music* (Texas: University of Texas Press, 1983), 2.
 <sup>37</sup> Han, "Zheng."

pipa can play the same intervals as Western musical instruments and in addition can produce <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> tones.<sup>38</sup>

The complex techniques of these instruments are more diverse for the pipa. *Tiantiao* (traditional Chinese: 彈挑), *mo* (traditional Chinese: 抹), *gou* (traditional Chinese: 勾), *fen* (traditional Chinese: 分), *zhi* (traditional Chinese: 插), *fu* (traditional Chinese: 持), *sao* (traditional Chinese: 掃), and *lunzhi* (traditional Chinese: 輪指), and other technical terms are described below in Table 2.0. These techniques produce musical sounds similar to *vibrato*, *portamento*, *glissando*, *pizzicato*, and harmonics. For example, the distinctive *lunzhi* technique, which is applied the most in *As in a Dream*, can create a sound that resembles a *tremolo*. The table shows the equivalent Western musical embellishments and effects.

# Table 2.0: Main Chinese Instrumental Techniques vs Western Musical

# **Embellishments and Effects**<sup>39</sup>

Chinese Instrumental Technique	Equivalent Western Musical Embellishments and Effects
Tantiao (with only the nail	• <i>Staccato</i> notes (pizzicato
contacting the string; index finger	notes)
strokes outward)	Percussion sound

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Tsun-Yuen Lui, "Pipa." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed 22 Aug. 2015, <u>http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/45149</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Theodore Jen Kwok, "Zheng: A Chinese Zither and its Music" (PhD diss., University of Hawaii, 1987), 75.

http://login.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/303470160?acco untid=4485

	Dry/attacking sound (not
	sustained)
Mo (with the nail and finger tip	• Warm sound (not sustained)
ntacting the string; and index finger	
rokes inward)	
Gou (with the nail and finger tip	• Warm sound (not sustained)
contacting the string; and the middle	
finger strokes inward)	
Fen (with the inside of one finger	• Dry/attacking sound (for
from the left and one finger from	double notes, not sustained)
the right; contacting two strings and	
stroke both strings in separate	
directions)	
Zhi (with the nail contacting the	• Tremolo
string and strokes rapidly outward	• Trill
and inward alternatively to sustain	Sustained notes
notes)	
Liyin (with index finger nail strokes	• Glissando
outward over several strings	
continuously)	
Fu and Sao (with index finger tip	Portamento
touch inward over one or several	Broken chord

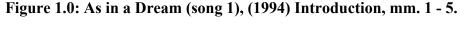
strings continuously and rapidly)	• Chord (notes are not played
	simultaneously but
	sometimes it is rapid enough
	to create a sound close to a
	chordal sound)
Lunzhi (with the use of the nails of	• Tremolo
several fingers to play on one or	• Trill
different strings)	• Rapid rhythmic figures
	Repeated Notes

Only five of these techniques in the table are used in version II (song 1), and they are *Tantiao* (*pizzicato*), *zhi* (trill), *liyin* (*gissando*), *fu/sao* (*portamento*) and *lunzhi* (*tremolo*). *Zhi* and *lunzhi* play very important roles throughout the piece because the zheng and the pipa cannot sustain notes.

The pipa in version II uses the *lunzhi* technique to create sustained sounds. Playing these rapid alternating figures, or *tremolos*, with a progressively increasing dynamic from mp to f can animate them (Figure. 1.0, mm. 1-5). Throughout the brief introduction, the zheng is given the principal melody, while the pipa accompanies by punctuating it with *tremolo* bursts.

The main instrumental techniques can immediately be seen in the introduction to song 1 (Figure 1.0). The zheng uses *portamento* (the *fu/sao* technique), which means to glide a short distance up or down from a given pitch point using the left hand, to slightly

change the pitch (chromatic notes cannot be fingered on the zheng). The waver in the pitches introduces a light sense of tipsiness at the beginning. This effect returns throughout the song. After a big *glissando*, which drops down from F#4 to F#3 in m. 2 of the zheng, Chen at the end of the introduction uses pitches in a lower register to suggest how deeply alcohol affected the narrator's state of mind. Here the pipa is playing a very important role by sounding a very distinct *tremolo* that contrasts with the melody in the zheng as well as keeping the flow of the music active.



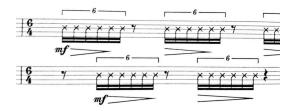


Percussive articulation serves as a cue or a descriptive sound effect in *As in a Dream*. Immediately before the voice enters in m. 5, at the end of the dynamic build-up, an x-note (non-pitched percussive notation) is played for the first time by the pipa. The poetry in both songs of this set is composed in a free metrical structure, and so the rhythms in the instrumental parts are also free and can reinforce the expression and mood

of the text in accordance with the meaning of the lines.<sup>40</sup> In this case, the percussive sound (the *tantiao* technique) is sudden and might be compared to an awakening from a dream and beginning the narrative.

There is another particularly dramatic percussive figure in m. 31. Figure 1.1, between line 5 and line 6 of song 1, which describes the rowing action of two oars.

Figure 1.1: As in a Dream (song 1), m. 31



In an interview, Chen explained what she thought about the percussive sound effects.

# Hoi Lam Ip (Question):

How did you design the rhythmic patterns in the song, and why would you use percussive sound effects in the song?

# Chen Yi (Answer):

It is almost like when you are trying so hard to row the boat forward! The percussive sound is mimicking the oars splashing the water, and that is what it talks about in line 6 that the egrets and seagulls are scared away from the beach by the water splashes.<sup>41</sup>

In m. 5, an F5 is played in the pipa after the *tantiao* (*pizzicato* or percussion

sound), anticipating the entrance of the voice. Though it is a half step higher than the

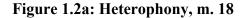
soprano's starting note, it is close enough to be a pitch reference for the singer. Here,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Chen Yi, interview by Hoi Lam Ip (Kansas City, March 15, 2014)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Chen Yi, interview by Hoi Lam Ip (Kansas City, March 15, 2014)

Chen shows how the Beijing Opera-style accompaniment interacts and cues the voice before voice entrances.<sup>42</sup>

*Heterophony* is a term referring to simultaneous variation of a melody. The term is used broadly to describe music from the Middle East or East Asia in which the vocal line is accompanied by the same melody in different rhythmic variations, or with multiple musical embellishments.<sup>43</sup> An example of heterophony in *As in a Dream* can be found in m. 18 (Figure 1.2a).





Here, the main notes in the vocal line are F#5 (Gb5) and G5, while the pipa plays with pitches that are not more than a Major  $2^{nd}$  higher or lower than a G. Though the pipa is playing a completely different melody, it stays within a narrow range, embellishing and yet emphasizing the center note G. Although the zheng started in this measure with notes that are farther away from G, it comes back at beat 3 with a dynamic mark of *f*, articulating and doubling with the G sung in the vocal line. The instrumental technique Chen uses here serves more of a decorative function thickening the texture and keeping

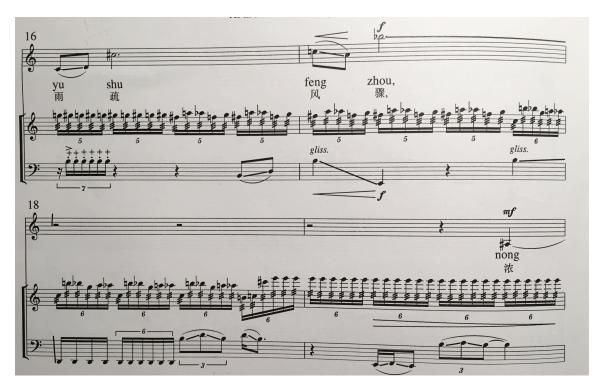
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Cooke, "Heterophony," *Oxford Music Online*, accessed March 2, 2015 http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/12945

the vocal line active. Because the Chinese character in this measure bears a meaning of *boat*, this moving accompaniment design could also suggest the image of a boat floating forward on the water.

Figure 1.2b shows mm. 16-19 of song 2, where the text is *rain and storm swept through the night*. Here, Chen creates an active music background with the pipa. In m. 16 the pipa plays sixteenth-quintuplets within a small compass when the text is about *yu shu* (light rain). The pipa keeps playing this figure until beat 4 of m. 17, where the Major 7th C5 to B5 is intertwined and the rhythm increase to sixteenth sextuplets. The text with this intensification is about the *storm*. At the end of m. 18 the pipa suddenly leaps upward and rapidly repeats the high pitch E5, completing this depiction of the increasing intensity of the storm. The zheng in contrast, plays various figures with *glissando* and *portamento*, perhaps to depict the blowing sounds of the wind to complete the background.

Figure 1.2b: Decorative Compositional Technique, mm. 16-19



Because the two proses of *As in a Dream* are linked with a continuous story line, there are places in the accompaniment that can be traced as connections between the two songs. The depiction of the storm in mm. 16-19 of song 2 is similar to mm. 26-29 of song 1 where the text is about *oars rowing*. Here in song 1 (Figure 1.2c), the pipa is again embellishing the vocal line with its own melody in sixteenth quintuplets, but it stays closer (within a minor 3<sup>rd</sup>) to the pitch of the voice (Bb5). The way the pipa plays in song 1 is similar to mm. 16-18 in song 2 (Figure 1.2b, above), although not playing with a *tremolo* technique. The line being set in each passage conveys motion and activity, of rowing in song 1 and of the storm in song 2. The zheng is also punctuating randomly as well as playing *glissando* and *protamento* as in mm. 15-19 in song 2. Chen uses similar rhythmic figures and techniques in the songs, not only to create a background for the meaning of the text, but also to join the two songs together in a poetic way.

Figure 1.2c: Song 1 mm. 26-29

ff ha 17 zheng 27 du 渡 28 120 C zheng 29 12 du 渡,

When asked about Chinese scales such as the tonal pentatonic, semi-tonal

pentatonic, neutral pentatonic, and pentaphonic scales, Chen said:

I did not follow any mode or specific scales. Instead, I had to change some writing on the instruments because of their nature of the instruments. For example, the zheng can't play chromatic notes according to the tuning system and method. I have to change some pitches in order to make it possible to match the melodic lines.<sup>44</sup>

The open strings of a zheng are fixed to a pentatonic scale. Pipa strings, however, are not

fixed to a certain scale and can play whole tones, semitones, and even <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> tones. In this

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Chen Yi, interview by Hoi Lam Ip (Kansas City, March 15, 2014)

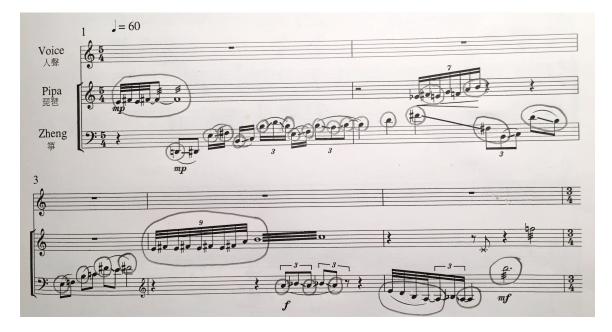
song set, Chen uses only the whole tones and semitones of Western music, but with minor atonal inflections. Chen chose two instruments with distinct tonal natures but with similar acoustic vibrations (both are plucked-strings instruments). In addition, she wrote the zheng in a broader range to give the instrument more tone color to balance with the variety of intervals the pipa can play within a smaller range. Table 2.1 shows the modes that can be played on a 21-string contemporary zheng, the one needed for the work.

Intervallic Arrangement in Western Music
$C \twoheadrightarrow D \twoheadrightarrow E \twoheadrightarrow G \twoheadrightarrow A$
$D \rightarrow E \rightarrow G \rightarrow A \rightarrow C$
$E \rightarrow G \rightarrow A \rightarrow C \rightarrow D$
$G \twoheadrightarrow A \twoheadrightarrow C \twoheadrightarrow D \twoheadrightarrow E$
$A \rightarrow C \rightarrow D \rightarrow E \rightarrow G$

 Table 2.1: Zheng Pentatonic Scale Modes

Figure 1.3 shows the pentatonic content of the introduction of song 1. The pitches E, F#, A, B, and D are circled as notes that are the most repeated and also assigned longer note value. The nearly-pure pentatonicism of this opening immediately establishes the Chinese musical character.

#### **Figure 1.3: Pentatonic Scale**



The Chinese instruments are playing a very significant role in *As in a Dream*, by intermittently bringing out the pentatonic character from the atonal piece. The accompaniment serves a decorative function more than just a harmonizing purpose in the songs, giving the piece a fluttering texture that is created by the unique instrumental techniques. The combination of these Eastern musical elements mentioned, together with the atonal vocal line and the chromaticism applied, creates Chen's East and West fusion compositional style.

#### CHAPTER 4

#### AS IN A DREAM: TONE LANGUAGE AND MELODY

Mandarin Chinese has always been the official language throughout China as well as in Taiwan.<sup>45</sup> In Beijing Opera, however, Mandarin bears a more specialized pronunciation, which emerged from several unique features of dialects spoken only in the provinces Anhui, Hebei, Sichuan, and Suzhou (in which all four tone pitches are more dramatically pronounced in the way they rise and fall).<sup>46</sup> During our interview, Chen Yi discussed not only the melody-speech tone relationship, but also how Beijing Opera pronunciation and intonation link closely together with the Asian impression of the melodies she designed. Different types of Beijing Opera speech will be introduced in this chapter, and the adaptation of a certain pronunciation creates a fusion vocal technique that is specifically needed for Chen's songs.<sup>47</sup>

There are three distinct types of stage speech, or nianbai (traditional Chinese: 唸

### 白), in the vocal art of Beijing Opera:

### 1. Prose Speeches

Prose speeches are monologues and dialogues, or called in Chinese *taici* (traditional Chinese: 台詞). Usually improvised and consisting of more vernacular speech than poetry. Prose speeches are always brief and without form.<sup>48</sup>

2. Classical Poetry

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Elizabeth Wichmann, *Listening to Theatre: The Aural Dimension of Beijing Opera* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), 26.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Ibid. 189.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Ibid. 189.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> Wichmann, *Listening to Theatre*, 48.

Such speeches are quotations from Chinese classical poetry, or called in Chinese *gushi* (traditional Chinese: 古詩). These create a heightened dramatic effect in the opera, and an intentionally incorrect quotation of classical poetry creates a comic effect to the drama. The music always follows the poetic form of the classical poetry.<sup>49</sup>

### 3. Conventionalized Stage Speeches

Conventionalized stage speeches are transition dialogues in between scenes, called in Chinese *chengshi nianbai* (traditional Chinese: 呈示唸白). These speeches provide bridges for entrances, exits, and recapitulations. The three conventionalized stage speeches for these purposes are called prelude poem, set-the-scene poem, and set-the-scene speech, respectively.<sup>50</sup>

Because Chen mentioned that the melodic design of the voice is largely inspired by Beijing Opera stage speech and Mandarin Chinese speech tones, it is important to understand which type of stage speech it fits. Because Qingzhao Li's composition is considered a *Ci* (prose) rather than a *Shi* (poem), the type of Beijing Opera speech in *As in a Dream* matches with prose speech (which is more like a monologue in a play). The following is a conversation between Chen Yi and the author during an interview regarding the melodic design of *As in a Dream*:

### Hoi Lam Ip (Question):

The two songs in *As in a Dream* not only contain a traditional classical Chinese approach, but also sound highly atonal and contemporary. How did you design the melody for these two pieces, and what inspired you when it came to their melodic design?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Ibid, 48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Ibid, 48.

#### Dr. Chen Yi (Answer):

Do you know anything about Beijing Opera? You know in Beijing Opera, besides the actual arias, there is something like the Western Opera recitatives, and we call that *Nianbai* in Chinese. It is not like how we usually talk everyday in Mandarin, but a stage speech to recite in a more exaggerating way.

### H (Q):

So like Spechstimme in German operas?

### **C** (A):

Kind of like that, yes! Dialogues, and they also recite prose in Beijing Operas. It is the over exaggerated tones in Mandarin Chinese that inspired me. I mixed the Mandarin reciting and singing together resulting in this melody and unique singing style. You cannot tell that the melody is from any ancient or classical Chinese repertoire, because this is exactly how it should almost sound when you recite it in the dramatic way in Beijing Opera.

Chinese song art (*quyi*, traditional Chinese:  $\pm \pm$ ), Chinese drama theater, and Chinese reciting speeches in theater inspired me to write not only the melody for these two songs in this set, but also you can find the shadow of it in my other works, even instrumental works. I translated the Chinese reciting singing sound even into instrumental music. Of course you can hear some pentatonic scale tones in my works, but what I mentioned is what makes my music my style.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, according to Chen, the inspiration for the melodies in *As in a Dream* is the recitation of Mandarin Chinese in Beijing Operas as well as the speech tones of Mandarin Chinese. This is suggesting that the pitches of the melodies are closely related to the four tones in Mandarin Chinese pronunciation. Mandarin Chinese is the dialect used in all three versions of *As in a Dream*. Because it is a tone language, the melody needs to be specially designed to the pitch levels and relative intervals of the Chinese words. Tone language is defined by linguist Kenneth L. Pike<sup>52</sup> as "a language having lexically

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> Chen Yi, interview by Hoi Lam Ip (Kansas City, March 15, 2014)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Alan S. Kaye, "Kenneth Pike." *Key Thinkers in Linguistics and the Philosophy of Language*. (Edinburg: Edinburgh University Press, 2005) *Credo Reference, accessed* 27 May 2015.

significant, contrastive, but relative pitch on each syllable.<sup>353</sup> If the musical pitch of each syllable is not assigned by the composer in a close enough manner to the language itself, it can audibly change the meaning of the text.

There are four tones in Mandarin Chinese. The first tone is a high and level tone; the second tone is a tone rising from the middle, which the first and second tones are known as level tones. The third tone falls from a middle tone and then rises; and the fourth tone falls from a higher tone, which these two are known collectively as oblique tones.<sup>54</sup>

Table 3.0 below compares the Mandarin Chinese *Pinyin* speech tones of the six characters in line 1 of the first poem (mm. 6-9) with the tone motion of the assigned notes.

Table 3.0: Tone Mark, Tone Pitch and Intervallic Change Relationship of mm. 6-9

	常	記	溪	亭	日	暮
	Chang	Ji	Qi	Ting	Ri	Wu
Tone Mark	Second	Fourth	First Tone	Second	Fourth	Fourth
	Tone	Tone		Tone	Tone	Tone

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> Fang-Kuei Li, "Language 26 (3)" *Tone languages: A technique for determining the number and type of pitch contrasts in a language, with studies in tonemic substitution and fusion,* 401-03, accessed November 18, 2015, <u>http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/stable/409736</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Aniruddh D. Patel, "Linguistic Sound Systems," *Music, Language, and the Brain* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), 39.

Tone Pitch	Begins in	From	High and	Begins in	From	From
	middle,	high, <u>falls</u>	level	middle,	high, <u>falls</u>	high, <u><b>falls</b></u>
	and <u>rises</u>	to low		and <u>rises</u>	to low	to low
	high			high		
Notes Assigned	Eb <b>→</b> F	E natural	C → D	Eb <b>→</b> Db	E natural	F# <b>→</b> E#
		<b>→</b> B		→ Eb		
Intervallic Change	Major 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Perfect 4 <sup>th</sup>	Major 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Major 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Level	Minor 2 <sup>nd</sup>
	<u>Up</u>	<u>Down</u>	<u>Up</u>	Down →		Down_
				Major 2 <sup>nd</sup>		
				Up		

The tone pitches go in the following order in line 1,

 $up \rightarrow down \rightarrow level \rightarrow up \rightarrow down \rightarrow down,$ 

and the intervallic relationships among the assigned notes also change in a similar motion in the following order,

 $up \rightarrow down \rightarrow up \rightarrow up \rightarrow level \rightarrow down.$ 

There are only two different motions (within 2nds), but since these are within small

intervals, they still retain the meaning of the texts.

Figure 2.0 is the musical setting of line 4 in As in a Dream (song 1), and below

(Figure 2.1) are the speech tone marks of its pronunciation in order.

Figure 2.0: As in a Dream (song 1) Line 4, mm. 19-21



Figure 2.1: As in a Dream (song 1), Line 4 Tone Marks



In Figure 2.1 above it is easy to see similar pitch motion between the melody and the speech. In the first two characters, wu and ru are both associated with tone four, in which tones fall. This shape is reflected in the melody in that Ab4 $\rightarrow$ G4 and Ab4 $\rightarrow$ F4 are both falling tones. *Ou* is associated with tone three, which is a turning tone, indicating that it needs to be followed by a higher pitch at the end of the word. In the melody the 9th leap from E4 to F#5 fulfills the speech-tone rule. *Hua* and *shen* are both associated with the first level tones, and the pitches in the melody remain the same. Last but not least, *chu*, which is a tone-four character, has a falling oblique tone quality, and the notes in the melody descend accordingly.

It is very important that the motion of the melody follow the speech tones. For example, the word *bi* (pen) means a pen only when it is associated with the first-level tone; it has a completely different meaning, as *nose*, if it is associated with the second-rising tone.

Beijing Opera speech is based on the four basic tones in Mandarin Chinese, and thus level tones and oblique tones together result in poetic patterns in the lyrics. A basic practice of Chinese poetry is that the last word of each couplet in a poem or a prose always ends with the same quality of tone.<sup>55</sup>

Table 3.1 shows the associated tones and tone patterns of the texts in *As in a Dream* (song 1).

# Table 3.1, As in a Dream (song 1): Tone Patterns

Line1:			
常記	溪亭	日暮,	(2)L-(4)O-(1)L-(2)L-(4)O-(4)O,
Chang-ji	xi-ting	ri-mu,	
Line2:			
沉醉	不知	歸路。	(2)L-(4)O-(4)O-(1)L-(1)L-(4)O,
Chen-zui	bu-zhi	gui-lu.	
Line3:			
興盡	晚回舟,		(1)L-(4)O-(3)O-(2)L-(1)L,
Xing-jin	wan-hui-	zhou,	
Line4:			
誤入	藕花	深處。	(4)O-(4)O-(3)O-(1)L-(1)L-(4)O,
Wu-ru	ou-hua	shen-chu.	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Wichmann, *Listening to Theatre*, 44.

Line5:			
爭渡,	爭渡,		(1)L-(4)O, (1)L-(4)O,
Zheng-du	, zheng-du	, ,	
Line6:			
驚起	一灘	鷗鷖	(1)L-(3)O-(1)L-(1)L-(1)L-(4)O
jing-qi	yi-tan	ou-lu.	

Chen pays attention to these poetic tone patterns in her composition, in that all musical phrases of the three couplets end with descending tone pitches. Besides the consideration of speech-tones, poetic tone patterns, and the intervallic relationships among words, Chen also designed the vocal line for purposes of word painting. She uses large vocal leaps in the two songs only a few times, and only where she wants to emphasize important words. Figure 2.2a shows how this compositional technique is applied.

Figure 2.2a: As in a Dream (song 2), Large Leap, m. 17



*Feng-zhou*, which means *storm* in English, is one of the most dramatic words in the prose. Chen sets these two words with a minor 9th leap together with a *crescendo*, creating an extremely dramatic effect. The word *feng* is in tone 4, a falling tone; whereas

*zhou* is in tone 1 ,a level tone. Again, the direction of the melody clearly indicates and matches with the speech tones of the text.

Another place where Chen uses big leaps to word-paint the text is within line 6 (song 1), which bears the meaning of *water splashes while the gulls and egrets flinch*. There is a *crescendo* to *ff* followed by a big leap for the words *yi tan, which* means *a whole bunch of* in m. 33 (Figure 2.2b). The measure is followed by a sudden dynamic change to *p*, and the words *ou lu*, which means *seagulls and egrets* are assigned the same pitch followed by a descending minor- $2^{nd}$  *portamento*. Chen explained in the interview the reason behind this contrasting dynamic and intervallic change: she wants to show how *a whole bunch of* birds are scared away by the splashing water described in line 5.





The word *fei* in Chinese means *abundant* (Figure 2.3). In m. 56 (Figure 2.4), Chen compares the word *shou (famine)* which bears a contrasting meaning to *fei*. The composer uses a leap of an augmented 9th with a *pianissimo* dynamic mark to create a contrasting effect. In this case, *lu* is in tone 4, a falling tone, which matches with the melodic design of the word; however, *fei*, in tone 2, is a rising tone while the syllable is only sustained. Here, the leap up from a lower note implies the rising tone.

### Figure 2.3: As in a Dream (song 2), Large Leaps 2, m. 53



Figure 2.4: As in a Dream (song 2), m. 56



Because most of the song is in the higher register, it stands out when a passage goes down into a lower register. The words in mm. 19-21 are *nong-shui* (Figure. 2.5), which means *deep sleep*. It makes total sense for Chen to dip into the lower register to describe the meaning.

Figure 2.5: As in a Dream (song 2), Low Register, m. 20



In Figure 2.6, the text *zhi-fou*, *zhi-fou*? is a question that means *are you sure*? *are you sure*? In Chinese, questions are inflected the same way as in English, so the speech tone needs to be raised at the end. *Zhi-fou* is repeated as it is in the poem, and the composer appropriately assigns an ascending *portamento* at the end of each iteration.

Figure 2.6: As in a Dream (song 2), Portamento Up as Raised Tone, m. 43



As shown in Figure 2.7, Chen applies appoggiaturas to the word *hong* (which means *red*) and reiterates its vowel with repeated notes. This setting could be Chen's way of indicating that there is more than one flower. Appoggiaturas have not been used very often during the set, and so it can be seen that Chen uses these ornaments to purposely "decorate" the *flowers*. Moreover, this stuttering singing technique is how important words are emphasized in Beijing Opera, and it is named as *tuoyin* 拖音. One interpretation of *tuoyin* is that the same note is repeated with accents to exaggerate and bring out the importance of the word.

Figure 2.7: As in a Dream (song 2), Musical Embellishments as Flowers, m. 55



Figure 2.8 shows another version of *tuoyin* seen in *As in a Dream*, this one depicting the word *zui* (*drunk*) with a fluctuating figure. Chen uses portamento a lot to portray the drunkenness throughout the songs. The word *zui* (*drunk*) is sung intertwining between a D4 and a C#4, resembling how a drunken person walks.

Figure 2.8: As in a Dream (song 1), Musical Embellishment Tuoyin, m. 10



Chen considered several aspects regarding her melodic design for the vocal line in *As in a Dream*. The Mandarin Chinese speech tone gives the line a direction of whether it should rise or fall. It not only brings the vocal sound closer to the spoken sound, but also associates the voice with atonal characteristic. The dramatic leaps and melismatic *tuoyin* are not only often found in Beijing Opera, but also word painting the songs in a different approach, unifying the musical style of the entire set.

### **CHAPTER 5**

### AS IN A DREAM: VOCAL ARTS AND TECHNIQUES

Chen's vocal technique has been described as a half-sung style.<sup>56</sup> How it should be interpreted has to do with the different voice types and the actual vocal sound quality required in Beijing Opera. In this chapter, an interview with soprano Rao Lan will be presented, and futher explanation of the fusion vocal technique in *As in a Dream* will be offered. In Chinese singing, an exotic sound is produced by tightened lips and by the use of nasal resonance. A brief look at ancient Chinese women's etiquette will explain why tightened lips are used in the art of Beijing Opera singing. Also, a brief performer's guide will present a different approach to diction in Chinese singing and will describe the nasal quality found in the fusion vocal technique.

In traditional Beijing Opera, there are two distinct types of sound that can be heard: *singing* and *reading*, or in Chinese *changbai* (traditional Chinese: 唱白) and *shengyue* (traditional Chinese: 聲樂).<sup>57</sup> The vocal mechanism in Beijing opera is basically the same as in Western operatic singing in respect to breath support and production. However, to Western opera and music listeners, the Beijing vocal style still sounds unique when compared to the rich and rounded *bel canto* vocal style they are accustomed to.

In the Oxford Music Dictionary, the definition of the Italian term bel canto is:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Zhang, "An in fusion of eastern and western music styles into art song." Cheryl Ann Melfi,
"An investigation of selected works by Chen Yi" (D.M.A diss., The University of Arizona, 2005),
44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Wichmann, *Listening to Theatre*, 196.

Italian vocal style of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the qualities of which include perfect legato production throughout the range, the use of a light tone in the higher registers and agile and flexible delivery. More narrowly, it is sometimes applied exclusively to Italian opera of the time of Rossini, Bellini and Donizetti. In either case, bel canto is usually set in opposition to the development of a weightier, more powerful and speech- inflected style associated with German opera and Wagner in particular.<sup>58</sup>

*Bel canto* vocal style is always associated with *legato* line and lightness in the upper register. It is about the rich and rounded sound produced: pure and bright, with open vowels and an even *vibrato*. In Western opera, there are several voice types, basically categorized into four female voice (soprano, mezzo-soprano, alto, contralto) and four male voice (tenor, baritone, bass, and in older times, the castrato). Voice types in Western opera can also be divided into more specific voice categories by the German *Fach* system, which classifies based on their timbre, strength, and characteristics.<sup>59</sup> In Beijing Opera, however, different voices are attached to certain types of theatrical roles. Chen Yi in composing *As in a Dream* considered these vocal stereotypes, and the following is a discussion of voices, roles, and the historical and traditional background of Beijing Opera.

#### Sheng

*Sheng* characters are usually the standard male roles in Beijing Opera. They are dignified, with high social status, and are divided into older *sheng* and martial *sheng*. Older *sheng* characters are like faithful retainers, scholars, and masters, and they get most of the attention and respect in a play; younger or martial *sheng* are warriors and bandits.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Owen Jander and Ellen T. Harris, "Bel Canto." *Oxford Music Online*, accessed March 4, 2015. <u>http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/02551?q</u> <u>=bel canto&search=quick&pos=1&\_start=1 - firsthit</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Pearl Yeadon McGinnis and Willis Marith McGinnis, *The Opera Singer's Career Guide Understanding the European Fach System* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2010), 20.

Martial *sheng* can also be subcategorized into high-ranking martial *sheng* (*changkao*) and lower-ranking martial *sheng* (*duanda*). Both martial roles in this category dance more, and the older *sheng* roles sing more.<sup>60</sup>

### Dan

Even though all roles in the ancient Beijing Opera were supposed to be played by men, *dan* characters are the principal female role types and can be subcategorized into older *dan*, blue cloth *dan*, flower *dan*, and martial *dan*. Older *dan* are equivalent to the older *sheng* in that they deserve more social respect, and they are older characters. Blue cloth *dan* characters are middle-aged women; they also receive much respect. Flower *dan* characters are like the younger *sheng* characters, that they are in the lower social classes and are younger. These are the more humorous, attractive, and flirtatious roles, and flower *dan* characters are always assigned more singing parts. Last but not least is martial *dan*, having the same social status as martial *sheng*, but given a larger portion of dance.<sup>61</sup>

## Jing

*Jing*, or *painted-face* in Beijing Opera, are characters with supernatural powers who are normally played by men. The role is called the *painted-face* because the makeup for the role is usually designed with eye-catching bright colors and striking graphics. The role can be subcategorized into great-painted-face *jing*, supporting *jing*, and martial *jing*. Only great-painted-face *jing* is more of a singing role, while the other two are dancing roles.<sup>62</sup>

#### Chou

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Wichmann, *Listening to Theatre*, 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Ibid. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Ibid. 10.

*Chou* is an important supporting character, because this role does a lot of *ad lib*, improvisation, and even talking directly to the audience to explain and introduce the scenes. This character almost always plays the role of narrator, which is not considered a leading part. *Chou* characters are humorous, and for that reason the role is also known as the *clown*. There are three types of *chou*: the civil *chou*, the martial *chou*, and the *chou dan*, of which only *chou dan* is a female role. The whole role type is considered an *ugly character* associated with low social status. *Chou dan*'s makeup style features small eyes and a big mouth and her face is always painted with large red circles on her cheeks. It is a role that is primarily spoken and dance acted in the opera.<sup>63</sup>

Beijing Opera voice types are generally divided into only two large categories, which are the *small* or *false voice* and the *large* or *true voice*. From the perspective of Western vocal technique, there are two primary registers distinguished as low and high. These two registers are comparable to the *small* and *large* voice types, but the subcategories of these are based on the roles being sung. Songs and speeches of female characters remain in the feminine vocal register, applying a *falsetto* voice, using *small* or *false voice*. The singing of male characters, however, is mainly *large* or *true voice*, or, in vocal terms, the *chest voice*. It is a vocal technique that males apply when singing in their lower range, and sometimes female singers do so as well in some rather low registers.<sup>64</sup> *Large or true voice* creates a distinctively contrasting timbre: a brighter, more solid, powerful and even metallic sound, compared to the *small* or *false voice*, giving the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Ibid. 11

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> J.B. Steane, "Chest Voice" *Oxford Music Dictionary*, accessed March 5, 2015, <u>http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/O005564</u> ?q=chest+voice&search=quick&pos=1&\_start=1#firsthit

impression to the audience that the *large* or *true voice* characters are more dominant, and with more authority and power.

The *small* or *false voice* in Beijing Opera is the same *falsetto* technique applied in Western opera. *Falsetto* results when the vibrating folds are shortened, thus creating an artificial high voice. It is also a technique known commonly as the second mode of phonation, and can be applied to the female voice as well.<sup>65</sup> However, it is usually commented by listeners that the sound of someone singing in a *small* or *false* voice sounds totally different when compared to the equivalent technique performed in Western opera. The source of this difference is something that is related to Chinese cultural virtue and etiquette.

### **Chinese Cultural Virtue and Etiquette**

Traditionally, women were supposed to stay home to take care of household responsibilities. Both unmarried and married women historically were instructed to follow an exact code of etiquette and to behave in a conservative fashion. Women had to look straight ahead when walking, and sit up straight without shaking the knees. They had to control their emotions by not laughing out loud, and when they spoke, they spoke quietly. Most importantly they could not show their teeth, so the proper manner for women was to keep their teeth within their lips when they talked.<sup>66</sup>

When one listens to Beijing Opera and a *small* or *false voice* is heard, the first impression is that it sounds very nasal and even squeaky. The reason behind this pinched

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Peter Giles, "Falsetto" Oxford Music Dictionary, accessed March 5, 2015 <u>http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/09270?q</u> <u>=falsetto&search=quick&pos=1& start=1#firsthit.</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>66</sup> Zhao Ban and Esther E. Jerman Baldwin, *The Chinese Book of Etiquette and Conduct for Women and Girls, Entitled: Instruction for Chinese Women and Girls* (New York: Eaton & Mains, 1900)

sound is that all *small* or *false voice* singers as young *dan* characters are required to sing with their mouths nearly closed, especially when they are playing a female roles. These young *dan* characters are younger, carefree, unmarried, rural, and lower-class women and they were all expected to follow the rules of female etiquette. In *Listening to Theater*, Elisabeth Wichmann mentions:

...young dan roles require that the teeth rarely be shown and the mouth never open wide, these sounds enhance visual aesthetics as well.<sup>67</sup>

Hence in a traditional Beijing Opera, female roles are always performed according to traditional Chinese etiquette. This is also why when they sing, *the mouth never open wide and the teeth rarely shown* is an applied rule explaining why there is a difference in sound between Western opera *falsetto* and Beijing Opera female role singing.<sup>68</sup>

The *large or true voice* is also known as the *chest voice* register in Western vocal terminology. It differs in quality from the *small* or *false voice* and is used by singers for male characters only. Like *chest voice* or *voce di petto*, it has sympathetic vibration in the chest, resulting a darker, more resonant timbre that is also louder and lower in pitch compared to the *small* or *false voice*.<sup>69</sup> The masculine quality of this voice is one of the most important traits of the Beijing Opera arts. As Elisabeth Wichmann describes it,

...the mouth must be fully open; that such sounds are considered very appropriate for the large – voice, male melodic – passage role types perhaps indicates that an open mouth is a sign of masculine strength.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Wichmann, *Listening to Theatre*, 214.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> "Voce Di Petto" Oxford Music Dictionary, accessed March 5, 2015.

http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/52464?q =chest voice&search=quick&pos=4&\_start=1#firsthit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Wichmann, *Listening to Theatre*,  $2\overline{18}$ .

The art of Beijing Opera could be compared to a combination of the *yin* and the *yang*. In this case, the *yin* is represented by the female voice, the *small* or *false voice*, and the *yang* is represented by the male voice, the stronger *large* or *true voice*.<sup>71</sup> Table 4.0 shows the association of the Beijing Opera roles with the two primary voice types.

Table 4.0: Association of Role Types and Voice Types

Small/ false – voice Small/ false – voice Small/ false – voice
Small/ false – voice
~ 11/ 4.1
<i>Small/false</i> – voice (exception)
Small/false – voice (exception)
<i>Large/ true</i> – voice (exception)
<i>Large/ true –</i> voice
<i>Large/ true –</i> voice
<i>Large/ true –</i> voice
Large/ true – voice

The basic vocal elements in Beijing Opera are the speech sound from *reading* (*changbai*) and the song sound from *singing* (*shengyue*). Chen Yi combines these elements together to form a fusion vocal technique with characteristics of Mandarin

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Eva Wong, *Harmonizing Yin and Yang: The Dragon-Tiger Classic* (Boston: Shambhala, 1997), 5.

Chinese speech tones.<sup>72</sup> In the early 20th century, Arnold Schoenberg and Alban Berg devised a vocal technique known as *Sprechstimme* or *Sprechgesang*, which intermediates between speech and song, or which can also be simply described as half-singing.<sup>73</sup> This particular device has always caused some limitation in composition since the speaking range is much narrower than the singing range. However, Chen's *As in a Dream* displays quite a wide range because she is not only fusing the techniques of singing with a normal speaking sound in Mandarin Chinese, but she also incorporates theatrical speech sound from Beijing Opera, which entails very exaggerated ups and downs in tones.

*As in a Dream* was composed for soprano voice, and this voice type is automatically associated with *dan* roles (*younger female*) and *small* or *false voice* in Bejing Opera. However, the traditional etiquette of singing without showing the teeth should not be considered throughout the whole piece since the wide vocal range requires relaxed lips and jaw to achieve.

Before Chen began writing *As in a Dream*, Rao Lan mailed her a note with a scale that showed her range and indicated which notes were her best, making the piece tailormade not only for sopranos, but also particularly for her.<sup>74</sup> The following are some questions from an interview with Rao, for whom the song set was composed and who premiered the work. The interview explored her views of the fusion vocal techniques.

#### Rao Lan's Perspective on the Vocal Techniques in As in a Dream

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>72</sup> Wichmann, *Listening to Theatre*, 177.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Paul Griffiths, "Sprechgesang." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed September 15, 2015,

http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/26465

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Rao Lan, interview by Hoi Lam Ip (Hong Kong, July 20, 2014)

#### Hoi Lam Ip (Question):

How would you describe the vocal technique you used when you performed *As in a Dream*?

#### Rao Lan (Answer):

There are four different types of vocal concepts in Bejing opera – recitation, which is like recitative in Western opera; prose dialogue, which is like *Sprechstimme* in German opera; songs with accompaniment, which is like arias; and last but not least vocalization for dramatic expression.

### H: (Question)

I understand the first three concepts of singing. However, did you combine all of the first three for the whole set when you sang it? Also, would you mind further explaining what vocalization for dramatic expression is and where we can see that in the pieces?

#### R: (Answer)

Yes, I did combine all three concepts, but most important of all you need to bear in mind that you are singing in Mandarin Chinese but not in any other languages. Even though in traditional Beijing opera, singers tend to sing with less space in their mouths, I would suggest that it is most important to keep projecting the sound towards your upper front dental to create a more forward sound. Beijingstyle Mandarin Chinese has a more backward sound to it and there is also a lot of rolled tongue positions when it comes to pronouncing syllables like *zh*, *chi*, *shi*, and *ri*. Even though the piece is inspired by the vocal art of Beijing opera, it is still recommeded to put the sound in a placement that is more towards the front of the mouth; otherwise, it would be really difficult to sing through those leaps and to make it more comprehensible to listeners. In traditional Beijing opera, the melodic design is more stepwise, and the range is not as wide as in this set. Chen wrote the piece for me, and according to my sketch of range and best sounding tones.

Vocalization for dramatic expression is like how actors and actresses cry, laugh, and cough, etc in Beijing opera. However, the way they act is not through the normal way but utilizing the art of *tuoyin* to depict that. We can see those places evidently in both songs of the set, but m. 18 in *As in a Dream* (song 1) is a very representable one (Figure 3.0).

### Figure 3.0: As in a Dream (song 1), Tuoyin Example, m. 18



### H: (Question)

One question about the *tuoyin* technique since you mentioned that it is a way to express crying, coughing, and laughing, etc. Here in m. 18, the Chinese character *zhou* means a boat. How would you explain why Chen wants to assign a *tuoyin* to the word boat in this case?

### R: (Answer)

There are certain role types in Beijing opera that sing more *tuoyin* than others. That is the art of traditional Chinese vocal art because the assignment of *tuoyin* in a voice part could mean that the character in general likes to laugh or cry. Sometimes it does not necessarily relate directly to the text like word painting in Western art songs, but instead it is a general depiction of the characters.

#### H: (Question)

That makes a lot of sense, and it really differentiates Chinese vocal art from Western vocal art. One question about vocal production: would you say that it is any different from Western vocal production?

#### R: (Answer)

No. Everything is basically the same, especially breath control. In traditional Beijing opera, the sound produced may be a little more nasal because the placement of the voice is placed very much in the nasal cavity, and sometimes it is required to breathe through the nose as well. However, even though it is suggested to sing in a less Beijing Opera way, the way you interpret Chinese diction, still changes the overall sound produced.

### H: (Question)

What do you think is the most challenging when it comes to singing through this set? And what do Western singers need to pay attention to when they sing this set?

#### R: (Answer)

One very important note for Western singers is that we always tend to lengthen and sustain the first vowel when there is a diphthong in a word, and it is almost like a rule when singing in English. However, it could be totally different when it comes to singing in Mandarin Chinese. The same rule applies to some of the words with diphthongs, but it is not a universal rule to all Chinese characters. In some cases like the word flower, *hua*, the vowel [a] will need to be sustained so when you sing the word *hua*, it goes right into the [a] and passes the [u] vowel quickly. In some cases like the word return, *gui*, both vowels almost share the value of the note evenly. Otherwise could change the meaning of the texts completely. Once again it has proven that it is very important for singers to really study a language before they sing it, and so they understand truly the nature, meaning, and the characteristics of the language.<sup>75</sup>

#### A Performer's Guide for As in a Dream

### Vocal Technique and The Language, Mandarin Chinese

Vocalists always start learning a piece from studying the pronunciation of the language. When one has gotten used to singing in West Germanic languages like English or in other European/ Romance languages, one might attempt to apply vocal technique rules for those other languages to *As in a Dream*. It is very important that when preparing to sing in any tone languages one should pay attention to the direction in tone pitches. For example, whether the word falls from a high pitch, rises to a high pitch, or returns to the starting pitch (after rising or falling), determines the meaning of the word one delivers.

Assuming that a prose/ poem is set syllabically, the singer should be responsible for performing a natural slight pitch change matching with tone pitches in the text unless

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Rao Lan, interview by Hoi Lam Ip (Hong Kong, July 20, 2014)

it is in the first-level speech tone. The way Chen designed the melody for voice makes it an easier task to sing in a way that makes sense out of the text. When preparing to sing in Mandarin Chinese and encountering a diphthong while sustaining a note, one should not sustain on the first vowel but go right into the second vowel. In the case of ending a diphthong with a consonant one should, on the contrary, sustain the note on the second vowel. In the case of having a nasal consonant ending a diphthong, one should neither sustain the first vowel nor the second vowel of the diphthong for too long. Instead sustaining on the [n] or [ng] a little longer, just like how the word should be pronounced in speech, is the ideal Chinese diction rule. However, as in many other languages, there are also many exceptions when it comes to pronunciation, which changes these rules.

Table 4.1 shows more examples of vocal rules for singing in Mandarin Chinese,

Chinese Word	Example from <i>As in a Dream</i>	Solution
Scenario		
Consonant(s) + 1 vowel	Xi (in line 1 of	Sustain on the vowel
	song 1)	
Consonant(s) + 1 Vowel + Consonant(s)	Chang (in line 1 of song 1)	Sustain mainly on the vowel and also little on the consonant(s) if nasal
Consonant(s) + Diphthong	Zui (in line 2 of song 1)	Sustain mainly on second vowel
Consonant(s) + Diphthong + Consonant(s)	<i>juan</i> (line 3 of song 2)	Sustain mainly on second vowel and also a little on the ending consonant if nasal

 Table 4.1: Vocal Guide to Mandarin Chinese Singing

### **Vocal Placement**

Rao mentioned in the interview that *As in a Dream* should be sung in a more Westernized and less nasal way. However, one very important aspect that affects production of a vocal sound is the starting consonant. In Mandarin Chinese in Beijing, starting consonants like [zh], [ch], [sh] and [r] sound more backward in the mouth because of the position of the rolled tongue. Singers should always remember to vocally project more forward, and to place the sound towards the front dental, for words associated with the rolled-tongue consonant(s).

# Tuoyin in Soprano Melody and Expressiveness

Chen's melodic design mimics Beijing Opera melodic style and emphasizes the nature of the tone language, Mandarin Chinese. Depiction of the text is accomplished by the instrumental parts and other word-painting devices in the vocal line. The personality and emotion of the roles should be delivered precisely in the *tuoyin* figures as Rao has mentioned in the interview. The energy and intensity of the voice should not be timid during the *tuoyin* figures, but instead should always be meaningful and associated with the personality and the general state of mind of the character.

#### CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

Chen Yi came to the United States from China to further her studies in music and subsequently taught at American universities and conservatories. She brought with her an extensive background in Eastern music. In *As in a Dream* she has applied traditional Chinese musical techniques and styles that are not common in most Western works, including pentatonic modes, heterophonic accompaniment, and sound effects created by the Chinese instruments and the voice. She has inserted Chinese folk music and idioms found in Beijing Opera by her use of traditional instruments and vocal techniques. The free form and structure of the ancient Song *Ci* (prose) *As in a Dream*, by Qingzhao Li, allowed the composer to be creative in her structural design, which resulted in a distinctive combination of two musical cultures.

### The Accompaniment

The accompaniment in *As in a Dream* supports and decorates the vocal line. For example in m. 20 (Figure 4.0) the zheng is playing an E4 repeatedly while the voice sustains the same pitch; in the same measure, the pipa plays a big leap up, not with the same pitches but in the same manner and direction as the voice. The different rhythmic patterns not only divide the song clearly into contrasting sections, but also create different backgrounds for the text. The instrumental parts also interact with and complement the voice in a way that anticipates starting pitches. Figure 4.0 shows how this anticipation is evident in the song. The pipa plays a G-natural with a mordent on beat 7 of m. 20,

anticipating the pitch in the next measure of the voice part. The musical ornament makes the G standout, appropriate for its function as a cue.

The accompaniment also imitates the voice as an echo, emphasizing and highlighting the more important words. An example is in m. 20 (Figure 4.0), where there is a big ascending leap in the voice. Both the pipa and the zheng imitate the singer in a similar leaping manner in the same measure and in m. 22 (Figure 4.1). Moreover, there are some agitated rhythmic patterns associated with action and emotion in the prose, and they interact with the voice. In Figure 4.0, the accompaniment becomes more active when the voice is resting (m. 19, beat 3-4) and when it is only sustaining a note (m. 20, beat 4-7).

#### The Instruments and their Tunning

Plucked string instruments are used to accompany lyric characters when they sing and act on the Beijing Opera stage. Throughout *As in a Dream*, the pipa and the zheng players wear artificial fingernails to play, resulting in a dry but vivid sound. Because sustained notes cannot be performed on the two Chinese instruments, repeated notes, rapid rhythmic figures, *tremolos* and ornaments are present throughout the entire set. In the passage shown in Figure 4.0, there are no sustained notes. Notes with a value longer than an eighth are accompanied with an ornament or more commonly used, a *tremolo* to extend the note value. This consistent compositional technique (limited by the nature of the instruments) gives the piece its unique sound texture and style.

In Figure 4.0a, pentatonic scale can be found as E, F#, A, B, and D in the zheng. When the three parts are combined together, 11 of 12 tones are present (except D#), making the passage almost fully chromatic. In *As in a Dream*, a pentatonic mode can be constantly heard in the zheng since the instrument is tuned to a pentatonic scale. The nature of the pipa, however, allows it to play whole, half, and <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> tones filling in the notes that are left out by the zheng and the voice. The limited pitches of the zheng makes it stand apart from the other two parts, and it is essential in giving this work its Eastern flavor.

Figure 4.0: As in a Dream (song 1) (1994), mm. 19-21.

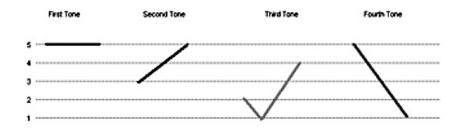


Figure 4.1: As in a Dream (song 1) (1994), m. 22.



### **Speech Tones and Melodic Design**

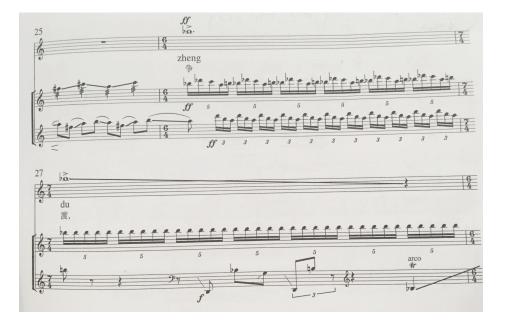
The four speech tones of Mandarin Chinese are summarized in Figure 4.2



**Figure 4.2: Speech Tone Diagram** 

In the passage shown in Figure 4.3, it is apparent that Chen musically designed the voice part to match the rise and fall of the tones. The first Chinese character (*zheng*) is set with a dotted whole note sung *ff*, matching the sustained character of the spoken leveltone pitch (tone 1). The accompaniment is more agitated when the voice is resting, or when it is only sustaining on a longer note. The setting of *zheng du* in mm. 26-27 is repeated with slight variation in mm. 28-29. In both versions the voice sustains high notes at *ff* while the instruments play rapid sixteenth quintuplets and triplets simultaneously, creating the most complex rhythmic patterns of the entire work. This setting of *rowing the oars* conveys anxiety in the voice and agitation in the instruments, which interpret the words in a way that associates the text with the protagonist's longing and her desire to find her way home.

#### Figure 4.3: As in a Dream (song 1) (1994), mm. 25-27.



The word *du* is in tone 4, a falling-tone character. Chen sets it with a *glissando* down an octave from Bb5, appropriate to the falling tone of the text. As the pitch falls, it not only matches the falling speech-tone, but also suggests a decrease in physical energy from rowing the oars repeatedly. The pipa is still playing steady quintuplets in m. 27, while the zheng plays rhythmic figures already interspersed since the beginning of the song, suggesting that the protagonist is lost and her level of anxiety has steadily risen to this peak.

These music examples illustrate why it is important to understand why the text was set in a certain way and to acknowledge the dramatic function of the accompaniment, which can lead to better collaboration with the instruments. Appropriate interpretation of the diction in Mandarin Chinese singing is also essential in bringing out the exact meaning of the texts.

#### The Fusion Vocal Technique

Chen's fusion vocal technique is an exceptional concept that makes her music unique. The Chinese cultural characteristics found in the vocal technique of *As in a Dream* are derived from Beijing Opera prose speech and make the work sound exotic to most foreign ears outside of Mandarin-speaking countries. To those who are not familiar with Chinese traditional vocal arts, the characteristic rolled-tongue and nasal sound of Mandarin Chinese, and the different diction of the language, produce an obvious comparison to *Spechstimme*. An understanding of Chinese pronunciation and enunciation and how vowels and consonants should be treated is essential.

The Chinese instruments themselves give *As in a Dream* a major Asian flavor; however, the array of chromatic pitches played by the instruments associates the work with a more-Western sound. Chen Yi's unique East and West fusion is also evident in the vocal technique of *As in a Dream*. The vocal line is so modern and virtuosic that it requires extensions of the basic Chinese vocal technique to perform the dramatic wide range of notes. Although Chinese vocal art is still not very popular in the United States, study of such works as *As in a Dream* might encourage Western musicians to seek out not only other works by Chen Yi, but also other music with Eastern elements.

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### Videography

Chen Yi. *As in a Dream for soprano and zheng*. Performed by Feinan Wang and Yu-chen Wang at UMKC Musica Nova concert <<u>http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P741JvtdvAI></u>

(Performance of which As in a Dream version III was written for)

# APPENDIX A

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# APPENDIX B

SHORT CONSENT TEMPLATE – CHEN YI

### Short Consent Template

STUDY TITLE: Analysis and Investigation of Chen Yi's Bright Moonlight and As in a Dream, and Zhou Long's Emperor's New Suit and A Poetess' Lament, in Musical and Vocal Style and the Emergence of Chinese Musical Elements in the Pieces

My name is Hoi Lam, Ip (Helena), and I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor David Britton, Dr. Amy K. Holbrook, and Professor Russell Ryan in the Department of Music at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to investigate the musical and vocal style, structure, background, etc. of Dr. Chen Yi's vocal pieces, "As in a Dream" and "Bright Moonlight", and Dr. Zhou Long's vocal pieces, "Emperor's New Suit" and "A Poetess' Lament". An investigation of the approach of borrowing conceptions from ancient Chinese poetry, and emerging particular Chinese cultural elements and sound into Western music will also be discussed. The cultural background of both composers and their pieces will also be researched, discussed, evaluated and explained with the connections of their works. An interview with both composers is designed and appointed to get to a better understanding of their approaches, personal interpretation of the pieces, as well as the messages associated with these works.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve approximately a less - than - 2 - hour interview of questions only related to the chosen pieces - Bright Moonlight, As in a Dream, Emperor's New Suit, and Poetess' Lament. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty, and there are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

I would like to video record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study

By signing below you are agreeing to be part of the study.

Name: Dr. Chen, Yi

Signature:

Date: 3/15 2014

# APPENDIX C

SHORT CONSENT TEMPLATE - RAO LAN

### Short Consent Template

STUDY TITLE: Analysis and Investigation of Chen Yi's *Bright Moonlight* and *As in a Dream*, and Zhou Long's *Emperor's New Suit* and *A Poetess' Lament*, in Musical and Vocal Style and the Emergence of Chinese Musical Elements in the Pieces

My name is Hoi Lam, Ip (Helena), and I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor David Britton, Dr. Amy K. Holbrook, and Professor Russell Ryan in the Department of Music at Arizona State University. 1 am conducting a research study to investigate the musical and vocal style, structure, background, etc. of Dr. Chen Yi's vocal pieces, "*As in a Dream*" and "*Bright Moonlight*", and Dr. Zhou Long's vocal pieces, "*Emperor's New Suit*" and "*A Poetess' Lament*". An investigation of the approach of borrowing conceptions from ancient Chinese poetry, and emerging particular Chinese cultural elements and sound into Western music will also be discussed. The cultural background of both composers and their pieces will also be researched, discussed, evaluated and explained with the connections of their works. An interview with both composers is designed and appointed to get to a better understanding of their approaches, personal interpretation of the pieces, as well as the messages associated with these works.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve approximately a less – than – 2 – hour interview of questions only related to the chosen pieces – *Bright Moonlight, As in a Dream, Emperor's New Suit, and Poetess' Lament.* You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty, and there are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

I would like to record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do <u>not</u> want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

Last but not least, the result from this interview will be used in my final research project for my Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in the Arizona State University. Your name will be mentioned, and the content of this interview will be quoted. You have the right to make changes, or even not to approve this.

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study

By signing below you are agreeing to be part of the study.

Name: Rao Lan

Signature:

Kaden

Date: 23. Juni 2014