

But we should not be ungracious. Professor Teiser has given us a marvelous study of an important text—a landmark in philological and interpretive excellence. The development of purgatory is now much clearer thanks to his study of *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*. He has navigated through diverse genres and numerous fields in order to bring this slice of the medieval world into clearer focus.

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WITZLEBEN, J. LAWRENCE. *"Silk and Bamboo" Music in Shanghai: The Jiangnan Sizhu Instrumental Ensemble Tradition*. Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 1995. xxii + 197 pages. Illustrations, figures, musical examples, appendices, glossary, bibliography, discography, index. Cloth US\$35.00; ISBN 0-87338-499-7.

The study of Chinese music appears to be experiencing an unprecedented boom recently. Important new monographs are appearing almost every year, and journals such as *CHIME* and *CHINOPERL* continue to publish a stream of fieldwork reports, analyses, and ethnographical studies. J. Lawrence Witzleben's account of *Jiangnan sizhu* in Shanghai constitutes another invaluable addition to our growing knowledge of Chinese music. Well written, researched both in the field and in the library, and informed by impeccable scholarship, *"Silk and Bamboo" Music in Shanghai* offers something for almost any reader. Those interested in the history of the genre and its relation to other traditional Chinese musics will find much of use in chapters 1, 4, and 5. Readers who prefer more contemporary, ethnographic types of information will probably wish to turn first to the Prologue and chapters 2 and 8. Music theorists interested in the pieces actually performed will discover many detailed analyses in chapters 3, 5, 6, and 7. The many facets of Witzleben's study complement each other, providing a short yet surprisingly comprehensive account of what the title promises.

*Jiangnan sizhu* means literally "silk and bamboo music from the south bank of the Yangtze" (2). In fact, *Jiangnan sizhu* is a traditional ensemble music, usually performed on *dizi* (transverse bamboo flute), *xiao* (end-blown bamboo flute), *sheng* (mouth organ), *erhu* (two-stringed bowed lute), *sanxian* (three-stringed plucked lute), *qinqin* (two- or three-stringed plucked lute), *yanqin* (struck zither), and several percussion instruments. The repertory of this ensemble centers on the "Eight Great Pieces," but includes over thirty other compositions.

The origins of *Jiangnan sizhu* are tangled, and Witzleben does an excellent job of sorting out the various strands that went into forming what the genre has become today. Most of the "bamboo and silk" instruments listed above have existed since time immemorial, and component parts of *Jiangnan sizhu* can be identified by at least the nineteenth century. By 1911 a *Jiangnan sizhu* organization was meeting in a Shanghai teahouse, and soon other groups began to appear. Despite the turmoil of the war against Japan and the civil war that followed, this music continued to be performed, and its repertory gradually solidified, centering on the "Eight Great Pieces." As recently as the 1950s *Jiangnan sizhu* could be heard throughout Shanghai, but during the period of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) *Jiangnan sizhu* clubs were forced to disband (some musicians continued to meet in secret). A small resurgence has taken place recently, but *Jiangnan sizhu* does not enjoy great popularity in China today. Nevertheless, it is an important and representative genre, a "viable but somewhat invisible subculture in Shanghai" (3).

Witzleben, who himself plays several instruments in the *Jiangnan sizhu* ensemble, bases the fieldwork portion of his study mainly on visits to some nine Shanghai *Jiangnan sizhu* clubs (which include a total of some two hundred musicians). Several organizations meet at tea-houses, others at private homes or elsewhere. Sessions, which usually begin in the early afternoon, typically last some three hours and preserve an informal mood. Musicians are highly trained but remain amateurs. Most are men, and the majority are of an older generation.

The music played by these groups is largely heterophonic and highly ornamented. Witzleben gives a good account of instrumental techniques (chapter 3) and of variation procedures (chapter 6). The general heterophonic texture is discussed in chapter 7. In the *Jiangnan sizhu* ensemble each musician enlivens the traditional melodies by incorporating idiosyncratic elements in performance. Similar to most other ensemble musics around the globe, however, improvisation does not take place on a large scale, but is limited instead to the “micro” level of performance. Witzleben provides several transcriptions of various versions of the same melody, showing how each performance is slightly different, depending on who is playing or when the performance took place (94–95, 97–98, 100–101, 108–13).

Today *Jiangnan sizhu* is being fostered on the official level, but Witzleben notes that “what is being promoted is a revisionist version of the tradition in which the more traditionalist groups are an anachronism. Top prizes in competitions tend to go to musicians from the Central Conservatory in Beijing, and not to the amateur associations from Shanghai.” Nevertheless, Witzleben remains optimistic. Amateur and professional, he hopes, will become two branches of the music that will “enrich each other and the tradition as a whole.”

Both Witzleben and Kent State University Press have done an outstanding job in producing this volume. Chinese characters are given for all Chinese terms, titles, and names, and a key to pronunciation is provided for those unfamiliar with the *pinyin* system. Page 145 introduces musical cipher notation, commonly used in China today. Pages 142–44 offer a translation of the “Regulations of the China National Music Ensemble.” A thorough and useful index closes the volume.

In sum, “*Silk and Bamboo*” *Music in Shanghai* is a welcome addition to the growing literature on Chinese music. Witzleben must be thanked not just for introducing to English-speaking readers an important form of Chinese music, but for producing a model ethnomusicological study that synthesizes historical, ethnographic, and analytic perspectives.

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WU ZONGXI 吳宗錫 et al, Editors. *Pingtán wenhua cidian* 評彈文化詞典 [Dictionary of *Pingtán* culture]. Shanghai: Hanyu Da Cidian Chubanshe, 1996. 583 pages, graphics. (In Chinese)

*Pingtán wenhua cidian* is a comprehensive resource on the traditional professional storytelling styles of the Lower Yangzi region in China, particularly in the Wu dialect-speaking regions encompassing Shanghai, Suzhou, and Wuxi. The term *pingtán* 評彈 is a cognate combining the terms *pinghua* 評話, a style of storytelling without music, and local forms of chantefable often called *tanci* 彈詞. The storytelling styles of *Suzhou pingtán* are similar in terms of form and content to the Yangzhou styles of professional storytelling north of the Yangzi River recently introduced in Vibeke Børdahl's *The Oral Tradition of Yangzhou Storytelling* (Surrey: Curzon, 1996; see review in this issue).