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This is a people-friendly storytelling PhD with many photos. **Keywords:** Practice-Led Creative Autobiographical, Interdisciplinary Intercultural Arts, Prototype For Re-Creation, Intermedia, Creative Writing, Western Classical Music, Electro-Acoustic Music, Cantonese Opera, Cancer Survivor, Hong Kong Cantonese Culture, Anglo-Chinese, Music Composition & Performance Art, Music-Dance-Drama-Visual Arts, Kung Fu Novels, UK-Hong Kong-Europe-US-China-Taiwan. See p.437 **Author's Thoughts** & pp. 429-436.

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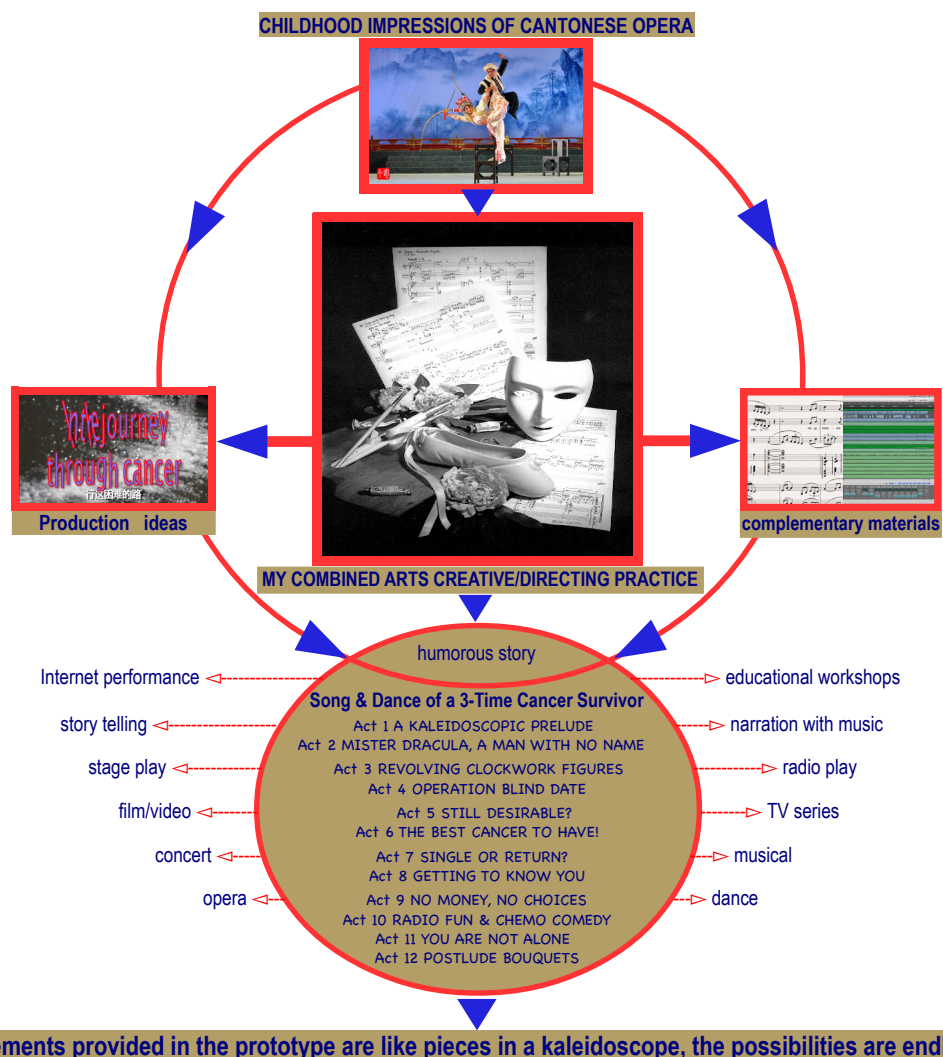
Ho, Wai-On 何蕙安

A CROSS-CULTURAL COMBINED ARTS PROTOTYPE ARISING FROM CANCER AND REMEMBERING CANTONESE OPERA

A Creation for Multi-Venue Performance and as a Basis for New Versions

A thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Anglia Ruskin University (Cambridge)
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Submitted: March 2016



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ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF ARTS, LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

**A CROSS-CULTURAL COMBINED ARTS PROTOTYPE ARISING FROM CANCER
AND REMEMBERING CANTONESE OPERA**

HO, WAI-ON 何蕙安

March 2016

This is a practice-led, creative, autobiographical PhD. I am a composer, and a creator/director of cross-cultural combined arts work/projects. I was trained at the Royal Academy of Music (London) according to Western principles. The music I love and know best is Western Classical, but my creative and directing practice has been influenced by my childhood impressions of Cantonese opera in Hong Kong. The process of surviving cancer three times alerted me to the possible demise of Cantonese opera. I have no training in Cantonese opera. My PhD constitutes an attempt to retain its characteristics in a new format that can be understood by Westerners and enjoyed by the general public, in the same way that Cantonese opera was enjoyed by even the lowest strata of society – I lived amongst these people as a child.

My thesis discusses publications, on-line Cantonese opera performances and the works of other practitioners in cross-cultural combined arts. A specific online forum was created to collate information worldwide and to gather others' memories of Cantonese opera performances. Cantonese opera was not well documented. My experience and memories contribute to the knowledge of what was happening at the time, adding a piece to the whole picture.

The Cantonese opera that I remember was collaborative, adapting existing materials freely, and allowing recycling and modification by others. The basis of 'Big Drama' (as Cantonese opera is designated) is a Quben 曲本 (quasi libretto cum script). In the same way I have created a twelve-act humorous Quben called *Song and Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor* that can be adapted freely by others. The text, music, production ideas and complementary materials for each act draw on memories of Cantonese opera. All these can be used in sections or in their entirety. The elements provided in the prototype are like pieces in a kaleidoscope, the possibilities are endless.

Starting from a personal experience, this research offers a new prototype for creation and performance, combining Western and Cantonese concepts, which I hope will be accessible to many people.

Please see AUTHOR'S THOUGHTS p.437

Keywords: Cross-Cultural Combined Arts, Cantonese Opera, Cancer Survivor, Creative Writing, Music Composition and Performance Art, Electroacoustic Music

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NOTES ON CHINESE AND TRANSLATION

Pinyin, simplified or traditional characters

China has been using 'pinyin' (a standardized pronunciation for Chinese characters using alphabets) at least as early as 1958. Whilst this is helpful for people with some knowledge of Chinese, it is confusing for most English speakers, as pinyin is not pronounced in the usual English way, and some long accepted forms of Chinese names now looking quite different – e.g. 'Peking' becomes 'Beijing', 'Sung' Dynasty becomes 'Song' (not pronounced as 'song' in English), 'Ching' Dynasty is now 'Qing' (with 'Q' sounding more like 'ch'). Hong Kong and Taiwan use traditional Chinese characters 繁體 while China uses the simplified system 简体. I am using pinyin and simplified characters in this thesis because they are becoming widespread, but with a few exceptions such as keeping 'Canton' and 'Cantonese' as they are more familiar to the West and less confusing. Otherwise 'Canton' is 'Guangzhou' in pinyin when it is the city 广州; 'Guangdong' when it is the province 广东; Cantonese as the people and Cantonese as the language are different in pinyin; and the more formal terms for Cantonese opera is yueju 粤剧 in pinyin, which is the same pinyin for Shanghai opera 越剧. I also keep some familiar spellings and traditional characters of names and terms relevant to Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Chinese names

The Chinese tradition is surname preceding given name. I include the full name whenever possible as it is the given name that is of significance, and it represents the person rather than the surname. Some romanized Chinese names follow the Western custom putting the surname last, e.g. in North America and the UK, but some are not, and this can be confusing. Though Chinese names usually consist of three characters (syllables) – one for the surname and two for the given name, there are exceptions. I have therefore put the given name in italics, so that those who are not familiar with the name and Chinese characters can tell which is which. I have also put known alternative spellings of the name in brackets. Regulations demand that titles are put in italics under REFERENCES. If the title includes a romanized Chinese name, the surname appears in uppercase so as to make this clear.

Translation

I attempt to convey the meaning rather than to capture the style of writing.

DECLARATION

My prototype and the materials included are both for my use and for the use of others. Anyone is free to use them, either entirely or in part, to create performances in a single venue or in multiple venues, and may modify them to create new performance versions for non-profit making and non-commercial purposes, as long as they clearly acknowledge the original work and its creator, Ho *Wai-On* (my professional name). Those who want to use the music, complementary materials and production ideas should also acknowledge myself. Those who want to use the Quben should acknowledge Ho *Wai-On* and Mike Greenhough. Audio and video materials should acknowledge Ho *Wai-On* and the performers accordingly: e.g., Rowland Sutherland, Julietta Demitriades, and Albert *Sui-Kai* Tang... For the use of graphics by Marcus West please follow his specific request: "include the original works somewhere, and my contact details along with them (his website link in Chapter 5 Act 10, p.357)."

Chapter 1

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND METAMORPHOSIS

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PRELUDE

My earliest memories were of Hong Kong in the 1950s. I grew up in this vibrant and cosmopolitan city of Chinese and Western influence, but have lived in the UK since 1966, mostly in an equally cosmopolitan London. The Hong Kong that I knew as a child was a British Colony, one of the world's most densely populated regions, and a haven for people who had fled Communist China: many of them regarded the pro-American Nationalist government, which had relocated to Taiwan, as the legitimate Chinese government. The ethnic majority Chinese kept to Chinese traditions but strove for a materialistic American way of life. Hong Kong followed the British legal system and judiciary, but the British government more or less left the locals alone and there was freedom of speech, with numerous local Chinese newspapers, magazines and books of widely differing political views: right (anti-communist), neutral, and left (affiliated with communist China).

An international port with low taxation, Hong Kong enjoyed stability, freedom and prosperity. It might have been a heaven for the rich and those who enjoyed privilege; but it was a society with disparity of wealth, lacking sufficient social welfare for those in need. Life for the masses¹ and especially the poor was often daily drudgery, extreme hard work, and a struggle to make a living in very crowded and unhealthy conditions. Hong Kong, where most people spoke Cantonese, was a centre of Cantonese opera. Its offspring, Cantonese film, was created in large quantity and was everyday entertainment. Hong Kong was also flooded with Hollywood films with Chinese subtitles.

During my childhood, Hong Kong was divided into three main areas: the city – Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula; the villages – the New Territories with old world charm, where villagers still cultivated fields in primitive ways; and many less populated or uninhabited offshore islands (Fig.1.1 p.29). From time to time I stayed in a village for short periods. In the early evenings, elderly villagers relaxed in a small open-air flat area surrounded by stones, telling stories of the past. An old and illiterate village woman once told me a legend about a tiny turtle crawling slowly on the seabed around the outer circumference of Hong Kong: when it finally completed the full circle Hong Kong would sink to the bottom of the sea. Perhaps the legend

¹ Though 'the masses' might be regarded as a derogatory term, I use this instead of 'the general public' as I meant those who were less respected in society at the time.

could be interpreted as a metaphor for the fast change and disappearance of many aspects of Hong Kong culture, in the absence of an oral tradition to pass them on². This PhD thesis is a narrative of things disappearing, and a creative intervention that enables them to continue in a new form rather than sinking to the bottom of the sea.

My professional training and practice were according to Western principles, and I have lived most of my life in the West. The music I love and know best is Western Classical music. Since 1974 my creative work and directing practice in Britain and abroad have been for concert halls and music/art festivals that connect with the middle classes. However, my very first experience of music and multimedia performance was the now endangered Cantonese opera that connected with the lower classes; and as a child in Hong Kong I lived amongst people whose world was like that depicted in *Les Misérables*. The following account, comprising the first chapter of the thesis, describes my childhood background, its impact on my creative/directing practice, and the evolution/metamorphosis of this doctoral thesis.

1.1 CHILDHOOD BACKGROUND

1.1.1 BILINGUAL BICULTURAL SCHOOLING

The British colony that I remember, unlike the UK, did not have compulsory education and not everyone could afford going to school. The majority spoke Cantonese but English was a compulsory subject in school. There were two types of schools – Chinese and English – nothing to do with ethnicity but language. In Chinese schools, apart from daily compulsory English lessons, most subjects were taught in Chinese; while in the more expensive and prestigious English schools, all subjects were taught in English, pupils conversed in English and could take French instead of Chinese as a second language. Those who received English school education usually had better employment opportunities. I was from a deprived and unstable background and seldom stayed long in any school. I went to at least ten different schools in various locations for my primary education and they were all Chinese schools, including some poor schools where I was often picked on. Going to school meant sitting in a

² Other versions of the same story claim that when a tortoise, climbing uphill, reaches the top of Victoria Peak, Hong Kong will sink to the bottom of the sea; and when the dragon head (Hong Kong Island) is awakened it will sink back into the deep sea together with its body Kowloon (see ref: Wiki, 2015, *HK under the sea*).

classroom listening to a teacher repeating what was in the textbooks. Apart from the music classes that I enjoyed, I usually daydreamed or drew pictures on textbooks during lesson. There were times I did not go to school at all due to circumstances. Even when I was enrolled in a school, sometimes I was a truant, roaming the streets to observe people, seeking knowledge in my own way instead of the poorly equipped and hostile school environment, which followed a colonial curriculum that did not inspire learning or thinking. I still remember my first English lesson in school: the very first sentence in the approved textbook that we were to repeat after the teacher was: "This is a man." – I have yet to find a real circumstance in which to use such a sentence. In reality my primary education started in the street and was drawn from entertainment. I learned English from Hollywood films. I learned Chinese and general knowledge from newspapers, comic strips and all books except for the school textbooks; I learned about society by wandering on the street, observing how poor people lived; and the music and multimedia performance for the poor was Cantonese opera.

I completed middle school education mostly at a school founded by Harriet Newell Noyes (1844-1924). She was an American sent to Canton as a missionary where she learned to speak fluent Cantonese and founded the first school for women in Canton in 1872 (students included married women at the time). The middle school was established in Hong Kong in 1947. In this middle school, apart from daily English lessons, most subjects were taught in Chinese, though some subjects used English textbooks. The school had connections in the US, and I was influenced and believed in the goodness of America and Americans, though later I was disillusioned by the happenings during the Vietnam War (1955-75).

1.1.2 ENTERTAINMENT AND ITS SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

The following not only relates to my childhood sociocultural background, but also to Cantonese opera – such as elements connected with Cantonese opera that later hastened its decline.

(i) FILMS:

As a child I befriended an usher at a cinema showing Hollywood films who let me in for free during school hours where I learned English. The drama captivated me and transported me to a multifaceted world where I empathized with the joy and pain of

the people in it. I remember the first Hollywood film that I saw – *Sister Carrie* (1952), starring Laurence Olivier and Jennifer Jones, directed by William Wyler and based on Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* (1900). I was too young to comprehend the plot of an extra-marital affair but I remember the depressing atmosphere and was moved by the impending tragic ending: when Jones was no longer a kept woman but a successful theatre actress, she wanted to take the ageing Olivier back and make it up to him – by then he was down on his luck and living on the street, but he took a coin and no more then disappeared. The pain I felt for Olivier was very like how I felt for those I saw on the street drifting into poverty and begging – and yet perhaps there was more dignity in begging than many of the other ways of gaining money.

Cinemas usually put on a new film every few days, especially those showing Cantonese films – an easy and affordable way for the masses to take their minds off the unpleasantness of life. Unlike the cinemas that showed Hollywood films, these cinemas would let a child enter for free. Cantonese opera performers appeared in Cantonese films to make a quick buck as a Cantonese film could be made in a few days, and some never returned to the Cantonese opera stage. Cantonese films gradually took the place of Cantonese opera as entertainment for the masses.

(ii) NEWSPAPERS, MAGAZINES, BOOKS AND COMIC STRIPS:

Another form of escapist entertainment for the masses was reading, especially the numerous newspapers in Chinese, and a particular form of comic strip aimed at children in poor areas. Like Taiwan, Hong Kong uses traditional Chinese characters 繁體 that are supposed to be more difficult to learn than the simplified system 簡体 used in mainland China. Even before I went to school, I perceived Chinese characters as images and had no difficulty in remembering them. I could often guess the meaning from the context. If I did not know the pronunciation I gave it a sound – some of this inaccurate childish pronunciation persists with me to these days. From childhood I read daily and widely except textbooks. I learned Chinese and gained a wide-ranging knowledge from newspapers.

(a) Newspapers

Seventy newspapers are mentioned in the Hong Kong newspaper listing from 1853 to present day (Wiki 2015). Most of those listed are Chinese newspapers, and the listing does not include some newspapers that I remember such as those aimed at

students. English newspapers were for non-Chinese people and those with good English education. The masses read Chinese newspapers. One could buy a Chinese newspaper for 10 cents – equivalent to a UK penny when halfpenny was the smallest in value. Newspapers were sold in crude street stalls or placed neatly on the pavements, usually with at least twenty to choose from. In late evenings, sellers folded different newspapers together – two, three or four different newspapers for the price of one. Sellers also delivered newspapers to clients' homes daily. Before skyscrapers rose up all over Hong Kong and people covered windows and balconies with security grills as if living in cages, I saw newspaper sellers perform their daily delivery by throwing rolled up newspapers into customers balconies or through open windows. Daily I savoured a variety of other people's newspapers. Apart from reporting news with commentary reflecting different political views, each of the numerous Chinese newspapers provided short stories/diaries and serial novels; short topic-articles on a variety of subjects; information, news and gossip about those in the entertainment professions, the rich and famous; cartoons, illustrations and photos of all sorts – even horrific photos of death (e.g. murders and accidents); sensational malicious gossips and conspiracy theories, and materials of unhealthy sexual fantasies... catering for all tastes and levels. Newspapers provided the masses with entertaining reading, comprehensive and condensed knowledge, and spiritual food, in daily tasty bite-sizes: of local people and happenings, life styles, Chinese traditions and values, China and Chinese, the world and especially the West – such as simplified versions of Western novels, stories, customs and history. The numerous serial novels led readers into an unreal but fascinating world, with melodramatic plots leaving readers in suspense. Many kung fu (wuxia 武俠), historical or romantic novels started life as serials in newspapers. Serials became published as books and were then adapted into films and TV series, and local film stars, singers, Cantonese opera performers and martial artists appeared in them.

(b) Magazines and books for pleasure reading

Many newspaper writers also wrote stories and articles for magazines that sold at newspaper stalls. Magazines and periodicals were more confined and expensive and did not do as well as newspapers. Also available at newspaper stalls were thin-volume books cheaper than magazines for pleasure reading, such as Mills and Boon type short romantic novels and popular newspaper kung fu novel serials in many thin volumes. The popularity of newspapers supported a large number of writers, and Hong Kong became a centre of escapist creative writing enjoyed by the masses,

especially kung fu novels which attracted a widespread following in Hong Kong, Macau, mainland China, Taiwan, and Chinese speaking readers in Southeast Asia and the US.

(c) Shakespeare as comic strips in Chinese

Also available at newspaper stalls were cheaply produced one-colour comic strips that were simplified version of English books, translated into few words with small and crammed pictures. I read many of these as a small child. Through them, I had my first encounter with Shakespeare: *Hamlet*, which I remember as *Prince's Revenge* in Chinese (what a strange way to murder someone by pouring poison down his ear), and *Midsummer Night's Dream* (what a bunch of annoying and weird adults and some could turn into part animal). In *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* (1820) by Washington Irving, which I remember as *Headless Horseman* in Chinese, I found everyone was unlikeable, and especially the schoolmaster Ichabod Crane and his pupils. I remember *She* (1887) by Rider Haggard because of the drawing of Ayesha bathing in fire (what a fascinating way to have a bath in something so beautiful as fire without getting hurt); and a story about a king who learned the craft of weaving so as to gain the hand of his future queen, and later he was rescued from the bandits who abducted him by weaving a message in a rug to his queen – I remember this because of the picture of the naked King after being rescued – the first time I saw a drawing of a naked man. These cheap comic strips might not be suitable for children, but they had sowed cross-cultural seeds. When I was older, I would look up the original, such as *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, and quite enjoyed the humorous and satirical writing about the pathetic Ichabod Crane. This also reflected Hong Kong's cross-cultural tradition reaching the masses. Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* was adapted as Cantonese opera (1952), very likely without much academic research but was watched and enjoyed by the lower classes that knew nothing about Shakespeare and spoke no English (Fig.1.2 p.30).

(d) Concatenate pictures 連環圖

In my childhood there was a kind of one picture per page palm-sized black and white comic strip, literally called 'concatenate pictures 連環圖'. Children in poor areas paid to read them. This genre was similar to Lianhuanhua (Wiki 2015 连环画), a picture book of sequential drawings in early 1920s China. In narrow alleys in poor areas, I often saw low benches placed next to a wall for children to sit on. Children, mostly boys, chose from low narrow shelves packed with these little picture books, usually a

few to more than ten books for one title, and paid a small sum to read them there. Some of the titles that I read were reminiscent of Cantonese opera costumes, characters and plots. The stories were about happenings in an unreal world in the distant past, depicting adventure action and often violence. A popular theme was about young men going deep into the mountains in search of a sifu 師父 (kung fu master, literally ‘teacher father’) or someone with supernatural power, thus acquiring physical or supernatural power themselves to avenge great wrong. As a child I saw poor people living on top of each other with no privacy: many families crowded into a flat divided into tiny cubicles, and some who could only rent the upper or lower wooden bunk bed in a corridor as their home. Children and especially active boys, had no space or playground but the streets. They not only had to defend themselves from bigger and stronger boys, from child molesters lurking about, but many also had to defend themselves from the violence of their parents who would beat them – perhaps as a means to vent their own frustration and sense of failure in life. Traditional Chinese values demanded that one should obey and look upon one’s parents almost like gods, to the extent that ‘If the father ordered the son to die, the son should obey 父要子亡, 子不得不亡 – a Chinese saying that I had heard time and again in Cantonese opera and Cantonese films. Boys with violent parents were unlikely to gain support or a sympathetic ear in their environment. Understandably they longed to escape into an unreal world where a teacher-father figure (sifu) would save, protect and guide them, and they would be transformed from nobody to somebody. Apparently some boys did leave home to go to the mountains in search of a sifu, for I saw a Hong Kong film with a story to dissuade boys from such attempts. In time these little books of ‘concatenate pictures’ disappeared from the streets:

In Hong Kong during the 1970s, the format had essentially disappeared, as they had become materials associated with the uneducated and unsophisticated. (Wiki, 2015. *Lianhuanhua* - 2 History - para.4)

Boys from deprived background and especially those who later practised kung fu were potential young recruits for Hong Kong’s ‘black society’ 黑社會 (organized crime). Many Cantonese opera performers were from the lower classes, and the training included kung fu style movement. The adaptation of Kung fu novels into films and TV series required Cantonese opera performers and kung fu practitioners. Some of those connected with entertainment and Cantonese films were known to have a link with ‘black society’.

(e) Kung fu novels, Jin Yong 金庸 and Cantonese opera

Jin Yong 金庸 (Louis Cha 1924 -) is the best known kung fu novel writer worldwide. The popularity of kung fu novels exerted a profound influence on the entertainment world in Hong Kong and contributed to the decline of Cantonese opera. The common denomination of this genre is the wuxia novel. Wuxia 武俠 means martial arts and chivalry. However, these novels are not really about martial arts, knights, swordsmen or noble warriors, and the protagonists may not even be chivalrous. What the writers depict is their own imaginary superhuman kung fu rather than the real thing. The protagonists acquired superhuman kung fu skills through superhuman sifu (master) or by obtaining a manual of such. The focus is on complicated and melodramatic plots: love, hate, conspiracies and revenge in or between kung fu families/schools/sects and secret societies, and the story line may also feature outcasts, rebels, bandits, and people of the lower echelons like beggars and prostitutes – a world with their own code of ethics and conduct outside the reach of government. The story often involves fighting, killing and avenging the killings with superhuman kung fu. I use the term kung fu novel instead of wuxia as this designation relates better to entertainment, to kung fu movies, to the West's impression and interpretation of kung fu (e.g., the 2008 computer-animation film *Kung Fu Panda*), and to Cantonese opera.

Due to the preponderance of fighting and horrendous killings in these novels, the scene is often set in the past or at an unspecified time. One empathizes with the need for superhuman kung fu to protect and prove oneself in a complicated, fast changing and evil society during troubled times, and one is readily drawn into the drama and kept in suspense by the complicated plots. Writers applied their skills to entertain and reach the masses so as to make a living, and the talented would achieve fame and fortune. In the same way Cantonese opera performers also used their talents and skills to entertain the masses so as to make a living and sometimes they achieved fame. When kung fu novels were adapted into films and TV series, Cantonese opera performers worked in the production as they were trained in beautiful movement, choreographic kung fu and costume drama. Martial artists also appeared in fighting scenes or as doubles – the pretty leading lady fights so much better when she turns her back to the camera and in long shots. Martial artists became super stars taking the place of Cantonese opera performers such as Bruce Lee (whose father was a Cantonese opera performer and appeared in Cantonese

films). Superhuman kung fu and the imaginary world of kung fu novels required special effects, such as actors being suspended by steel wires, and computer animation that lead to video games.

Jin Yong was born in Zhejiang province 浙江, China in 1924, and was from a family of scholars, but has lived in Hong Kong since 1948. His novels have been translated into many languages including English, French, Korean and Japanese. He is also a history scholar. Despite receiving his honorary doctorate at the University of Cambridge in 2004, Jin Yong decided to become a full-time student at Cambridge (St John's College) for four years, and earned his PhD in 2010 (aged 86) with a thesis on imperial succession during the early Tang Dynasty (Wiki, 2015). His fifteen novels all started as newspaper serials from 1955-1970, and have been adapted into films and/or TV series. An example is *Legend of the Condor Heroes* 射雕英雄傳 (1957-59), which has been adapted into numerous films (first adapted as a Cantonese film in 1958), TV series, comics and video games, and followed by two serials. His novels are mostly long and complicated with numerous characters. His fine writing and broad knowledge vividly depict moving drama against interesting cultural and historical backdrops. The stories all happen in some dynasty of the past and often include well-known historical characters (e.g., Genghis Khan and family), though sometimes he takes poetic license and prefers legends and hearsay to historical fact. In their newspaper serial stage, the daily short portion of his novels often featured spontaneous creative imagination to captivate readers and persuade them to follow on (see Fig.1.3 p.31). Sometimes the happenings and dialogues were incredibly funny with a sense of the ridiculous that made readers burst into laughter. Sometimes the story alluded to and ridiculed happenings at the time, such as a megalomaniac leader of a kung fu sect who made his followers chant praises of him, in a way that echoed the chanting of praises to the great leader in mainland China. In 1965, during the period of Jin Yong's travel in Europe, the daily serial of his *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils* 天龍八部 (1963-66) was written by fellow writer Ni Kuang 倪匡 (1935-) on his behalf (Wiki 2015, 金庸 *Jin Yong* 9.1). His novels at their daily serial stage were reminiscent of some Cantonese opera characteristics: the Quben³ 曲本 on which the drama is based was written by a cultured writer; they were collaborative creative efforts; spontaneous creativity served to captivate the audience of the moment; they used funny ad lib mocking happenings at the time to make the audience roar with

³ Quben: quasi libretto cum script, pronounced: chuben – u, like German ü; en as in happen.

laughter; and they brought enjoyment and culture to the masses.

Kung fu novels are pleasure reading for the masses, yet Jin Yong's genius has pushed the genre to a higher level. He used the form to express personal convictions and challenged traditional taboos, such as his *Return of the Condor Heroes* 神鵰俠侶 (1959-61), which is about forbidden love between a pupil and his female sifu (teacher) – the rebellious young man, an outcast due to his father's sin, loved and married his sifu disregarding the fact that she was raped by a leader of a respectable taoist kung fu school (according to the original newspaper serial version). From 1970, in an effort to rewrite his kung fu novels into wuxia literature, Jin Yong started revising his works, such as deleting what Ni Kuang 倪匡 had written in *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils*, or making drastic changes such as changing the names of some characters and the plots related to them, or removing completely some characters and plots. This is akin to Cantonese opera pursuing the goal of being 'high art' like Western opera, and in the process losing some of its characteristics so endearing to the masses. A 'new edition' Jin Yong in comparison with the original is almost like a different book. Though the sense of humour is still there, I no longer burst into laughter as I did when I read the original. I enjoyed more of the daily short portion of story with illustration (Fig.1.3 p.31) with spontaneous charm, suspense and whatever non-literature 'blemishes' that formed into a mosaic-like novel. I miss the original in a similar way that I miss the Cantonese opera of my childhood. I read *Legend of the Condor Heroes* 射雕英雄傳 (1957-59) as newspaper serial and it is my favourite Jin Yong. After reading the new edition, I longed to buy a copy of the original but it was no longer available. It was around 1989 when I was in Hong Kong that I had a meeting with Jin Yong about my interest in writing a one-act opera based on a small section of his *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils* 天龍八部 (1963-66). I asked him whether he could help me to obtain a copy of the original *Legend of the Condor Heroes*, and told him why. He did not answer and seemed not to be amused. Later it dawned on me that Jin Yong did not want the original to be available though I wish he would allow the co-existence of new and old. I treasure and enjoy the few Jin Yong novels in original version that I possess in the same way that I treasure the Cantonese opera that I remember – they may no longer be practiced or valued but they were endearing to the masses, and the impressions they left have profoundly influenced my creative/directing practice.

When I met Jin Yong he was rich and in control of at least one newspaper – Ming Pao 明報 – and involved in politics, meeting with powerful people in Hong Kong, mainland China and Taiwan. He was supportive of my writing a one-act opera based on a small section of his novel *Demi-Gods and Semi-Devils*. He also gave me a copy of his ‘new edition’ *Smiling, Proud Wanderer* 笑傲江湖 (1967, new edition 1984) which involved music in the story line – perhaps he thought I might make use of it. In the afterword of the novel, Jin Yong mentions that the work can be read as a political allegory. At the time I was working on my combined arts project *Theme Hong Kong*, and becoming increasingly disillusioned because of the complications, troubles and intrigues to do with money, power, politics and the darker side of human nature. Perhaps this was one of the reasons why I did not pursue the opera project with Jin Yong – not because of concerns about Jin Yong himself, but because of my ineptitude in dealing with the complications and politics that might come with creating an opera based around the allegory. Likewise, Cantonese opera became involved with politics. In 1955 following an invitation from Premier Zhou Enlai 周恩来, a top Hong Kong Cantonese opera performer Hung Sin-Nui 红线女 (literally Red-Line-Girl 1924-2013) went back to mainland China where she later became a towering figure in Cantonese opera, of similar stature to Jin Yong in wuxia novel. With government support and control, and the efforts and vision of Hung Sin-Nui, Canton became the centre of Cantonese opera activities while it has steadily declined in Hong Kong. The manifestation of Cantonese opera wholly under the control of the Communist Party has had no influence on my creative practice.

(iii) MUSIC AND CANTONESE OPERA

As a child, I showed an aptitude for music and performing on the stage, and enjoyed Cantonese opera. The following is a brief account of the music and Cantonese opera that I encountered:

(a) Western Classical music

Western Classical music was never entertainment for the masses of Hong Kong. Nonetheless all the schools I attended had a weekly music class that required pupils to sing Western popular classic (e.g., Beethoven *Ode to Joy* twelve bars only) with the teacher playing the melody on the piano. The songbooks were in Western staff notation, which most pupils could not understand. However, I had no difficulty with

the system and used it in my first composition attempt when I was about seven or eight. Piano lessons and the Associated Board piano exams were popular; next in popularity were Western Classical music vocal lessons and the violin. Those who had studied piano and singing abroad would give a piano or singing recital when they returned to Hong Kong to ensure a good living as a private teacher. I learned to play the piano as a child, but did not have a piano or attend a concert till I was in my teens.

Concerts of Western Classical music in Hong Kong had a small audience and a limited repertory, including such favourites as Handel's *Messiah*, Beethoven's *Egmont Overture* and Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. Despite Hong Kong's wealth there was no opera house and Western operas were seldom performed. Local opera productions such as Puccini's *Madam Butterfly* and Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* were staged in a concert hall, with singers from abroad invited to join the cast. However, as soon as I heard a professional Western Classical music performance, I was bowled over. From listening to the first record that I possessed of the Paderewski *Minuet in G*, and my first attendance at a chamber music concert of Beethoven quartets (starting with the *String Quartet No.1 in F major*, op.18), I progressed to learn more of the immense repertoire of Western Classical music. I learned to love the abundance of musical creation and to delight in the grandeur of the classical symphonies. My growing appreciation of Western Classical music coincided with the gradual decline of Cantonese opera in Hong Kong. To this day Western Classical music has become what I love most, though I still regard Western opera as music rather than live performance: no Western diva on her own can deliver a performance of 'total theatre' like a lead performer of Cantonese opera. As Western Classical music had spread around the world and was being studied and practiced by non-Westerners, I longed to become a professional musician.

(b) Popular songs

There were three kinds of popular songs in Hong Kong, according to the Language: English, Mandarin and Cantonese. The radio was omnipresent in Hong Kong during my childhood, and one could hear these songs everywhere.

1) English: These were American pop songs that appealed to young people, especially those who went to English schools. They were also played at parties and wine bars. Some were from Hollywood films and popular with cinemagoers.

2) Mandarin: Though most Hong Kong residents did not speak fluent Mandarin, they were familiar with the language. Many of the songs were from Mandarin films and popular with Cantonese speakers because of their enchanting melody. They were also played for tea dances, enjoyed by the older population.

3) Cantonese: These were loved by the masses and were excerpts of Cantonese opera, or arrangements of existing tunes with witty lyrics sung by Cantonese opera performers. Later they developed into original Cantonese songs with some Western pop music influence, such as the use of electric guitar, drum kits, and female singers who used a more natural voice instead of the high-pitched Cantonese opera style that would sound strange to Westerners.

(c) Cantonese opera, briefly

The Cantonese opera of my childhood, whilst using a reservoir of traditional melodies, also made use of the melodies of all three types of popular song (mentioned above), since the practice of a Cantonese opera at the time was to add new words to existing tunes to unfold the drama. The attraction was the lead performers. In addition to singing, performers were involved in acting, stylized gesticulation and movements, dance and kung fu. They had knowledge of elaborate makeup and costumes, were good-looking and charismatic, and had freedom in modifying existing materials, adding their creative input to live performances. Cantonese opera was a mixture of high and low: refined and vulgar, loved by fans yet low in social status, multifaceted, cross-cultural and multimedia – anything goes for survival. Most importantly, it was enjoyed by the masses and reached those shunned by society – the illiterate, the poor, prostitutes, beggars and gangsters – bringing them entertainment and culture. The profession was not looked upon as respectable. Many performers were from the lower classes and were not well educated. However, the Quben (libretto cum script), usually written by a scholar, contained fine poetic writing, reflecting Cantonese culture, history and traditional values. A fuller discussion follows in Chapter 3 *Cantonese Opera*.

1.2 IMPACT ON MY CREATIVE/DIRECTING PRACTICE

In 1.1 *Childhood Background* (pp. 4-15) I briefly explained my unusual childhood.

Though dangerous for a child, I learned about survival from an early age, and had extraordinary freedom to see, hear and experience many aspects of life of the less fortunate, and to enjoy entertainment for the masses. Western Classical music has been my life since arriving in the UK in 1966, but I cannot forget the Cantonese opera of my childhood that closely intertwined with everyday life in the tiny microcosm of Hong Kong. The sounds, images and impressions, which I remember to this day, made me venture outside the confines of Western Classical music, and have profoundly influenced my creative/directing practice.

1.2.1 AN INSATIABLE PURSUIT

After reading Chinese and English language and literature at the Chinese University of Hong Kong for a year, in 1966 I won a scholarship for professional training at the Royal Academy of Music in the UK, where I studied piano, singing and composition, and took both performer and graduate courses.

Remembering the vast quantity of Cantonese and Hollywood films that I saw as a child, I wanted to create some form of music performance akin to film. In 1974 I won a part scholarship to study short courses for film & TV direction and production in London. The experience only made me realize the huge expense involved in film and TV at the time and the impossibility of breaking into the circle.

Remembering how stylized movement and dance were an integral part of Cantonese opera, I wanted to incorporate similar elements alongside Western Classical music performance. In 1976 I was chosen by the Gulbenkian Foundation to participate in the First International Dance Course for Professional Choreographers and Composers under the direction of the American choreographer Glen Tetley (1926-2007). I worked with dancers and choreographers from the Royal Ballet, Ballet Rambert and other dance companies, performing and composing music for them daily. I have involved dance and especially modern dance in my creative/directing practice ever since.

Remembering how the sounds of Cantonese opera are outside equal temperament and diatonic harmony, I wanted to venture beyond the confines of Western Classical music, and became interested in the wide and flexible sound world of electro-acoustics. In 1978 I took part in an intensive computer music workshop at CCRMA,

Stanford University with John Chowning. I worked on electro-acoustic music for many years at West Square, Morley College, and at other electronic music studios.

I was exposed to Cantonese opera as a small child before I encountered Western opera. I have searched for a way to merge these different art forms throughout my professional life. For my Masters (1983) at Cardiff University I studied stage and operatic works by Stravinsky, Schönberg and the Korean composer Isang Yun. I wrote computer programmes for musical purposes and used a hybrid computer music system to produce the germ for new quasi-operatic work. In 1988, with start-up funding from Gulbenkian Foundation, I formed Inter Artes 通藝 to create and perform works that combine music, dance, drama and visual arts across different cultures.

1.2.2 EXAMPLES

Best known as Ho *Wai-On* 何蕙安, aka Ann-Kay Lin, I am a composer of contemporary Classical music and electro-acoustic music, and a creator/director of cross-cultural combined arts works. My works have been performed in Britain and abroad since 1974, and I feel privileged to have collaborated with many distinguished professionals. My training and creative practice are according to Western principles. Its tradition of cherishing an original work created by an individual satisfies my creative side. However, when I look for creative inspiration and ideas for staging a performance, I often fall back on my impressions of the Cantonese opera of my childhood. The following are some examples:

(i) MUSICAL STRUCTURE

At the Royal Academy of Music in London, I was taught the forms of Western Classical music and its techniques of composition, yet my instinct is to create successive short musical sections of different character to extend a work rather than to write a long development as in sonata form – probably due to the influence of Cantonese opera, which uses a collection of short tunes to unfold the drama. An example is my clarinet solo *Farewell My Beloved: Impression of a Chinese Opera* (1982) which is my impression of *The Conqueror Bids His Concubine Farewell* 霸王別姬, better known in the West as the 1993 film *Farewell My Concubine* directed by Chen *Kaige* 陈凯歌. Fig.1.4 (p.32) is the first page of the music score, clearly marked in short sections to unfold the drama.

(ii) HARMONY AND TUNING

The Cantonese Opera that I first heard as a child consisted of melody without harmony. The singing was influenced by the sound and meaning of new words set to existing tunes, and was sung in a flexible style between singing and speech outside the equal-tempered twelve tones. The tuning of different instruments might differ slightly and was not equal-tempered. It was common practice for the instrumentalists to bend and slide pitches, to add ornaments and to follow the singer's flexible rendition. This created an interesting heterogeneous texture of combined sounds in lieu of harmony when a singer and instrumentalists performed the same melody together: it would never sound as if in unison or an octave apart. This led to my interest in melody and counterpoint rather than harmony, my fondness of glissando and pitch bending, and was a reason for my venturing into computer music in search of new sound textures. Harmony in my music often results from the combination of melodic lines. An example is my *Permutation* (1998) for oboe, clarinet, horn and piano. The first nine bars might sound like a chord progression, but in fact they result from the superimposition of computer permutations of a melodic shape (Fig.1.5 p.33).

(iii) WORDS AND MUSIC DRAMA

The Cantonese opera of my childhood resulted from the creation of a Quben (quasi libretto cum script) and the performers' flexible rendition of that Quben using singing, acting and movement: words are the basis of the music drama. This childhood impression has led me to include the use of words in music creation. In *Drinking Alone Under The Moon* 李白月下独酌, the last of my *Four Songs in Chinese* (1974), the vocal melody is my musical rendition of the sound of reading Li Ba's poem in Cantonese, and the song is suitable as a melody for Cantonese opera (Fig.1.6 p.34). In the instrumental interlude of my music video *Magic Banyan Tree* (AV2 & p.429)⁴, the xylophone melody is my musical rendition of the sound of telling the story in Cantonese, and is suitable as a melody for Cantonese opera. I often use words in a score to describe the music drama. I write lyrics for my songs, and the libretti for my music theatre such as *Wiseman, Fool and Slave* (1990), and *The Story So Far* (1990).

(iv) RECYCLING OF MATERIALS

I am also influenced by the way that Cantonese opera would use a Quben as the

⁴ AV2 = numbering of example in enclosed Audio/Video Folder. It is available on the Net as 'Magic Banyan Tree by Ho Wai-On'. The xylophone interlude passage starts from 06:30.

basis for new versions, which could be quite different from the original. An example is my music video *Magic Banyan Tree* (AV2 & p.429), which may be used as complementary material for Chapter 5's *Song and Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor*. The work originated in English in 1990 as *A Tree Named Tang* (script/lyrics/music) based on a 1987 children's literature in Chinese of the same name by Irene Yim about a huge banyan in Hong Kong's New Territories which has a small house embedded within it. The happiest time of my childhood was when I lived amongst simple villagers in the New Territories. My various music theatre versions based on this story contain fond memories of village life and villagers. The 1990 English version was for instrumentalists and three actors, who were also required to sing and dance, and was performed at the Purcell Room, London. The 1991 English version for Hong Kong included more actors, different instrumentation and tape. The 1991 Cantonese version for Hong Kong involved actors' modification of my script, whilst I also modified the music for singing in Cantonese. Further modification was undertaken for a later version called *Magic Banyan Tree* performed at Walthamstow, London as a community project for children. Springing from the materials are various instrumental pieces over the years: *Dance of Kamtin*, *Bulldozers*, *Old House and Old Banyan*, *Let's Sing A Tree Named Tang*, *Let's Sing Magic Banyan Tree*, and the latest *Magic Banyan Tree* as music video.

(v) STAGING AND DESIGN (Fig.1.7 a-l, pp. 35-41):

In the Cantonese opera of my childhood, the leader of the troupe was often the lead performer and would take control of drama, design, training and all aspects of performance to present an identity for the troupe, and would intuitively modify a performance according to circumstances for the enjoyment of the masses. This is probably the reason for my proclivity for combining other elements with music, and directing and designing my projects. I not only use such memories for inspiration, but also to provide solutions when encountering difficulties in a production. In 1986 I was invited by the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) to be the director and designer of an operatic production of Handel's *Acis and Galatea*. HKAPA was established in 1984 with Government and other funding bodies' support to be a leading institution in performing arts with excellent facilities to train local professional undergraduates. From my preparatory research in London, I found that Handel's *Acis and Galatea* (1732) is a serenata consists mainly of *da capo* arias with short recitatives in between. The continuous repetition of the lengthy first section of each *da capo* aria makes the work dramatically static on stage, and the recitatives do not

always give enough time to carry out the stage action suggested by the drama. Remembering the vivid on-stage action and drama of Cantonese opera, I decided that my production of *Acis and Galatea* was to be a dance opera. I created new characters for dancers based on the libretto – birds, the genius of the mountains, cupids and muses – to dance while singers sing to prevent static stage situations (Fig.1.7 c d g i j; pp.36, 38-39). Each character was to be identified by their costume and could be played by singers and dancers – e.g., at the end of Act 1, there would be four pairs of *Acis and Galatea* on stage. I approached staging this work in the same way as writing a music composition. I wrote a production script: the musical, visual and dramatic elements were like different voices of a polyphonic composition: compositional techniques such as exposition, development, recapitulation, sequence, leitmotif, and rhythm were applied to the staging; and the underlying themes were obsession and metamorphosis (from reading Dryden's translation of Ovid's story). My stage and costume design carried a hint of Greek myth and fairy tale.

Soon after arriving in Hong Kong to work on this production, I realized that the previous HKAPA opera had been Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, in a large budget production by a Western team that did not sell well and received some hostile responses from the Chinese press, claiming that it was not a production for the locals and was wasting taxpayers' money on the elite. I was informed that, unlike *Dido and Aeneas* that was staged in the large opera theatre, I was to stage *Acis and Galatea* in the Studio Theatre; no opera singers from abroad were to be invited to join my production; and I was to make do with the costumes and production leftovers of *Dido and Aeneas*. After meeting with the singers, I realized that they were locals who could not afford to study abroad, and some were recent migrants from mainland China. They were mostly from a background more familiar with local entertainment derived from Cantonese opera than with Western Classical music and its professional disciplines⁵, and some had difficulty with the English libretto. Apart from singers and instrumentalists of the School of Music, I involved students from the other three Schools of Dance, Drama and Technical Arts. I changed my production script after some observation of the performing and production team. Ideas from the team were accepted so that all would feel involved and the production would reflect characteristics of the team like that of a Cantonese opera troupe.

⁵ That was the early stage of HKAPA when local talents in Western Classical music went for professional training abroad. It has since developed into a leading institution and has produced winners of international competitions.

The leftovers of the set and costumes of *Dido and Aeneas* suggested a royal court in Baroque Europe rather than in Carthage, and they were made with expensive materials of black and white – the colours of Western and Chinese funerals respectively – and would certainly not be pleasing to Chinese locals who were very superstitious. To make do with these leftovers, I informed the Head of Costume to cut the legs of the black velvet court breeches of *Dido and Aeneas* into strips then sling mud on them for the shepherds and swains of *Acis and Galatea*. She was amused and I managed to win her support. She made alterations on existing costumes and used colourful materials in stock such as ribbons to make modified version of my designs, taking team ideas into account. Long colourful ribbons on costumes for the nymphs and Galatea were reminiscent of a type of Cantonese opera costume that looked good with dance movements (Fig.1.7 f h, pp. 37-8). However, those expensive European royal court wigs made with human hair were difficult to alter into my Greek myth style design. To make use of them, Cupid was changed into three cherub-like beings – dancers with horror film Victorian doll-like masks and wigs for the scene of the death of Acis (Fig.1.7i, p.39) – when love turned into the motive for murder. Another wig was modified and dyed green with a half mask for the Genius of the Mountains to be a mixture of an elf and some supernatural creature in Cantonese film (Fig.1.7j, p.39). The team suggested that the male cast, instead of wearing wigs, should wear colourful hair scarves in a fashion that reminded me of Cantonese opera (Fig.1.7 d e, pp. 36 37); and the female cast should wear shining wig-like headgear made with colourful shiny strips, cheap enough for the Costume Department to buy (Fig.1.7 f h, pp. 37 38). The shiny headgear was a bit vulgar but was reminiscent of Cantonese headgear and went well with the ribbon dresses in dance. My design for the Cyclops Polyphemus was inspired by Cantonese opera and fairy tale. Here the team added more trimmings, such as platform shoes and headgear that were reminiscent of Cantonese opera costumes (Fig.1.7k, p.40).

The Studio Theatre could be arranged flexibly, and I arranged it to be like a semi amphitheatre so that the audience could have a good view (Fig.1.7b, p.35): though it sounded like an opera, visually my production was a dance. I arranged the performing space to be like a reversed opera theatre (Fig.1.7a, p.35): the auditorium of an opera theatre became the main performing stage; the upper stalls of an opera theatre became a smaller upper tier stage mounted with a projection screen and the design of clouds; on the sides where the boxes should be were the orchestra in

stereo effect – in the Cantonese opera that I remember instrumentalists were on stage near the wing. The stage floor of the main stage was painted with a pastoral design with neon lights under perspex as flowing water. The larger projection screen decorated with a cloud design on the upper tier stage, together with two mobile screens decorated with tree designs on the lower main stage expanded the spatial limitation of the Studio Theatre and also could be used to express the thoughts of the characters (Fig.1.7 a b d, pp. 35-36). The backdrop of the lower main stage was made with reflective and movable materials in a design of water, and there were also mobile side drops (Fig.1.7l, p.41). The mobility of scenery gave a sense of rhythm corresponding with the singing, dance movement and the drama – all of these were used to convey the themes of obsession and the love triangle (everything in threes).

Any natural expression of the cast was to be valued in the performance. Technical Arts students helped to make props and other production items. Instead of understudies, I used two casts to perform on alternate days. As more students became involved, more members of staff became supportive. I overcame the restriction of single colour printing for publicity materials by using red and gold paper similar to what local Chinese would use for invitations to celebrations and Fai Chun 揮春 – traditional decorations with good luck phrases. The story of the original opera is about the nymph Galatea who loves Acis but rejects the Cyclops Polyphemus. I chose a Chinese title similar to those of Cantonese films meaning *Fairy Lovers and Giant* 仙侶與巨人. Students of the Drama School were to narrate a synopsis in Cantonese and English before each act. This production was not for the elite, but was colourful with lots of action like a Cantonese opera (Fig.1.7l, p.41). Two previews, and the performances from 10-14 March 1987 were all sold out, with good reviews from the press. It is probably the very first performance in the world of Handel's *Acis and Galatea* staged as a dance opera in the style of Cantonese opera with a Cantonese-speaking cast. The team and I did not deliberately undertake research into Cantonese opera: in 1987 Cantonese opera still had a big influence on many in Hong Kong.

(vi) PROJECTS ADDRESSING SOCIOCULTURAL ISSUES

As a child in Hong Kong I experienced and observed simple village life, the toil and pains of the poor, and the evil in dark corners of society. I enjoyed Cantonese opera since it reached these people, and many of its performers were also drawn from

these people. For most of my adult life I have lived in the UK as an outsider. This life journey has made me sensitive to sociocultural issues. My forming of Inter-Artes 通藝 (4.1.6 p.170) is an outcome of this journey and many of my projects have responded to certain sociocultural issues. Two examples are: 1) *Theme Hong Kong* (1990-91), created in response to the Tiananmen protests and Hong Kong people migrating to the UK as a result; and 2) *Historical China* (1991) whose purpose was to promote greater Anglo-Chinese understanding.

1.3 EVOLUTION OF THIS DOCTORAL THESIS

The seed of this PhD thesis can be traced back a very long time, but its germination was repeatedly thwarted. Surviving cancer for the third time made me try again. It has been a long process for the PhD to take its final form.

1.3.1 A LATENT EMBRYO

In my teens I had longed to receive professional training in Western Classical music at a top institution such as the Royal Academy of Music or the Conservatoire de Paris so as to become a professional musician. I saw no chance of doing so – not only was it financially impossible, but also I was not good enough as I was never groomed for this purpose. Whatever talents I possess had not been nurtured – I had passion but no technique. My childhood exposure to poetic lyrics as sung in Cantonese opera and the translation of simplified versions of Shakespeare had developed into an interest in literature, and I entered the Chinese University of Hong Kong to read Chinese and English language and literature. After a year at the university I won a scholarship in 1966 to study at the Royal Academy of Music and left for the UK. However I enjoyed my year at the university, and the works that I read during that year – the Chinese classics, Beowulf, works by Homer, Virgil and Dante – left a deep impression on me and a desire to combine music with fine writings. While at the RAM, I applied to Cambridge University to read music and was accepted. To my regret I was prevented from taking up this offer due to family interference. This only fuelled future attempts to further my university work.

After obtaining an MA in contemporary and electronic-computer music from Cardiff University in 1983, I wanted to work on a PhD related to Western opera and Cantonese opera. I approached King's College, University of London with my

proposal, since Professor Brian Trowell was known as an authority on opera of all periods. He had been the director of opera at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (1963-7) and head of radio opera at the BBC (1967-70). Nicola LeFanu, a composer whom I already knew, also worked at King's College. At the interview to consider my PhD proposal, Brian told me that European opera and Cantonese opera were too different to be compared; Nicola suggested a composition PhD instead; and another member of the interview panel suggested a PhD on *The Beggar's Opera* as it is perhaps the closest of all Western work to the structure of Cantonese opera. But I did not want to compromise.

I then approached Dr Laurence Picken (1909-2007) of Trinity College, Cambridge University. He was an ethnomusicologist and a Fellow at Jesus College, who from 1944 started to research traditional Chinese music. I had no ambition to be an ethnomusicologist as my intention was to undertake cross-cultural creative work. However, meeting with Dr Picken was inspiring and I gained much from talking with his students who were researchers in non-Western music, such as Richard Widdess later to be a professor at SOAS specializing in the music and culture of South Asia.

Since Trinity College Cambridge had a record of producing Nobel Prize winners, I thought Trinity might be interested in my innovative PhD proposal on Western opera and Cantonese opera. At the interview I was told the problem was that Cambridge would have to employ a new member of staff so as to supervise this unusual cross-cultural PhD.

I thought I had left no stone unturned at the time, so I carried on with my professional work and left this PhD idea to lay dormant.

1.3.2 CATALYSIS

In 2009 Cantonese opera was 'inscribed' by UNESCO onto their list of the 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity' (UNESCO, 2013). Though intended as a celebration of the art, being added to the list effectively means that Cantonese opera has become an endangered species. The process of surviving cancer three times alerted me to the possible demise of Cantonese opera. I survived, but will Cantonese opera survive? Even if Cantonese opera is to survive, many of the characteristics that I remember are unlikely to continue. I have no training in Cantonese opera, but some

of the characteristics that I remember have lived on in my work. With the passage of time, the accepted understanding of a PhD in the arts has finally expanded to include creative, cross-cultural, autobiographical, and combined arts practices – conditions favourable for the success of this creative PhD thesis, which constitutes my attempt to retain those characteristics of Cantonese opera that I remember in a new format.

1.3.3 PROJECT EVOLUTION

A creative work or project starts with an idea. The idea can evolve to have a life of its own that surprises its creator.

(i) USEFUL COMMENTS

When I started working on this PhD, my original intention was to create an opera with essential components related to my creative/directing practice, and drawing on Cantonese opera for inspiration. I gradually realized from comments I received that my creative/directing practice and the Cantonese opera that I remember are closely knitted, intertwining with my background, especially my unusual childhood and Hong Kong society at that time. It was also necessary to find a compromise between contradicting concepts of Western music and Cantonese opera.

(ii) FLAGS OF CHANGE (Fig.1.8 p.42)

In the 1950s, Hong Kong was flooded with those who fled the Communists and many of these people were pro-Nationalists. The Nationalist flag of 'Blue Sky-White Sun-Wholly Red Earth' (a flag red with a navy blue canton bearing a white sun with twelve triangular rays 青天白日滿地紅 p.42) was a common sight, especially during the yearly celebration of the Double Ten (10th October) National Day – they were hung abundantly like Christmas decorations. According to Wiki (2014): "The Hong Kong 1956 riots were the result of escalating provocations between pro-Nationalist and pro-Communist factions in Hong Kong during Double Ten Day, 10 October 1956." From what I saw, what I remember and what I read in the local Chinese press daily, it was sparked off by some officials tearing down the Nationalist flags to celebrate the Double Ten at an estate for the poor. Many of those who fled the Communists had seen better days or had held political or military posts in mainland China before, but then suffered hardship in Hong Kong, living in these Resettlement Estates built for the poor. The tearing and removal of the Nationalists flags evoked a sense of

frustration and humiliation that sparked off the riot. The intervention of the police and British soldiers fuelled patriotic fervour and racial tension. Some rioters were shot while throwing stones at British soldiers. There were 59 deaths and approximately 500 injuries in total (Wiki 2015, *HK 1956 riots*). At the time, many of those working in entertainment, in the labour union and in crime organizations were right wing. Nationalist flags were on sale everywhere – cars and shops had to display a Nationalist flag to avoid being attacked. There were curfews. During a curfew, from the entrance of where I lived, I saw a lone British soldier, fully equipped and holding a gun, stationed in the middle of the road. Seeing no one around he relaxed and sat down to have a rest. I thought that was funny and walked into the street towards him with a stone in my hand, smiling at him I gestured I was to throw it at him. He stood up, pointed his gun at me and smiled at this silly child playing such a dangerous game. All was in good humour with no hostility between us. Had he shot me the consequence would have been terrible. Whilst undertaking research for this PhD, I watched on the Internet ‘New Cantonese operas’ staged in Canton. Those with scenes portraying British soldiers in Hong Kong were ugly and unlike what I had experienced. An account of bygone times authored by those people who were there will provide a more balanced picture.

I left Hong Kong in 1966 for the UK to study at the RAM. Living in London, I read about the Hong Kong riots of 1967. This time it was the Communist red flag with yellow stars that was on display everywhere (Fig.1.8 p.42). The leftists clashed violently with the Hong Kong Police and resorted to terrorist attacks. A minor labour dispute grew into large-scale leftist demonstrations against British colonial rule resulting in 51 people being killed, more than 800 people sustaining injuries, and 5,000 people being arrested with around 2,000 convicted (Wiki 2015. *The HK 1967 leftist riots*). Media depiction by those who were there includes John Woo’s 1990 action movie *Bullet in the Head* – the 1967 Riots are briefly shown, and Wong Kar Wai’s 2004 movie *2046*, which features a backdrop of the riots and some old newsreels. I was not there to experience these events, and as far as I am aware, they did not have an impact on my creative inspiration.

I was in Hong Kong during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests. Daily, there was extended coverage in the media. I knew many who worked in the Hong Kong media due to my creative/directing practice, including those with leftist affiliations who could obtain daily information and images of the protests from Beijing – had I been in the

UK I would not have come across these. An editor of a leftist magazine that I knew was upset on seeing photos of protest casualties such as the body of one killed by a tank driven over him – photos that would not be published by his magazine. I declined his offer to view these gruesome images that upset him. However, whenever the West brings up the famous footage or photo of a Tiananmen protester confronting a tank (Fig.1.9 p.43), my admiration is for the person in the tank who had a heart, and did not drive the tank to crush this protester like those who did – a reminder of that British soldier who did not shoot me when I violated the curfew and was about to throw a stone at him during the riots.

At the time I was moved by the reaction of Hong Kong people and students. They took to the street to express their support for the protesters and democracy. The harsh treatment of protesters in mainland China brought fear to many Hong Kong residents concerning the forthcoming 1997 Take Over, especially those who had fled the Communists once before – many were considering emigrating. Knowing a number of them would emigrate to the UK, I staged *Theme Hong Kong* 香港做主題: the first leg was held at London's South Bank Centre 21-26 August 1990, and followed by a larger scale second staging in Hong Kong from 23 December 1990 to 2 January 1991. *Theme Hong Kong* included three combined arts programmes, two concerts, a forum, a workshop and displays, and involved musicians, composers, dancers, choreographers, writers, actors, artists, etc. that have connection with Hong Kong or the UK.

I saw *Macbeth in Cantonese* at the Globe Theatre in London (17-23 August 2015), a Hong Kong production co-commissioned by Hong Kong Arts Festival. Cantonese opera had tackled Shakespeare long ago in Hong Kong and this legacy should have supplied inspiration. I had expected the production to demonstrate the influence of Cantonese opera. But although it was performed in Cantonese, I saw and heard Japanese influence instead (further discussions on this point follow in 6.1.1, pp. 398-399). Perhaps as Cantonese opera has dwindled in Hong Kong, it no longer influences a younger generation, who may not have seen a live performance of Cantonese opera.

All these experiences of political and social change made me consider the importance of the autobiographical in my thesis and prototype.

(iii) CANTONESE OPERA, THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL AND CANCER SURVIVAL

The live performances of Cantonese opera that I remember were often unrehearsed with creative input from performers and only happened in the moment, but they live on in the memory of audiences. It was truly contemporary – like the large, strongly fragrant flowers of *Epiphyllum* that bloom for a single night and for a few hours only (Fig.1.10 p.43). Though a lead performer's rendition lives on in audiences' memories, what each audience remembers is subjective. In the past the profession was looked down on and Cantonese opera was not well documented. Some practitioners and audiences talked and wrote about their own experience, and my experience and memories contribute to the knowledge of what was happening at the time, adding a piece to the whole picture.

Some characteristics of Cantonese opera are unlikely to survive, but they have lived on to some degree in my work. There are many whose creative work is semi-autobiographical and has been affected by exposure to another art form or culture, but I am probably one of a very few composer-directors that has been influenced by Cantonese opera. The journey of my multifaceted career includes encounters with those working in similar practices and with similar interests as my own, such as Stockhausen, Chowning, Serge and Ivan Tcherepnin, Peter Zinovieff, Isang Yun, John Adams, Judith Weir, Tan Dun, Glen Tetley, best-seller writer John David Morley, and many more in the UK, US, HK, China and Taiwan.

Since the core of this creative PhD (Chapter 5, pp. 213-396) is akin to opera, I needed a story. It was surviving cancer for the third time that alerted me to the possible demise of Cantonese opera. Many people will develop cancer during their lifetime and many will survive. With advances in treatment there will be a growing number of survivors. Many survivors have written or made a video about their experience. My own cancer survival story, which is the basis of the *Quben* (libretto cum script) in Chapter 5, is humorous and intended for enjoyable, easy reading. My PhD serves as an example of how one can go on to achieve, look back with humour and boost the morale of fellow cancer survivors. My humorous survival story mirrors the fortunes of Cantonese opera. Like the Cantonese opera that I remember, its purpose is to entertain the general public, and it can be used flexibly by others and reinterpreted to yield new versions.

Chapter 1 Figures

Fig.1.1: Hong Kong map (pp. 3, 78)

Orange = Mainland China

Yellow = Hong Kong

SLCP = Sha Ling Livestock Waste Composting Plant

When I was a child, Hong Kong was divided into three regions:
The city – Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula;
Villages – New Territories;
Less populated offshore islands.



Source: imageKB, *Hong Kong Map image gallery*, 2015.

Fig.1.2: THE MERCHANT OF VENICE as Cantonese opera (p.8)

HEAVEN'S PROUD DAUGHTER in Chinese 天之骄女

From *yue-ju-da-dian* (A Collection of Cantonese Opera Classics 粤剧大典): 1983 performance based on a Hong Kong version, with Hung *Sin-Nui* 红线女 as Portia.

1.2a: Portia and maids

1.2b: Shylock and Portia

1.2c: Antonio and Bassanio



Source: Yin-ling-xue-xin 银伶雪欣

1.2d: 'The Wedding Scene' (below) 2014 – a Canton performance in memory of Hung *Sin-Nui* 红线女.



Source: Jinming 2014 production photos of *WEALTHY DAUGHTER* 豪门千金 – a new version of *HEAVEN'S PROUD DAUGHTER*

红船 [精彩剧照] 今明 《天之骄女》之选婚 2014-1-12

Fig.1.3: RETURN OF THE CONDOR HEROES 神鵰俠侶 daily newspaper serial
Tuesday 1-9-1959 (pp. 11-12)

Jin Yong's kung-fu novels started as daily newspaper serials. A short portion of one such serial, *Return of the Condor Heroes*, is shown below. The original versions of his kung-fu novels are now nearly impossible to obtain. So-called 'New Editions' with drastic revisions are widely available as wuxia literature. I treasure and enjoy the few original Jin Yong novels that I possess in the same way that I treasure the Cantonese opera I remember.



Source: Wikipedia, *Return of the Condor Heroes*.

霸王别姬 (1982) – the score is clearly marked in short sections to unfold the drama (p.17).

© Ann-Kay Lin, also known as Ho Wai-On

Fig.1.5: Ho Wai-On *PERMUTATION* (1998)

The first nine bars might sound like a purposeful chord progression, but they result from the superimposition of computer permutations of a melodic shape (p.18).

Permutation
for the 1st London Festival of Wind Music 1998

Ann-Kay Lin
(also known as Ho Wai-On)

A Haunting, like a distorted hymn, and as if from far far away
Tempo 1
♩ = 60

Oboe
Clarinet in B \flat
Horn in F
Piano
una corda

B Solo and echoes, piu mosso
Tempo 2
♩ = 120

Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Pno.
tre corde

C Espressivo e rubato, meno mosso
♩ = 60 (Tempo 1)
solo b
molto vib.

Ob.
Cl.
Hn.
Pno.
open

Ob.
Cl.

Fig.1.6: Ho Wai-On DRINKING ALONE UNDER THE MOON 李白月下独酌 1974
 The vocal melody is my musical rendition of the sound of reading Li Bai's poem in Cantonese, and the song is suitable as a melody for Cantonese opera (p.18).

4. Drinking alone under the moon

Poem by Li Bai, the great Tang Dynasty poet

$\text{♩} = 150$ Animato

71 *meno mosso* $\text{♩} = 120$

Cl. *mf*

76 Among flowering shrubs with a pot of wine, I drink alone with no one dear to me.

S. *mp*

hua jian yi— hu jiu, du zhuo wu xiang qin.

Cl. *mp*

81 I raise my wine cup to invite the moon, and with my shadow we become three.

S. *mf*

ju bei yao ming yue, dui ying cheng san ren.

Cl. *mf*

85 But the moon does not appreciate wine, and my shadow follows me blindly.

S.

yue ji bu jie yin, ying tu sui wo—

Cl.

89 *meno mosso* $\text{♩} = 60$

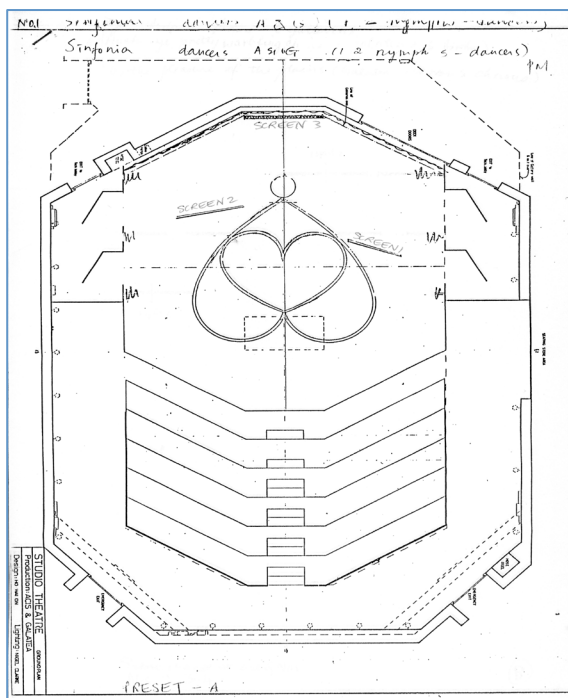
S. Yet with the moon and my shadow, we make merry in Spring.

shen. zan ban yue jiang ying, xing luo xu ji chun.

Cl. *mf*

Fig.1.7: Ho Wai-On *ACIS & GALATEA* costume & stage design 1987 仙侶与巨人 (pp. 19-22)

1.7a: Stage design (pp. 21, 22) – I arranged the performing space to be like a reversed opera theatre: the auditorium became the main performing stage; the upper stalls became a smaller upper tier stage mounted with a projection screen and the design of clouds; on the sides where the boxes should be were the orchestra in stereo effect – though in the Cantonese opera that I remember instrumentalists were on stage near one side rather than both sides of the wings.

**1.7b: One of my many stage floor plans** (pp. 21, 22)

The Studio Theatre could be arranged flexibly, and I arranged it to be like a semi amphitheatre so that the audience could have a good view. The floor of the main stage was painted with a pastoral design with neon lights under perspex as flowing water: a heart within heart signifies the obsessive and passionate love between Acis and Galatea transformed into a more gentle and unpossessive love when Acis is turned into water.

To make use of leftovers: black and white materials

1.7c: White for Galatea's aria *AS WHEN THE DOVE* (p.20)



1.7d: Black and white: Hair scarfs, and dresses with ribbons for the Muses; black trousers, white shirts and hair scarfs for the swains. The screen and projection expand the spatial limitations. See pp. 20, 21 and 22.



1.7e: Colourful hair scarves (p.21)

– in a fashion that reminded me of Cantonese opera (image L).



Source of image L: Yun-cai 雲彩, 粵劇《碣樓》劇照之四 2015-11-30 17:35:04

1.7f: Long colourful ribbons on costumes for the nymphs and Galatea are reminiscent of a type of Cantonese opera costume (image L) that looks good with dance movements (p.21).



Source for Image L: Local Ginger 本地姜南派武功粵劇的自我救贖 2014-9-22 10:55:52

1.7g: More use of ribbons: Birds in aria *HUSH, YE PRETTY WARBLING CHOIR* (p.20).



1.7h: Shiny headgear – reminiscent of similar headgear in Cantonese opera, and matching the ribbon dresses used during dance numbers (p.21).

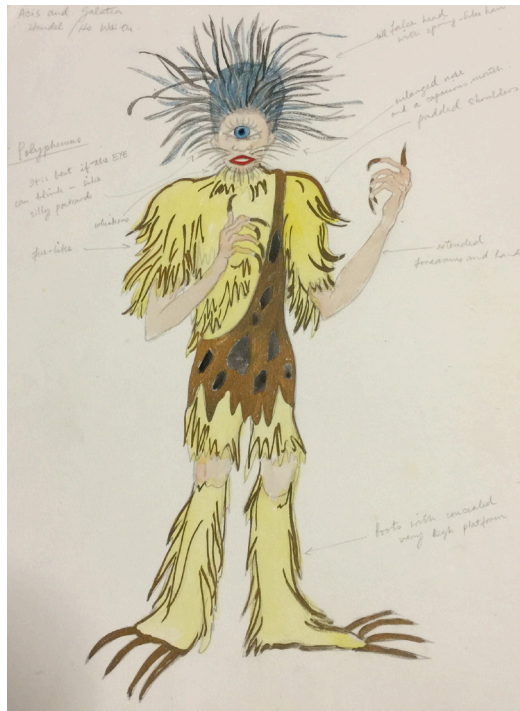


1.7i: Cupids: White costumes and wigs (pp. 20 & 21)

Cupid was changed into three cherub-like beings when love became the motive for murder: dancers with wigs and horror film Victorian doll-like masks, used for the scene of the death of Acis.

1.7j: Genius of the Mountains (pp. 20 & 21): Wig modified and dyed green with a half mask – to create a mixture of an elf and some supernatural creature from Cantonese film.

1.7k: The Cyclops Polyphemus (p.21): My design was inspired by fairy tale; and used Cantonese opera headgear, platform shoes and walking on stilts.



Above R is a wuchang (Impermanence 无常) that escorts spirits to the Underworld, walking on stilts and wearing a tall hat with the words 'Seeing this brings good fortunes' so as not to offend superstitious audiences.

Source of above R:
Local Shallot, 2012.



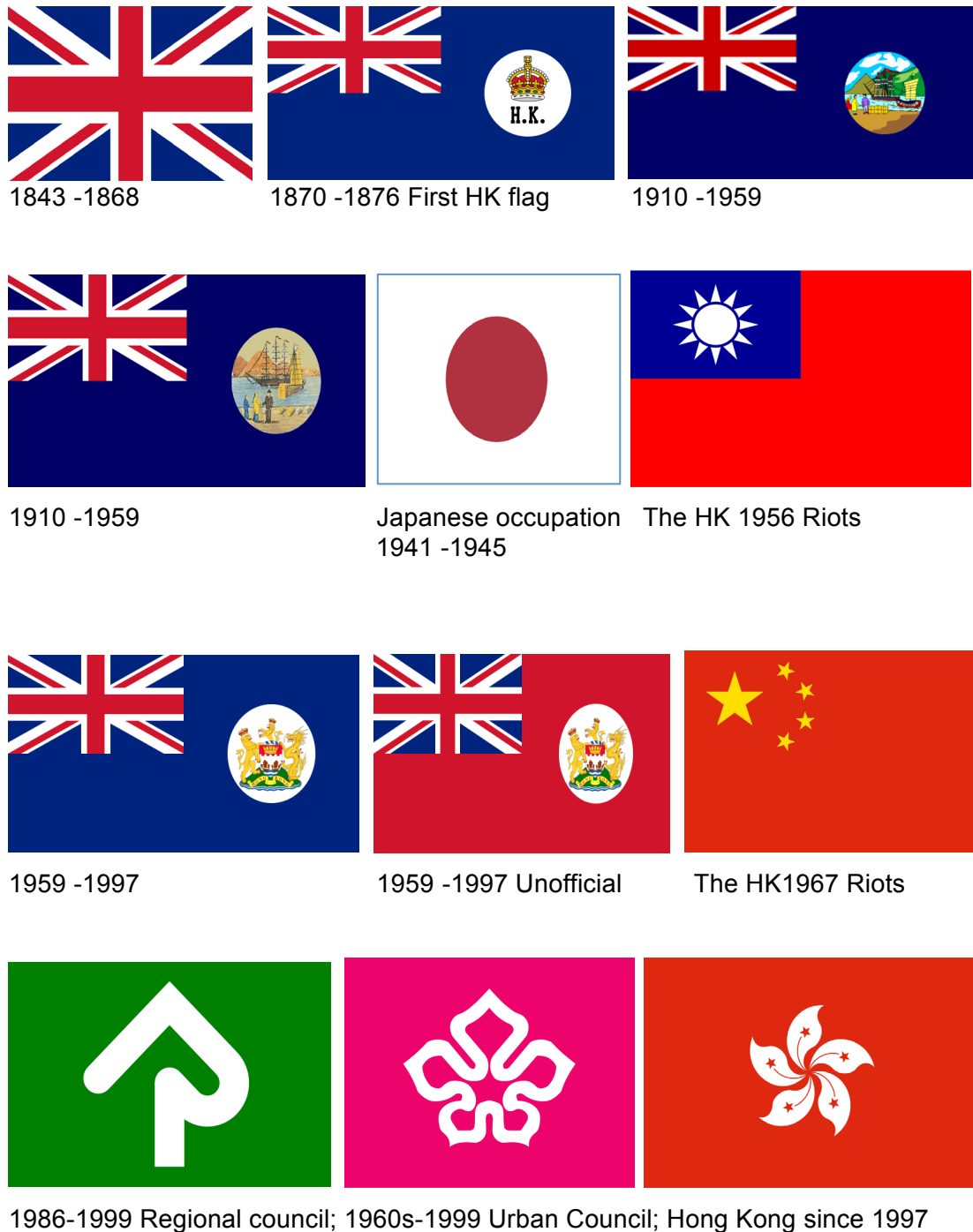
The eyes of Polyphemus appear when the chorus sing *WRETCHED LOVERS*

1.71: ACIS AND GALETEA as colourful 'big drama' (p.22)



Fig.1.8: Flags of change (pp. 25-27)

The following are flags of Hong Kong from 1843 to 1997, and the two flags connected with the 1956 and 1967 riots.



Source: *Hong Kong Flags* (Wikipedia, 2015)

Fig.1.9: Tiananmen protester confronting tank 1994 (p.27)

My admiration is for the person driving the front tank who had a heart, and did not crush this protester (source: thejornal.ie Jun 3rd 2014, 6:45am).

**Fig.1.10: Epiphyllum 昙花一现 (p.28)**

The live performances of Cantonese opera that I remember were often unrehearsed with creative input from performers and only happened in the moment, but they live on in the memory of audiences. It was truly contemporary – like the large, strongly fragrant flowers of Epiphyllum that bloom for a single night and for a few hours only.



Source: Kid.QQ.com

Chapter 2

RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODS

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2.1 OVERVIEW

The research I have undertaken has supported the creation of my prototype, which constitutes a Quben 曲本 (libretto cum script), original music, production ideas, and other complementary materials. My prototype is cross-cultural combined arts because that is the nature of my creative/directing practice. Though I have no formal training in Cantonese opera, my creative/directing practice has been strongly influenced by my childhood impressions of the art form. My research serves as creative inspiration and brings to light ideas that reflect certain characteristics of Cantonese opera. I also pursue research into what engenders popular appeal – at least for the creative part of this thesis – since the Cantonese opera that I remember was strongly connected with the lower classes of Hong Kong society, as explained in Chapter 1. The Quben is a humorous cancer survival story based on my experience. As there is a strain of the autobiographical, I investigate others whose work also includes an autobiographical dimension, as well as the work of other practitioners in cross-cultural and combined arts. My creative/directing practice and the Cantonese opera of my childhood, embrace and touch upon areas that include Western Classical music, contemporary music, electro-acoustics, music theatre, Western opera, musicals, pop music, popular culture, jazz, film and TV, drama, stage plays, Shakespeare, dance, martial arts, mime, acrobatics, stand-up comedy, cabaret, creative writing, and visual arts. I confine my research to that which has a direct influence on my creative work, or is particularly relevant to Cantonese opera. Despite health and finance, the Internet has made fieldwork possible: by watching on-line performances of Cantonese opera and by creating an on-line forum to gather others' memories of Cantonese opera. Apart from the following discussion, further discussions and research results appear in each of the succeeding chapters – 3 *Cantonese Opera*, 4 *Explaining My Prototype*, and 5 *The Prototype Proper* – as relevant to the context of that chapter.

2.2 RESEARCH SUPPORTING CREATION AND PERFORMANCE

My research serves primarily as inspiration for the creative part of my PhD thesis – the prototype – but simultaneously it broadens my understanding of Cantonese opera beyond the childhood impressions that I cherish. The following account reflects critically on the purpose of research in the pursuit of creative/performative work, and contrasts this with research in a broader academic context.

2.2.1 THE EDGE OF OUR THINKING

On 18-19 November 2011, I attended a multi-disciplinary PhD student-led conference at the Royal College of Art, *The Edge of Our Thinking: Research in Art and Design*. Dr Glenn Adamson, then Head of Research at the Victoria and Albert Museum (and now director of the Museum of Modern Art, New York) delivered the keynote address. He pointed out that, whilst every PhD must include research, since the AHRC had endorsed the legitimacy of a creative PhD, an accepted understanding of the term 'research' might be disputed. As a veteran of creative work, I know that creative artists often undertake research – for the purpose of gaining ideas and inspiration that help them move towards the goal of completing a new work. Yet on other occasions creative artists will omit to undertake any research. This is unlike academic research where the emphasis is on research as an end in itself. Academic research is typically objective, avoiding that which might be regarded as personal. Yet a creative artist needs artistic freedom, and needs to listen to his/her artistic instinct and intuition rather than to follow what others have done. Artistic creation is subjective and will bear the signature of the creator rather than present the objective findings of research. Otherwise the creation will be of little artistic value, merely an exercise. University research often involves rules and regulations. Such restrictions can stifle artistic inspiration and instinct.

2.2.2 THE LIVING TRADITION

In 1988, London's Victoria and Albert Museum advertised in the press, inviting innovative proposals for 'Special Events' to take place in the museum. In response I wrote a proposal entitled *The Living Tradition*, which called for the performance of new works based around images of museum exhibits and involving many creative and performing artists with whom I had worked. The proposal was initially accepted, but as the project developed the V&A official in charge felt uneasy about the 'creative' and 'living' aspects of the project. I had to answer to repeated queries: Would the relationship between the creative work and the image be historically correct, and in what way would the relationship between the creative work and the image have educational value? The official seemed not to understand that the project would use images of the past as creative/performative inspiration. Creative and performing artists are different from museum curators in that imagination and originality take precedence over historical accuracy or factual research; and creativity has a value of

its own. In the end the V&A cancelled the project. However my group Inter Artes⁶ performed *The Living Tradition* at London's Bloomsbury Theatre on 6th May 1989, in a version for soprano, dancers, three instrumentalists and multi-slide projection of images of V&A exhibits. A later version of the work was performed at the Hong Kong City Hall Concert Hall in 1991, with images from local museums (Fig.4.7b, p.203). Even when writing a historical novel or directing a performance of historical drama, though the writer/producer will undertake a certain amount of research, authentic historical details alone cannot ensure the success of the work – ultimately it is the drama that matters. My PhD project is similar to *The Living Tradition* – its purpose is to create a performative work inspired by Cantonese opera at a time when the art form is in danger of becoming a lifeless museum exhibit.

2.2.3 DANTE AND BEATRICE

One of the set books during my year of study at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (1965) was Dante's *Divine Comedy III: Paradise* (trans. Dorothy L Sayers and Barbara Reynolds, 1962). Dante met Beatrice when he was a child and she captivated him completely. In 13th century Florence arranged marriages were the norm. Dante was married to Gemma Donati, to whom he had been betrothed, and Beatrice married somebody else only to die three years after that. Dante remained devoted to Beatrice for the rest of his life and she was the principal inspiration for much of his well-known work, such as the *Divine Comedy*. The last part of my PhD title "*remembering Cantonese opera*" points to a similarity between my creative approach and Dante's use of the memory of Beatrice – his first love – as creative inspiration. As a small child my first exposure to music and multimedia performance was Cantonese opera and it captivated me completely. Providence decreed that I am married to Western Classical music and that I live in the West, yet I remain devoted to Cantonese opera from a distance. My creative and directing practice has been inspired and influenced by this first love despite its decline and possible demise.

Another similarity shared with Dante is the perfection that may abide in memory. Memory is subjective and the image of perfection may suffer under scrutiny. Some of my cherished childhood memories of performances of Cantonese opera have been diminished when seeing online videos of the same or similar performances while

⁶ I formed Inter Artes 通藝 in 1988 to create and perform works that combine music, dance, drama and visual arts across different cultures. See Chapter 4 *My Cross-Cultural Combined Arts Prototype*, 4.1.6. *Inter Artes* (p.170).

researching for this project. Creation stemming from the memory is perhaps the most subjective, as witnessed in Dante's first sonnet in *La Vita Nuova*. The translation into English of chapters III and XI from *La Vita Nuova* as rendered in *Fascinating History: Dante and Beatrice* (29 January 2006) are quoted below:

When exactly nine years had passed since this gracious being appeared to me, as I have described, it happened that on the last day of this intervening period this marvel appeared before me again, dressed in purest white, walking between two other women of distinguished bearing, both older than herself. As they walked down the street she turned her eyes toward me where I stood in fear and trembling, and with her ineffable courtesy, which is now rewarded in eternal life, she greeted me; and such was the virtue of her greeting that I seemed to experience the height of bliss. It was exactly the ninth hour of day when she gave me her sweet greeting. As this was the first time she had ever spoken to me, I was filled with such joy that, my senses reeling, I had to withdraw from the sight of others. So I returned to the loneliness of my room and began to think about this gracious person. (*La Vita Nuova III*)

Whenever and wherever she appeared, in the hope of receiving her miraculous salutation I felt I had not an enemy in the world. Indeed, I glowed with a flame of charity which moved me to forgive all who had ever injured me; and if at that moment someone had asked me a question, about anything, my only reply would have been: 'Love', with a countenance clothed with humility. When she was on the point of bestowing her greeting, a spirit of love, destroying all the other spirits of the senses, drove away the frail spirits of vision and said: 'Go and pay homage to your lady'; and Love himself remained in their place. Anyone wanting to behold Love could have done so then by watching the quivering of my eyes. And when this most gracious being actually bestowed the saving power of her salutation, I do not say that Love as an intermediary could dim for me such unendurable bliss but, almost by excess of sweetness, his influence was such that my body, which was then utterly given over to his governance, often moved like a heavy, inanimate object. So it is plain that in her greeting resided all my joy, which often exceeded and overflowed my capacity. (*La Vita Nuova XI*)

Had Dante married Beatrice, knowing her intimately, his image of her as perfection would probably have been shattered or at least dented, and perhaps she would no longer have served as Dante's muse. In pursuing research for creative inspiration, it is important to know when to stop so that the image remains intact. While researching into this project, for a while I wondered whether it was wise to get so close to a beautiful memory. Dante's writing is about Beatrice, yet it is not about the real Beatrice – it is a new creation of Beatrice. The same is true with my creative project – it has much to do with Cantonese opera, yet the creation is not really Cantonese opera, but a new format inspired by my memories and impressions of it.

2.3 THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL IN CREATION AND PERFORMANCE

As the accepted understanding of a PhD has expanded to include creative practice, it is logical that the autobiographical has also become accepted. Creative work often reflects the life of its creator. Many creative/performative works have a tendency towards the autobiographical or semi-autobiographical, or at the very least are related to the creator's background and experience. In a less obvious way, academic work is also affected by one's background and personal experience – this is what gives the work passion and poignancy. If it is about life and life experience, even a PhD thesis will be of interest to the general public. A creative and performative work must have an audience – and in the case of my *Song and Dance*, the intended audience is the general public. At the core of the creative part of my thesis is creative writing; so I have investigated the work of writers with popular appeal and practitioners whose creative work reflects the autobiographical, their background, and their personal experience. The following are some examples:

2.3.1 JEANETTE WINTERSON

The best-known work of award-winning English writer Jeanette Winterson (1959 -) is probably *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985), which is a coming-out novel based on her life:

The main character is a young girl named Jeanette, who is adopted by evangelists from the Elim Pentecostal Church. She believes she is destined to become a missionary. The book depicts religious enthusiasm as an exploration of the power of love. As an adolescent, Jeanette finds herself attracted to another girl, and her mother's group of religious friends subject her and her partner to exorcisms. (Wiki 2015, Plot)

Winterson is aware that she is affected by her background and life experience, and reveals these nakedly in her book. She has found salvation in creativity fuelled by her unusual life experiences rather than through the church, as her adoptive parents would have preferred. I have also found salvation in creativity, but I was not aware of how much my work has been affected by my background and life experience (though I seem to have everything but normality) – it was not until it becomes necessary for my creative PhD to include elements of the autobiographical that I became aware of this fact. There are many whose work includes the autobiographical in a subtle fashion that may or may not be intentional.

2.3.2 JOHN DAVID MORLEY

I met the writer and novelist John David Morley in 1966. I was then a first year student at the Royal Academy of Music and a paying guest in his sister's house, and became acquainted with the Morley family. On the maternal side, his family has a strong connection with the RAM – his late maternal grandfather Victor Booth was a piano professor at the RAM before my time, and his sister and then brother-in-law are both RAM alumni. His mother Patricia Morley, an artist and sculptor, painted a couple of portraits of me. She told me that David grew up speaking Malay amid an extended household of Malays, Javanese, Chinese and Indians when they lived in Singapore. At five, his family returned to England before spending some time on Africa's Gold Coast. In his semi-autobiographical novel *Pictures from the Water Trade* (1985), the inside page reads:

John David Morley was born in Singapore in 1948 and was educated at Merton College, Oxford. His first job was in Mexico, as a tutor to the children of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. Then he went to Germany to work in the theatre, and by the age of twenty-four had begun to develop an interest in the theatre – and later the general culture – of Japan, and to teach himself the language. He went to Japan on a Japanese government scholarship... (1st edition Flamingo)

In the novel he wrote in the third person calling his young Englishman Boon, and explained why he went to Japan:

Boon went to Japan because he had once seen a Japanese actor walk across a stage in a way that deeply impressed him. It was not a big stage, not more than a dozen yards across, but the actor moved so slowly and with such controlled tautness of muscle that the stage itself seemed to become progressively bigger; it took him a full minute to pass from one side to the other. The distension of space and time in this performance on the stage likewise characterised Boon's decision. Made in the course of this minute, to visit Japan, for when he did eventually get there he was to stay for almost three years – far longer than he had originally intended when he took that decision. (p.30, 1st para.)

He then wrote about the changes in him that occurred while staying in Japan:

By this time he had learned to speak very good Japanese. He was accepted by his employees on Japanese terms; more to their own surprise than to his they treated him as one of themselves. Without conscious effort he spoke and behaved in the way most appropriately suited to the occasion... (p.241, 2nd para.)

This is followed by an explanation of why he left Japan:

Boon followed his instinct and went home. He did not take any decision or attempt to reason the matter out. The decision was taken for him, by the same impulse that had originally brought him to the country.

In the new year he received a telephone call from one of the agencies for which he worked. At the end of the conversation he wished his invisible caller a propitious opening to the coming year and involuntarily bowed to him before placing the receiver. Many Japanese bowed not just when visible, but also when only audible in the presence of another person, but this was the first time that Boon was conscious of having done so himself. Why had he bowed? Mechanically, for no other reason than that he had learned to bow. And Boon realised that imperceptibly he was beginning to lose touch with himself. (p.247, last para.)

D J Morley's early exposure to other cultures might have been an important factor contributing to his easy assimilation into the Japanese culture. Yet perhaps there is no turning back. Apparently his work continues to be involved with Japanese culture, as the first page of his book says:

Since then he has made his home in Munich, where he works for Japanese television as a liaison officer and interpreter, researching TV documentaries. He has translated some thirty Japanese scripts into English and German'.

I sometimes wonder what effects of working on my PhD project and revisiting Cantonese opera would have on me.

2.3.3 SALLY BERRIDGE

Sally Berridge is an Adjunct Professional Associate in the Faculty of Design and Creative Practice, University of Canberra. She was awarded her doctorate for a performative creative PhD in 2006 (Canberra). In her paper *What Does It Take? Auto/biography as Performative PhD Thesis*, she says in the Abstract:

The physical outcome of my thesis is two artist's books: one, *Tissue*, is autobiographical, while questioning the nature of autobiography, memory and identity. The other, *Re-Picturing My Life*, is the theoretical component, examining several paradigms including issues of methodology; the value of art as research; theories of memory, identity, autobiography, and human interactions with objects. I have placed some of my text/images in this paper to provide a taste of the work in my thesis. My paper reflects on performative work in the context of academic research, and the resilience, determination and sense of humour needed to complete a doctorate successfully in this valuable area of endeavour. (Forum: Qualitative - Social Research, 9(2), Art. 45, May 2008 - Sally Berridge).

The *Introduction* that follows is personal autobiographical creative writing:

Yes, we had a farm in Africa, though not at the foot of the Ngong hills... the dry, burnt colours of Africa did enter my heart and my veins. It's not just the smell of the dust, the red and gold of the Gloriosa lilies, the geckos that hang stickily around the ceiling, the kak-kak-kak of the guinea fowl that call you back to Africa... There's no getting rid of Africa however hard you try, once you have been infected.

An African worm had infected me. It constantly slithered and whispered in my brain... — each time the worm whispered its old questions: What happened to our farm? Could I ever find it again? ...

It took my PhD journey to make my dream come true, to silence that slithery Kenya worm gnawing and nibbling at my psyche. It took my PhD journey to make me look up Calcutta newspapers from 1942 in the Australian National Library in Canberra, and travel to India to find my mother's previously unknown grave in Calcutta; and to England to the National Archives in Kew to find lost family history, including the actual divorce papers of my grandparents from 1909, and her family with deep, deep farming roots in Dorset (England). I didn't know that I would find so much family background: a whole heap of relatives, several stately homes, a few eminent and (fortunately, because they are so much more interesting) a few notorious ancestors, as well as a family tree that goes back some 800 years. This was extraordinary for me, a previously rootless being who has lived in four countries and can't feel totally at home or grounded in any of them.

I have no knowledge of Africa and my work belongs to a different creative practice, yet I read Berridge's paper with keen interest as it is about life, not only hers, but also the lives of those people connected to her. I empathise with her reasons for undertaking the project, the restrictions imposed on her and the efforts involved in accomplishing her unusual PhD.

My PhD is also about remembering and revisiting and involves the autobiographical. Berridge's creative performative PhD is art-based and multi-disciplinary, including creative prose and visual images (Fig.2.1 p.64). Her interpretation of the 'performative' is broader than my understanding of the term as comprising music, dance and acting. Yet her approach is relevant to my PhD with its use of creative writing (the Quben), original music, production ideas and complementary materials. In the context of my PhD, these materials present the performative rather than a finished performance on stage, and do so whilst welcoming the user's own interpretation.

2.3.4 LIZ TRENOW

After a public lecture on her writing in Romford on 19th November 2015, I talked to the successful novelist Liz Trenow about undertaking research for creative purposes, as I was aware that she had obtained an MA in Creative Writing that involved writing a novel. From her lecture and her website (liztrenow.com) I learned that Liz Trenow was born and brought up in a house next to the family silk mill – her family have been silk weavers for nearly three hundred years, learning the trade from the first Huguenot refugees. Silk played a large part in her early life and as a student she undertook a range of holiday jobs in the mill. The silk company has a long and distinguished history that had never been recorded, so she started to research it with the intention of writing a book. As her parents reached their eighties, she started recording conversations with them, individually and together, about their extraordinary lives. During one of these conversations, her father mentioned that during the Second World War what kept the mill going were contracts to weave silk for parachutes, surgical dressings (silk has amazing antiseptic properties) and electrical insulation (plastics had only just been invented). He also told her how tricky it had been getting the porosity of the fabric just right for parachutes. The germ of an idea for a novel was born, but it was not until she retired from full-time work and took an MA in Creative Writing at City University, London that she started writing *The Last Telegram*, and the story started to unfold. It was the recollections that inspired this first novel of 2012.

Her 2014 novel *The Forgotten Seamstress* was inspired partly by a piece of unique royal silk that she discovered at the Warner Textile Archive in Braintree, Essex, and partly by her personal experience of spending a couple of nights in a clinical ward which was part of a huge former Victorian mental asylum. At the centre of the novel is a patchwork quilt discovered decades later. The meaning of the messages embroidered into its lining is an intriguing patchwork of past and present, through which tells the extraordinary story of a seamstress to the Royal Family. Though the books are not obviously autobiographical, the creation reflects its creator's background and is inseparable from her life and personal experience.

The following is Liz Trenow's 21 November 2015 email to answer my queries in bold:

Your views/experience on research for creative writing

LT: Of course it is really important to make sure you get the historical details

right, and the further back you go in time, the more difficult this is!

Historical details are easy enough to find in books, but it is the social historical, and the personal details that are harder to find. So, for example, researching the Second World War era for my first novel, *The Last Telegram*, I had:

- first hand accounts from that generation, eg my father
- diaries, letters and accounts from the Mass Communication project
- videos on You Tube

On the other hand, researching the Georgian era for my latest novel was much more difficult. Again, the historical facts are easy to read up, but more difficult were the little details eg what did my artist protagonist use for a pencil (not yet invented), and what were people's real attitudes to Huguenot refugees.

My experience is the same as that of many others: research can take over. The advice I received when doing my MA was 'do all your research, then put the books away, and let your creative mind take over'. This is true - getting bogged down into historical facts does certainly hamper creativity, but when you are unsure of your ground it is sometimes difficult to 'let go' and allow yourself to start 'making things up'! This feels scary at the time but certainly pays dividends. In other words, you have to learn to start writing fiction, rather than a historical account.

Your works and the autobiographical – you said to me that the closest to this is *The Last Telegram*. However, from your talk, I feel that your early exposure to silk and the 'rag trade' (in your own words) is an important element to your books

LT: Most authors will admit that there is much of the autobiographical in their novels. A writer can't help bringing their own experience of the world into the worlds they create - be they historical, or sci-fi - and the characters they imagine. Not that any character in a novel is usually a complete crib from real life, but there are almost always details eg their freckles, or their way of clearing their throats, that you have stolen from yourself, or from people you know.

However for my first novel, *The Last Telegram*, many of the characters and storylines were inspired by real events and real people. The parachute weaving at the mill, the central love story, the tale of the Syrian raw silk - all of these were based on real events. The father character had much of my father and grandfather in him, and the brother was a close match to my uncle. I don't think that Lily had much of me in her, but I'm sure there was something in her determination that reflected my own character. Settings are very important for me when writing, and I had the great luxury of knowing well the setting of the silk mill, which has changed little since those days.

About five chapters into writing the novel I showed it to a wise friend. She said: 'this is all very lovely, Liz, but everyone is too nice to each other. Where's the jeopardy?'

It was a watershed moment. I realised that writing about my family meant that I was afraid to portray anyone as weak, or vulnerable, or able to make momentous mistakes. No-one was unpleasant to anyone else, everyone was perfectly reasonable in their behaviour. BORING! So I had to decide to unhitch

my story from the family and start allowing the characters to breathe their own air, instead of the autobiographical/historical air! Only after that did the story start to take its own shape. In other words, I started writing fiction rather than a memoir.

The core of the creative part of my thesis is the Quben *Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor* based on my experience. The creative writing, original music, production ideas and complementary materials draw on my creative/directing practice and impressions of Cantonese opera. Yet I also need the creation to breathe its own air and take its own shape, away from academic restrictions. That is why it is a prototype rather than a finished opera or a finished performance.

2.3.5 JULIET CHENERY-ROBSON

Juliet Chenery-Robson is a visual artist who works mainly with lens-based media. She gave a presentation on her AHRC funded practice-led PhD at *The Edge of Our Thinking* conference at the RCA, which I attended in November 2011 (2.2.1, p.46). The following explains the background to her research:

When my daughter became ill with ME 10 years ago I found myself cast as a traveller between two worlds, worlds that are eloquently described by Susan Sontag in her book *Illness as Metaphor*: 'Illness is the night-side of life, a more onerous citizenship. Everyone who is born holds dual citizenship, in the kingdom of the well and in the kingdom of the sick. Although we all prefer to use only the good passport, sooner or later each of us is obliged, at least for a spell, to identify ourselves as citizens of that other place.' Residing in the world of the well I felt assuaged with guilt at not being able to offer my daughter any firm answers as to why she was trapped in the land of the sick. And, because ME is still shrouded within an aura of disbelief and misconception, I decided to explore ways in which, through photography, this invisible illness could be made visible to a disbelieving audience. (2015 Axis Web, Juliet Chenery-Robson)

Juliet kindly sent me a copy of her PhD thesis *Portrait of an Invisible Illness: The Visualisation of Myalgic Encephalomyelitis through Photography and Text with Participation from ME Sufferers* (2015, Sunderland University). In it I learned that Juliet's MA is also related to ME which includes photos of her daughter. For her PhD research she worked with other ME participants, but there is still a photo of her daughter included in the thesis (Fig.2.2a, p.65). In this striking photo her daughter is not clearly visible, but her open hand is in the foreground of the image, as if to give a poignant message. From my first meeting with Juliet in 2011 and our subsequent contacts via telephone and emails, I perceived that her daughter's illness has had a

profound effect on Juliet's life, indeed it has almost become her life, and the situation has been like this for a long time. In the thesis she writes: "... giving up work to care for Emilia full-time, but unable to offer her any hope of a cure..." (1.2: *Mimesis 1: Background to the research: A personal perspective*)

Her PhD is multi-faceted and consists of two volumes – Vol. 1 Thesis (248 pages) and Vol. 2 Appendix (165 pages) – which contain writing from her personal perspective, the history and background of ME, case studies, participants' narratives, diaries and family albums, documents, historical photos, publicity information, records of exhibitions and reviews, and a justification of the contribution to knowledge... all very valuable to ME awareness and research. Abundant figures are included, yet it is her own photographs of her daughter (2.2a, p.65), a series of portraits of ME sufferers with their eyes closed (Fig.2.2b, p.66) and a series of their hands (Fig.2.2c, p.66) that speak directly to me, and no doubt have spoken to and will speak to her audience. In them I see the strength of the silent invisible, the frustration, and the suffering of a prolonged challenge. In her photos there is a tone of the autobiographical – telling me of the life not only of Juliet, but also of her daughter and other ME participants. In Juliet's 12 December 2015 email, she writes: 'I am now looking for funding to expand my research (arts-medical science collaboration) post doc via a fellowship, in order to work alongside a clinical ME research team at Newcastle University...'

My PhD is also concerned with turning the personal experience of illness into strength, yet unlike Juliet there is no clinical dimension to my work. My focus is on survival, seeing the funny side of my experience, and turning that experience into a creative work, freely adaptable to multi-venue performance, for the enjoyment of the general public.

2.4 THE CROSS-CULTURAL

Due to my background, described in Chapter 1, a cross-cultural dimension has always been important in my creative/directing practice. In this PhD my research takes a closer look at Cantonese opera and compares it with creative work according to Western principles. I identify the differences as well as the similarities between these two approaches. I embrace both the subjective and the objective by

remembering and by revisiting Cantonese opera, and through contact with others working in a similar practice to myself whom I have met during my long career. There are many whose creative work involves another culture. Some of them will have experienced a personal connection with that culture in their past, and that experience will often stay with them for the rest of their life.

2.4.1 CANTONESE OPERA AND WESTERN CREATIVE PRACTICE

I identify characteristics of the Cantonese opera of my childhood that are in danger of disappearing, and consider why I cherish them and how to incorporate them into a prototype that demonstrates many aspects of creative/directing practice according to Western principles. This involves the merging of musical languages, singing styles, narrative conventions/styles, scenography and dramaturgy. I investigate the history of the performance of Cantonese Opera, and attempt to identify factors that might have succeeded in keeping alive those characteristics that I value and other factors that have hastened them to disappear, such as the rising popularity of kung fu novels discussed in Chapter 1 (pp.10-13).

It is important to find the right balance so as not to dwell too much on Cantonese opera, bearing in mind that this PhD is a cross-cultural creative project rather than a thesis on Cantonese opera. Of necessity, my research is bilingual, or to be exact, trilingual, since Cantonese opera is inseparable from the Cantonese language, which is not the same as standard Chinese, whether in speech or in writing. Academic writing on Cantonese opera, especially in English, though it may broaden my understanding, also has the potential to distort subjective memories of long ago. Unlike Western opera, which is typically understood as original work created by a composer (many of whom are no longer alive), Cantonese opera is about the art of living lead performers. Therefore I use reference books and articles in Chinese that are written, contributed to, or compiled by living lead performers and practitioners of Cantonese opera, such as the *Yue-Qu-Da-Ci-Dian* 粵劇大辭典 (literally: Cantonese Opera Grand Dictionary, 2008), the equivalent of *The Grove Dictionary of Western Classical Music*. The names of committee members and consultants of this dictionary include nearly all living Cantonese opera lead performers and practitioners in China, Hong Kong and Macau.

A specific online forum was created to collate information worldwide and to gather

others' memories of performances of Cantonese opera. Since 29 August 2010, I have used the largest Cantonese opera website Red-Boat (009y.com), many of whose members are my contemporaries, under the pseudonym AKLWHO. Within the Red-Boat site, I created a forum called Plum-Flower-Boat on 1st July 2011, and from the more than 6,636 articles/replies I have elicited to date – mostly written in Cantonese – I have learned what others remember of the live performances they saw.

2.4.2 REMEMBERING AND REVISITING

In order to preserve the dual character of my project – the subjective and objective – I approach my research using the following methods:

Remembering: This constitutes the subjective dimension, which supports my creative practice. I remember not only the Cantonese opera of my childhood, but also the work of others whom I have come across during my long career.

Revisiting: Despite the limitations of health and finance, the Internet has made fieldwork possible – listening to and watching on-line Cantonese opera performances and the work of other practitioners in cross-cultural combined arts. I attempt to absorb and transfer all of these into my prototype. Revisiting constitutes the objective dimension of my research.

2.4.3 CONTRADICTION AND SIMILARITY

In cross-cultural work, it is natural to notice the differences and overlook the similarities. Cultures are the creation of humans. Humans may be different individually, but we share many similarities: some of the best artistic creations transcend cultural barriers and are appreciated universally. To emphasise cultural difference may create unnecessary barriers that alienate others. However, the contradicting principles of Cantonese opera and Western music/opera demand investigation in order to achieve a compromise.

Contradicting principles: According to my Western training and creative practice, an original work is the creation of an individual and cannot be freely altered by others. The performance of original music values authenticity. According to my experience as a child in Hong Kong and my subsequent research into Cantonese opera, that

which is termed an “original Cantonese opera song 原創粵曲” is inevitably an arrangement of existing music. In a new Cantonese opera, the original creation was invariably the Quben 曲本 (libretto cum script) – creative writing rather than original music – and a performance was valued according to a lead performer’s creative input, which often included adlib. This explains my decision to create a quasi Quben called *Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor* as the core of the creative part of my thesis, and original music as complementary material for others to use at their discretion, if they wish.

Similarity: I investigate Western musicals, since their performers share some similarities with Cantonese opera performers; pop and folk music since it allows flexible rendition of songs; and jazz since it is improvisatory. During the course of working on this project, I have noticed that more and more Western Classical music has accepted improvisation in the performance of well-known works. In November 2015, BBC Radio 3 broadcast several programmes called *Contemporary improvising round Purcell*, and *Jazz-take of Purcell*. An example is *Dido and Aeneas* performed by the ensemble L'Arpeggiata and directed by Christina Pluhar (BBC Radio 3: *Saturday Breakfast* 21, 23 November 2015). There are examples of re-creating, such as Maria Pomianowska’s arrangement of the Chopin *Mazurka* No. 23 in D and Op 33/2 (encore) broadcast at 6:27am on BBC Radio 3’s *Through the Night: Polish National Day* (11 November 2015). There are also cross-genre renditions, such as the *Romance* from *Lieutenant Kije* (1934) by Prokofiev, which becomes a music video by Sting called *Russians*, performed with his own lyrics (2005 A&M Records); and on BBC Radio 4, *Alex Horne Presents The Horne Section*, which featured new words to Vivaldi’s *Four Seasons* (27 November 2015) – a new comedy show series hosted by Alex Horne and his five piece band. This last instance reminded me of the way that a Quben matches new words to existing, selected tunes.

2.4.4 PERSONAL, PAST AND PRESENT

Like myself, many whose creative work involves another culture will have experienced a personal connection with that culture in their past, and that experience will often stay with them for the rest of their life. The following are some of those I have come across during my research:

(i) **LI YUAN-CHIA** 李元佳 (1929–1994)

There was an exhibition of Li *Yuan-Chia* at Tate Modern (11 October 2014 - 22 November 2015). The following is a summary of the information provided by Tate Modern (2015) and Wikipedia:

An artist, poet and curator, Li was born in Guangxi Province, China in 1929, and lived and worked in Taipei (1949), Bologna, London (1966) and Cumbria (1968-1994). He incorporated installations, painting, calligraphy, sculpture, and photography into his art, and was one of a small number of artists of Chinese background active in the UK during his lifetime. In 1968 Li *Yuan-Chia* moved to the area of Brampton (now in Cumbria) in North West England. After two years residence near Lanercost, he purchased a derelict farmhouse at Banks on Hadrian's Wall from the artist Winifred Nicholson. By his own efforts and with scant resources he established the LYC Museum and Art Gallery (1971), and for ten years provided space for over 300 artists active in the UK and encouraged the creative efforts of local children, some of whom went on to successful careers in the arts. Li was awarded funding from the Arts Council, making it possible for the Museum to continue its activities for the ten years he had originally planned. As well as making his own art, between 1972-1983, Li organized the LYC Museum and Art Gallery in Cumbria. It was made in his own house, a small farm building originally, which he extended year by year with his own hands, until it contained a gallery, library, theatre, printing press, children's art room and darkroom. LYC Museum was open to the public every day of the year and exhibited the work of more than 300 artists in its ten years of existence.

Though Li *Yan-Chia* had links with mainland China, Taiwan and Europe, he worked most of his life in the UK, for UK artists and children. Likewise, though I am of ethnic minority, my work is for the general public in the UK: for example, the CD and book *Music is Happiness* (2003) that I produced after surviving cancer for the second time was for English speaking people. Had I heard of Li before he died in 1994, I would have travelled to Cumbria to meet him and see his LYC Museum and Art Gallery. The following is from an article by Li *Wai-Ching* in the Taiwanese newspaper China Time on 23 February 1998, in which Li *Yuan-Chia* describes the LYC Museum and Art Gallery:

(trans.) I am the LYC Museum and Art Gallery, the LYC Museum and Art Gallery is me. The gallery has free admission and is always open, each visitor may participate, move and rearrange what is on show, and may participate in creating together to accomplish art.⁷

I formed Inter Artes 通藝 in 1988 as a flexible force to create and perform works

⁷ Here is the original in Chinese: 我就是李元佳美術館，李元佳美術館就是我。這個美術館免收門票，隨時開放，每個參觀者均可參與、移動轉示作品並可動手創作，共同完成藝術。

combining music, dance, drama and visual arts across different cultures with an emphasis on music (4.1.6, p.170). Unlike Li *Yuan-Chia* I had no wish to call it my own, rather I hoped that Inter Artes would be like a family of artists of similar minds and that the organization could exist without me. With funding from the Gulbenkian Foundation, regional Arts boards and professional musician's funding bodies, others soon followed. Inter Artes Trustees included Professor Peter Renshaw (Guildhall School of Music and Drama) and composers Chan *Wing-Wah* 陳永華, Victor W. K. Chan 陳偉光 and Julia Usher. Committee members included many in the creative and performing arts. More than 200 people participated with Inter Artes in creation and performance in Britain and abroad. When I was first diagnosed with cancer, performances entrusted to committee members either featured that particular member or used the name of their performing company instead of Inter Artes. Perhaps due to putting so much of my own effort into the organization, Inter Artes was soon looked upon as my own creative/performing group, which could not exist without me. This was one reason for my working on the blueprint of 'Inter Artes Yuanlin': Inter Artes as a permanent artistic environment (Fig.4.8 p.204). Due to health reasons, this project will have to be realized in cyberspace, rather than in the real world like Li *Yuan-Chia*'s Museum and Art Gallery.

(ii) MONIQUE FILSNOËL

I met Monique Filsnoël on 30 October 2014 at the Apple Shop Regent Street, London, after a workshop related to my electro-acoustics research. She told me that she was working on a Masters at SOAS relating to Tibetan arts. Neither of us is young yet both of us have knowledge of more than one culture. She suggested that one pursues postgraduate work at an advanced age not for academic status but for passion. We met up at St. Martin-in-the-Fields on 13 Nov 2014 to discuss the matter further. In her 11 December 2014 email to me, she writes:

As I told you, I am French from Chambéry, in Savoy, a department which has close links with Italy. In fact, Savoy, together with the Comté de Nice, became French after a referendum in 1860. Before they belonged to the Kingdom of Piedmont Sardinia. I was raised in a Catholic school, Saint Ambroise, which headquarter is in Milano. Chambéry being surrounded by mountains, as a little girl, and together with my siblings, we went skiing and hiking in the mountains from a young age. Our father transmitted to us his passion and love for the mountains. He also enjoyed travelling and discovering new countries and during the long school holidays he would take the family to spend time to Spain, Portugal or Italy.

I myself enjoyed travelling from my teen age. Later, I moved to Switzerland where I started my professional life. After my working years, my last position was Chief of Mission in Bangkok for an international organization, I decided to go back to university to study Asian Art. I started my studies in London and obtained the Post Graduate Diploma in Asian Art delivered by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). I enjoy studying and decided to continue and enrolled in the Master's Degree programme in the department of History of Art and Archaeology. I am now in the second and last year of the Master's Degree and will write my MA dissertation on the mural paintings in a temple in Bhutan.

My interest in Asian Art started early on. I was always interested in art, European Art, and also very intrigued by Japan and China. On my own I read books and visited museum whenever I could. While working in Bangkok, for five years, I took the opportunity to visit the surrounding countries, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam and also Bhutan, India, Taiwan and Japan. I took a lot of interest as well visiting Thailand historical and archaeological sites. All this triggered my renewed interest in Asian culture and art that I did not know, and that I wanted to better understand.

As I said before, I will write my MA dissertation on temple paintings in Bhutan, paintings which are essentially Tibetan, Bhutan being within the cultural sphere of Tibet. I think that my interest, I could also say passion, for Tibet and Tibetan art comes from my love of mountains and the idea of Buddhism in mountain. This sounds like a naive and romantic idea but basically it is what it is, without saying that these paintings, and Tibetan paintings in general are beautiful, the temples located in wonderful landscapes. I have not been to Tibet, but to Bhutan several times and each time met wonderful people and seen beautiful art and scenery.

In Monique's 8 November 2015 email, she says:

I am back in London, starting my PhD at SOAS on the Bhutanese temple and I am so busy, I cannot imagine. In addition to start researching at the library, I take an intensive class of Tibetan language to be able to read the inscriptions in the temple...

One can feel the passion and urgency in her pursuit. Even in what seems to be pure academic work, there is a personal factor going back to her childhood that stays on in her life and fuels the passion for her research work.

(iii) PROFESSOR RODERICK WATKINS

I met Professor Roderick Watkins on 3rd November 2014 at the Chelmsford campus of Anglia Ruskin University, when he went there as the new Dean to meet postgraduate students. I discovered that we shared similar work backgrounds – we are both alumni of the Royal Academy of Music and composers of contemporary and electro-acoustic music – and we talked about the musicians we knew in common. I later saw a video on YouTube of a Japanese performance of his *Tsuyunoyō* for voice,

20-stringed koto, sho, violin, viola and cello. The following is the introduction:

This piece is a response to Issa's famous poem, *tsuyu no yo wa tsuyu no yo nagara sari nagara* — written, we are told, upon the death of a child. This haiku is almost endlessly fascinating in its internal structures and rhythms, its employment of apparent contradiction, and, of course, the semantic richness of the words themselves. Performed at Sogakudo Hall at Tokyo University of Music and the Arts, 23 January 2011 as part of the performance project with the title "British Renaissance Music and British Contemporary Music with Japanese Cultural Influences" supported by JSPS and hosted by Tokyo University of Music and the Arts. (sonority, 2011)

I later met with Professor Watkins on 21 November 2014 in his office in the Cambridge Campus of Anglia Ruskin University. I asked him the reason for this cross-cultural work. He said that his interest in poetry went back a long time ago, starting with early Chinese poetry and then extending to recent, contemporary work. Though he considers himself an outsider of Japanese Haiku, he was impressed by the nature of the language and imagination. He admires the music of Takemitsu, as well as the shakuhachi, and has watched Kabuki through the media. He spent some time in Japan and has composed three pieces related to Japanese culture, including a piece that is to be sung in Japanese where he worked with the sound of the words rather than consider their meaning. He has worked in electro-acoustics at Oberlin Conservatory of Music in the USA and later at IRCAM in Paris. His visit to Afghanistan and the Middle East may be partially responsible for his interest in microtonal and spectral music. Many of his works combine instruments and electronics. Though he has not worked in combined arts or sound with images, he has written opera and music for the stage, and has an interest in how others have staged his work. He is interested in taking artistic risks, in the new as well as the less sophisticated. The Anglia Ruskin web page says of him: 'A number of recent works also develop an interest in non-western aesthetics and musical techniques.' The germ in his past has evidently stayed with him to the present.

It appears that more and more people are involved with the cross-cultural. The crossing of cultures includes those in the arts, in creative and academic work, and there is often a trace of the autobiographical. For these people there is no going back, and they are more likely to venture into other, new spheres.

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From creative to performative – one of the images as the performative



Image from *Introduction* (Forum: Qualitative - Social Research, 9(2), Art. 45, May 2008 – Sally Berridge.)

Fig.2.2: Juliet Chenery-Robson photography (pp. 55-56)

Source: from her PhD thesis

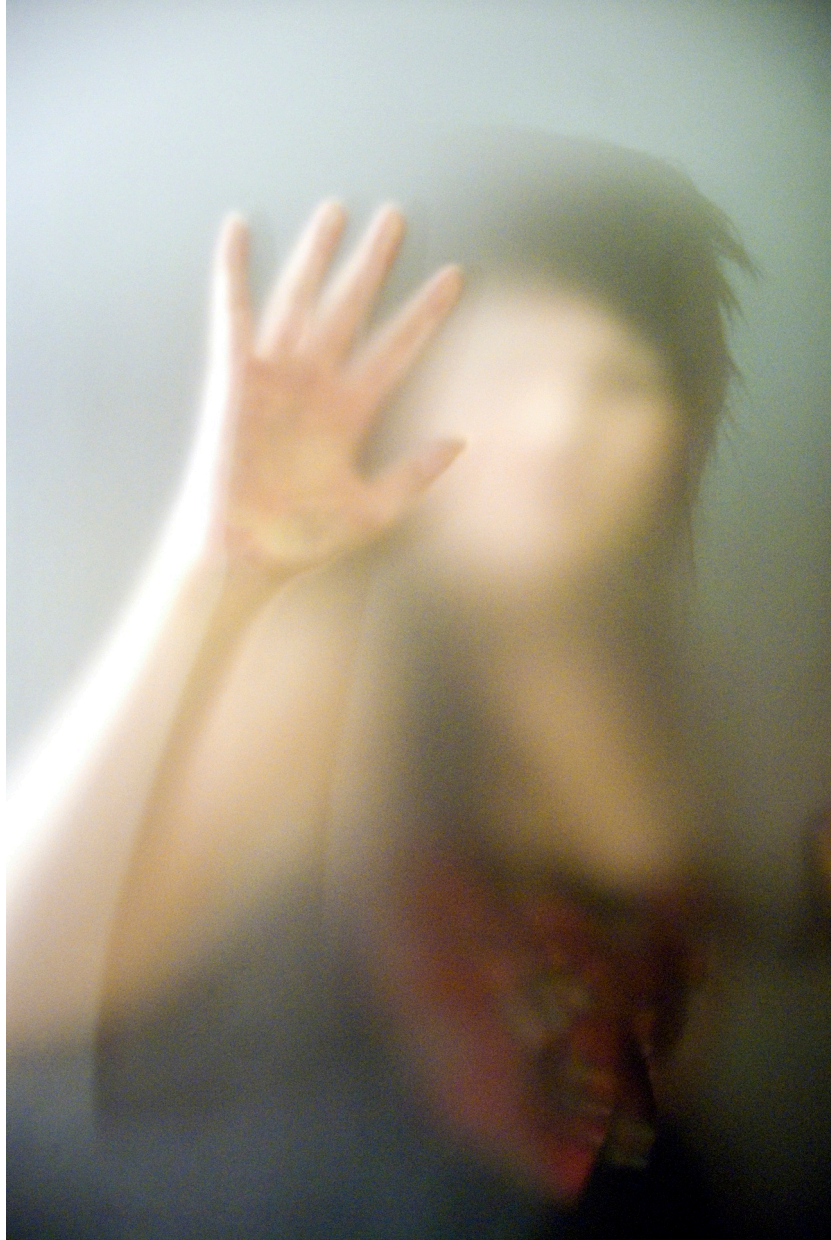


Fig.2.2a: *Invisible: Emilia* – photograph of her daughter who suffers from ME included in her PhD thesis (pp. 55, 56)

Cont. Fig.2.2: Juliet Chenery-Robson photography

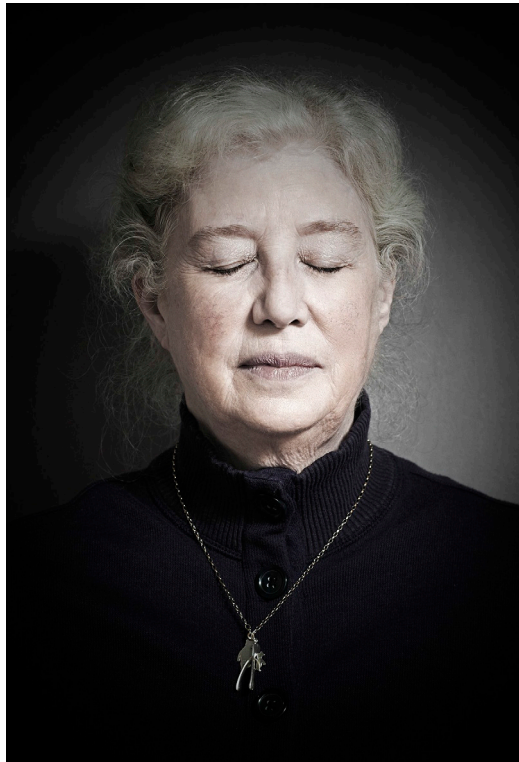


Fig.2.2b: *Jen* – from a series of ME sufferers with eyes closed (p.56)

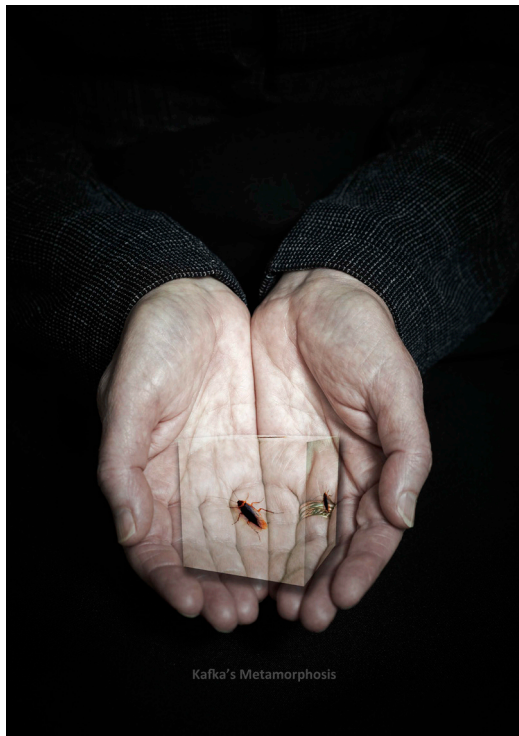


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CANTONESE OPERA

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INTRODUCTION

The title of this PhD thesis makes it clear that I am concerned with the memory of live performances of Cantonese opera as a source of inspiration for the creation of a cross-cultural combined arts prototype based on my cancer survival story. My impressions of Cantonese opera in Hong Kong date from childhood to when I left for England on a scholarship to study Western Classical music at the Royal Academy of Music in London: the 1950's to mid 1960's. This thesis is really a continuation of the use of such memories as inspiration in my creative/directing practice, which has occupied me since 1974. But my thesis also embodies the significance of other audiences' memories of live performances of Cantonese opera.

Research undertaken by creative artists typically supports their creative practice rather than being an end in itself, as discussed in 2.2 *Research supporting creation and performance* (p.45). Yet my PhD is also a tribute to Cantonese Opera – which was inscribed by UNESCO in 2009 on their list of the 'Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity' (UNESCO 2013) – and the prototype is an attempt to retain some of its characteristics in a new format. At the British Library I have found just two PhD theses in the UK related to Cantonese opera: Kevin Latham's *Cantonese Opera in Hong Kong: An Anthropological Investigation of Cultural Practices of Appreciation and Performance in the Early 1990s* (1996, SOAS), and Cheng Ling-Yan's *Cross-Media and Cultural Study of Music in Hong Kong Film and Cantonese Opera* (2012, University of Liverpool). I hope that my work may elicit more research into this art form, whether creative or scholarly. Cantonese opera is inseparable from the Cantonese people, their language, and their culture, so I start this chapter with some background information on these matters.

3.1 CANTONESE PEOPLE, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

3.1.1 CANTONESE PEOPLE

I am Cantonese and grew up in the then British colony Hong Kong where the majority were Cantonese. English was a compulsory subject in school (Chinese was not), but the common language was Cantonese. During my school years teachers and textbooks described five main Chinese ethnic groups 汉满蒙回藏: Han, Manchu (northeast), Mongol (Inner Mongolia), Hui (Muslims in the northwest) and Tibetan.

Modern sources of information (e.g. Wikipedia and Baidu, the Chinese equivalent) describe 56 ethnic groups in the People's Republic of China (mainland, Hong Kong and Macau) and the Republic of China (Taiwan), with Han constituting the majority. In reality the Han have assimilated many different races over a long period of time. The Cantonese belong to Han, and are people from the southern coastal province of Canton 广东 (Guangdong). Today in mainland China, one is referred to by one's ethnic group. This practice might unify Han as a whole but does so at the expense of regional identity, and it also tends to accentuate tension between Han and other racial groups. The Chinese tradition is to mention one's *ji-quan* 籍貫, that is one's ancestral native place – the province and county – not where one was born or what racial group one belongs to. *Ji-quan* is part of one's identity. For the purposes of this thesis, Cantonese people are those whose *ji-quan* is Canton province.

The Central Plain 中原, the area of the lower reaches of the Yellow River, is the cradle of Chinese civilization. *Zhong-guo* 中国, the characters for 'China', literally 'central (middle) kingdom' signify China's culture and history originated in the Central Plain where the emperors lived. By contrast, Canton is situated on the lower reaches of the Pearl River, much further to the south in the outermost circle from the Central Plain and touching the so-called 'Southern Barbarian (literal translation from Chinese)' area – see Fig.3.1 & Fig.3.2, p.117. Before the Han dynasty (206 BC - 220 AD), Chinese history had little to do with the Cantonese. But the influence of the Central Plain gradually expanded southward towards the Yangtze River and then the Pearl River. According to the Baidu Library 百度文库⁸ Cantonese people include the following three main categories, distinguished by the different periods when Han people settled in Canton:

1) Those in the vicinity of the capital Canton 广府: The capital of the province Canton is also called Canton – pinyin Guangzhou. This first category comprises the Han people that migrated southwards to Canton province from after Qin 秦 (221-206 BC) to Liang Jin 两晋 (265-420) and merged with aboriginals (barbarians). The category comprises the majority of Cantonese people.

2) Those in the vicinity of Chaozhou and Swatou 潮汕: The Han people that

⁸ The online Baidu Library 百度文库 comprises only professionally verified articles.

migrated during Liang Jin 两晋 (265-420) to Fujian province 福建 (Hokkian). Some of those that had settled in Fujian later migrated southwards to the neighbouring Canton province. Their language and customs are related to Fujian, and like Fujian people, many then migrated to Southeast Asia. They tend to associate with their own kind, are shrewd in business and wealthy, and are known colloquially as the 'Chinese Jews'.

3) Hakka 客家: Han people have dispersed all over China since the Song dynasty 宋 (960-1279) to escape from wars. Since the more fertile plains had already been occupied, latecomers settled in mountainous areas and preserved their distinct language and customs; they came to be called Hakka.

The same article in the Baidu Library also describes how other Chinese view the Cantonese people. Situated far from central government and political power, they are understood as being little interested in politics or abiding by governmental decree and tend to be pragmatic for personal interest. They are generally regarded as being of a lower cultural level than other Chinese due to Canton's low standards of education. They are the most superstitious and susceptible to believing in a variety of religions; they have good personal hygiene such as the habit of taking a daily bath⁹ but do not excel at environmental cleanliness; they excel in commercial dealings but are not so good when it comes to social relations, family planning and city planning; and finally, they are proud and arrogant.

The above description and other articles that I have come across are more or less in line with the historical view in China of the unrefined and rebellious southern barbarian. This view may in turn have affected the Cantonese psyche: being arrogant may be an overreaction to being considered inferior. In the Hong Kong that I remember, apart from the above mentioned three categories of Cantonese, there were other minorities such as the Tanka people 蜑家 who traditionally lived on junks, and people from mainland China who had fled the Communist regime. A significant difference between the three principle categories of Cantonese and other minorities in Hong Kong is language. This PhD thesis relates to the people of the first category

⁹ When I first arrived in the UK from HK in 1966, one complaint about living in the UK that I heard from some fellow HK students was that they were not allowed to have their daily bath – possibly due to the hot water system at the time.

– descendants of the Han race who merged with aboriginals – since their language is standard Cantonese, i.e., the language of Cantonese opera (see 3.1.2 *Cantonese Language*, p.75). The other two categories each have their own traditional opera sung in their own language. The languages spoken by each of the three categories are not mutually intelligible.

One finds fewer important Cantonese people the further one goes back in China's long history. From China's distant past, in the area of today's Canton, there was Lady Xian 冼夫人 (512-602, Fig.3.3 p.118) who lived during the Southern and Northern dynasties 南北朝 (420-589) and the Sui dynasty 隋 (581-618). Her achievements included cultural development, suppressing rebellion, quelling civil disturbance, defending her tribe against enemies and promoting racial unity. Amongst China's very few notable female leaders, she is the only one that has not aroused hostility or slanders from past and present. Emperors bestowed awards on her even after her death, and Premier Zou Enlai 周恩来 called her the 'First Heroine of China' (Wikipedia, *Lady Xian* 2015). A temple in Gaozhou 高州 in southwestern Canton province is dedicated to her (Fig.3.4 p.118). There is the Lady Xian Research Net 冼夫人研究网 (www.xfryj.com), and there are Cantonese and other traditional Chinese operas about her, such as the Cantonese opera *Madam Brocade* 锦伞夫人 (Plum-Flower-Boat topic 2013-2-13 #1)¹⁰.

In subsequent dynasties, there are few well-known Cantonese figures. During the Tang dynasty 唐 (618-907) there was Huineng 六祖慧能 (638-713), the sixth and final Patriarch of Zen Buddhism¹¹; and Zhang *Jiu-Ling* 张九龄 (678-740), a noted poet, scholar and prominent minister. During the Ming dynasty 明 (1368-1744) there was Lun *Wen-Xu* 伦文叙 (1467-1513), a witty scholar who achieved zhuangyuan 状元 (the highest score on the highest level of the Imperial Examinations) – a number of Cantonese operas and films were based on his story; and the controversial Yuan *Chong-Huan* 袁崇焕 (1584-1630), a famed patriot and military commander whom

¹⁰ Though Lady Xian 冼夫人 was born and lived her whole life in nowadays Canton province, she was a Li 俚 (aboriginal) who married a Han. Many Li people later merged with Han but historically she is classified as a Li heroine.

¹¹ Huineng 六祖慧能 was born in Canton, his mummified body is still there and Cantonese people claim him as their own, yet his ji-quan was not Canton, and some modern scholars doubt the works written about him.

Emperor Chongzhen 崇禎 (1611-1644) condemned to a traitor's death by 'slow slicing' – his story has been told in Cantonese opera and Chinese novels.

There are more noted Cantonese nearer the present. To name but a few of the Qing dynasty 清 (1644-1911) and the early Republic 民国 (1912-1949): Hung *Hei-Gun* 洪熙官 (1745-1825), a major influential figure of Southern Shaolin kung fu whose story forms the basis of various films, TV series and novels; Kang *You-Wei* 康有为 (1858-1927), a scholar, calligrapher and prominent political thinker and reformer; his pupil Liang *Qi-Chao* 梁启超 (1873-1929), a scholar, journalist, philosopher and reformer; and two beautiful legendary film stars in China's film history – the tragic Ruan *Ling-Yu* 阮玲玉 (1910-1935, Fig.3.5 p.119) and the resilient movie queen Hu *Die* aka Butterfly Wu 胡蝶 (1908-1989, Fig.3.6 p.119). The internationally acclaimed Cantonese film *Centre Stage* (1992) was based on the story of Ruan *Ling-Yu*, and won awards in five film festivals including the Berlin International.

Since Canton is situated far from the cultured Central Plain and the central government, Cantonese people are often regarded as unrefined, and at various periods in the past have been rebellious. Well-known rebels include Hong *Xiu-Quan* 洪秀全 (1814-64), leader of the Taiping Rebellion 太平天国 (1850–64) who used his interpretation of Christianity as the basis of an ideal society, which was akin to embryonic communism but later corrupted by power; and Sun *Yat-Sen* 孫逸仙/中山 (1866-1925), revolutionary first President and founding father of the Republic of China. He developed 'Tridemism 三民主義' – nationalism, democracy and welfare – his political philosophy to make China free, prosperous and strong, but died before achieving his goal. Sun was revered as 'Father of the Nation 國父' before the communists took over mainland China, and still is 'Father of the Nation' to non-communist ethnic Chinese worldwide, and the ultimate Cantonese pride.

For centuries, people of the southern coastal province Canton have been absorbing overseas cultures and have migrated to all parts of the world. *Guang-Dong-Ren* (pinyin for 'Cantonese'), a Chinese book of 2011 by Wuhaio 伍豪, sings praises of the entrepreneurial Cantonese people in their success and influence on the commercial and industrial scenes in China and worldwide – as exemplified by Hong Kong's rich and powerful Sir Li *Ka-Shing* 李嘉诚 (1928-). The book's Chinese title 可怕的广东人

is more aptly translated literally, *The Awesome Cantonese*. It was published by China Changan Publishing House, which is connected with the Party and the Government. The name of the author, Wuhao, was one of the pseudonyms used by Zhou *Enlai* 周恩来 (1898-1976), the first Premier of the People's Republic of China, which aroused discussions on the Internet about whether the author was in reality Zhou. Most agreed that it was not, since the book mentions events after Zhou's death, and Zhou was too important and busy to write such a work.

3.1.2 CANTONESE LANGUAGE

Qin Shihuang 秦始皇, the autocratic First Emperor of China, after conquering all the warring states in approximately 221 BC, unified the written language, i.e. Chinese characters, but spoken dialects remained very varied throughout the empire. This situation persisted until the Communists promoted simplified Chinese characters in 1956, the writing of horizontally from left to right, and pinyin (phonetic transcription using the Latin alphabet). People living outside the mainland – such as those in Hong Kong and Taiwan – still use traditional Chinese characters and write vertically from right to left. Those who are taught either simplified or traditional Chinese characters often find it difficult to read the other system. Putonghua (Beijing dialect) has been the official language enforced throughout China since Communist times. One advantage of these reforms has been to make the Chinese language/writing more international. But it has left us with two systems for written language and one system of speech; and it has also endangered regional dialects and cultures such as Cantonese. In fact, during my research for this project, I have come across some Cantonese commenting on the Internet that young people in Canton no longer know how to speak Cantonese.

The Cantonese language usually denotes the dialect spoken in the capital of Canton province (also called Canton). It is the majority language of Hong Kong and Macau, and traditionally the most spoken Chinese language in Southeast Asia, Canada, Australia, Western Europe, and the US. Wikipedia's article on *Cantonese* says:

Although Cantonese shares much vocabulary with Mandarin Chinese, the two languages are not mutually intelligible because of pronunciation, grammatical, and also lexical differences. Sentence structure, in particular the placement of verbs, sometimes differs between the two languages. The use of vocabulary in Cantonese also tends to have more historic roots. One of the most notable

differences between Cantonese and Mandarin is how the spoken word is written; with Mandarin the spoken word is written as such, whereas with Cantonese there may not be a direct written word matching what was said. (2015, 4th para.)

The use of historic vocabulary has led some Cantonese to claim that they are the more cultured ethnic group. According to Weibo's¹² controversial December 2013 rating of '*The most difficult China ten dialect (sic.)*', Cantonese ranked second after Wenzhounese 溫州話 (Baidu, 2015). A reason for the controversy is that this survey did not include racial minorities, and only concerned Han. Han people use Chinese characters, while many racial minorities, such as the Uyghurs, have their own system of writing. Cantonese dialect is under the umbrella of Han and uses Chinese characters. Yet to write Cantonese, some characters are used to represent the sound disregarding the meaning, e.g. 貢, 鬼... Even when a character is used for the purpose of its sound, the pronunciation might change according to the context, e.g. 尼, 咪... It is also necessary to use special characters, e.g. 乜, 冇... as well as Cantonese characters, e.g. 嚟, 搵... and sometimes even letters from the English alphabet to represent a sound, such as the letter 'D'. An example of the latter is in my music video *Magic Banyan Tree*¹³, where at 3:02 children sing the Cantonese words "D Da Dum".

Cantonese is a tonal language of monosyllabic words. If one changes the tone or pitch contour of a word, it becomes a wholly new word with a different meaning. Cantonese has between six and nine different tones according to various specialists. Modern dictionaries use a number to indicate tone – e.g. '猫 (cat)' is tone 1, and '矛 (spear)' is tone 4. Most Cantonese people are not aware of what tone a word is, just as English people are not consciously aware of English grammar when they speak. The different tones are of interest to Cantonese scholars and linguists; and they need to be learned carefully by anyone whose native language, like English, is non-tonal. Cantonese opera librettists typically follow the level and oblique tone patterns 平仄 when fitting new words to existing melodies, rather than full range of six to nine tones used in Cantonese. Further discussions on this theme, as relevant to the context, are found in Chapter 4 *Explaining My Prototype*, 4.2.4(i)c *Chinese Characters, Tones And Pitches* (p.184); and in Chapter 5 *The Prototype Proper* 5.5.2(ii) *Shakespeare St.*

¹² Weibo is a popular microblogging in China.

¹³ *Magic Banyan Tree* music video is AV2 in Audio/Video Folder (notes p.429), and on YouTube.

Crispin's Day Speech, HENRY V, Act III (p.275).

Standard Cantonese is the language of the capital Canton, but there is a vast range of accents once outside the capital. Cantonese opera is sung in standard Cantonese in the capital's accent. Hong Kong people speak similarly to those in the capital Canton, but due to its history as a British colony, English has been assimilated into the spoken dialect and is used in daily conversation to such an extent that a mixture of the languages has appeared in Cantonese opera and songs.

3.1.3 CANTONESE-HONG KONG CULTURE

The same article from Baidu Library mentioned in 3.1.1 (p.72) claims that it is not fair to describe Canton as a 'cultural desert' since it has been influenced by culture from the Central Plain and by external cultures, especially the West and Malay. It also says that Cantonese people eat absolutely anything (implying a sign of the barbarian).

Perhaps the general lack of writing on Cantonese culture is due to its transience and impurity; the fact that it is forever absorbing other cultures, ever changing. As a result, Cantonese culture is often included under the umbrella of a bigger group such as Lingnam culture 岭南文化, which refers to Canton province and other nearby provinces in south eastern China, and includes Cantonese, Teochew, Hakka and Hong Kong cultures.

In an article titled *On Hong Kong culture characteristics* 论香港文化的特色 published in the Nanjing University of Science and Technology Journal 1997 (under Philosophy and Social Science), author Chen Lu 陈鲁 considers the common view of Hong Kong as a 'cultural desert' to be prejudice. But he is of the view that Hong Kong culture, in comparison with mainland China, lacks academic excellence and a clear sense of its historical/political responsibility or mission. He says that Hong Kong culture lacks classical elegance and heritage, but is not lacking in modern resources to express itself in a new format that is altogether different from mainland China and Taiwan. He is of the opinion that Hong Kong excels in popular, vulgar and commercial cultures; and that it is a cross-cultural product, principally of China and the West. Chen's article is more objective than much other writing on this subject.

Within Cantonese culture, Hong Kong culture is perhaps the most impure since it is

the most open to outside influences, and the most transient due to the insecurity of an ever-changing political situation. Lacking genuine tradition or depth but contemporary in many new formats: perhaps this is the reality of Hong Kong culture, its uniqueness and tradition. It is a small place, yet its culture remains clearly distinct from mainland China and Taiwan. Peking opera does not change, and thus represents the ultimate tradition of Chinese opera. Every two years the Chinese Plum-Flower-Prize 梅花奖 is awarded to outstanding talents of traditional operas. Peking opera has received the most winners; Cantonese opera is awarded much less often (Fig.3.17 p.128).

3.2 REMEMBERING CANTONESE OPERA

My earliest memories were of Hong Kong in the 1950s. Cantonese opera was part of the daily life of the masses.

3.2.1 CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE

As a small child I lived in many different locations in Hong Kong, Kowloon, and the New Territories¹⁴ (Fig.1.1 p.29). I often roamed free on my own, almost like a street child. Though unstable and dangerous for a small child, these early years also permitted me incredible freedom of experience. My childhood impressions of Cantonese opera were formed by radio broadcasts, by the singing and playing of the working classes, by playing with other children, and by witnessing live performances of Cantonese opera and Cantonese films connected with opera performers.

(i) RADIO BROADCASTS

In their over-crowded and noisy living quarters and in their workplace which was often the streets, the masses tuned into radio stations that broadcast Cantonese opera excerpts and Cantonese opera songs 粵曲 much of the time. I lived among these people as a child, and could hear such radio broadcasts all day long – probably before I could remember anything else.

(ii) MUSIC MAKING OF THE LOWER CLASSES

The British colony Hong Kong did not have compulsory education, and not everyone could afford to go to school. Despite lacking an education, many of the lower classes

¹⁴ Hong Kong includes the Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsula, the New Territories and many islands.

knew Cantonese opera by heart and sang it while going about their daily life. The songs had poetic libretti reflecting Chinese history and tradition. Those with good ears taught themselves to play an instrument and many could play several instruments without tuition or use of scores. They would meet up to play together, and to accompany those who sang Cantonese songs. They played by ear, flexibly following the singer's style. Though I had poor schooling due to a difficult start in life, I could read well and could recite from memory. Occasionally when they gathered to play, adults would ask me to sing from memory, or from the libretto, as I knew how the words should fit a familiar tune instinctively.

(iii) PLAYMATES, AND A BEGGAR BOY

In the many different locations where I lived and in the schools where I briefly stayed, I came across children from a variety of backgrounds. Watching many 'big dramas'¹⁵ and Cantonese films, I learned to sing popular excerpts and to mimic stylized movements and choreographic kung fu. I was a skinny little girl, but showed off my kung fu to impress the younger boys. They followed my demonstration seriously. Soon more joined in including some of the older boys, and wanted regular kung fu lessons. I sang and acted with the girls. When I was about nine or ten I had a close friend at primary school whose elder sister was practising to be a female lead (hua-dan 花旦). My friend passed on some of her sister's skills, and we practised them together. Cantonese opera was part of children's game playing.

While roaming free on the streets I befriended a beggar boy about my age. He sometimes put his hand into my jacket pocket to see if there was anything there for him. He was unusual because he was Eurasian. In colonial Hong Kong, ethnic Europeans were usually well off and occupied good positions. They did not mix with local Chinese, let alone beggars. Even the poorer Chinese would have nothing to do with beggars. I sometimes saw a pregnant woman begging on a nearby street. The beggar boy told me that she was his mother. He told me that all his relatives were beggars, though they never acknowledged one other on the street. Once he told me at their family gathering that they ate dog meat – illegal in Hong Kong. He never mentioned his father. Perhaps his mother worked as a prostitute, and the boy was the issue of a drunken GI or marine, commonly seen on the streets when their ship

¹⁵ 'Big drama 大戏' is the Cantonese term for a live performance of Cantonese opera by a large troupe of performers. See below 3.2.1(iv) *Live Performances* (p.80).

visited Hong Kong. To be the son of a beggar woman who also prostituted to gwai-lou 鬼佬 or devil men – the Cantonese term for Westerners – would make my friend the lowest of those shunned by society. Yet he knew Cantonese opera via the omnipresent radio broadcasts, the open-air shen-gong¹⁶ 神功戏 and other street performances accessible to all. China has had a long tradition of prostitutes singing traditional opera songs to entertain clients. There were also blind people who played and sang Cantonese opera songs on the streets of Hong Kong to beg for money.

(iv) LIVE PERFORMANCES

'Big drama 大戏' as Cantonese opera is designated in Cantonese, to be precise is live performance that involves a troupe of numerous performers. A performance would usually last three hours or more and would normally take place in the evening, though daytime performances were not uncommon especially when in the open-air. It was the live performances that I saw which made the most lasting impression on me. All of the troupe would usually appear on stage at the beginning of a performance (sometimes without the leads) and again at the end. A troupe was formed to feature one particular lead and his/her chosen opposite lead. The primary lead gave the troupe its identity and had a say in most things. Audiences went to see this lead rather than the opera that was being staged. Young performers started from the lowest rank (non-speaking/singing stage appearance) and learned by observing the leads, quite often from the wings.

A male performer was either a xiao-sheng 小生 who played romantic/scholar roles and sang well; or wu-sheng 武生 who played martial roles that showed off choreographic kung-fu; and if playing both, a wen-wu-sheng 文武生. A female performer was a hua-dan 花旦, ranking from high to low as zheng-yin 正印 (lead), er-bang 二幫 (second) ... and mei-xiang 梅香. When a male or female performer grew old or fat, or both, or could not otherwise make it as a lead, they specialized in playing old people, comedians or villains (Figures 3.9 -10, pp. 122-123). Some male performers also played da-hua-lian 大花臉 i.e. face-painted roles associated with certain well-known historical/legendary characters. A performer with superstar status was known as a da-lao-guan 大佬倌.

¹⁶ The literal translation of shen-gong is 'god-reward'. See below 3.2.1(iv) *Live Performances*.

The troupe of a da-lao-guan 大佬倌 (superstar lead performer) usually performed in theatres. But at certain times of the year such as festivals or special occasions, the superstars, and troupes of other leads that had not reached da-lao-guan status, performed at temporary open-air venues comprising a stage with a cover supported by bamboo poles. The better venues would have the cover extended to the audience area. Open-air performances were paid for by money collected from locals/villagers, or by a club or rich donators that had booked the performance, and usually took place in less central locations such as in the villages of the New Territories. They were often for a specific purpose, serving as an offering to ask for blessings from the gods – known as a sheng-gong (god-reward) performance 神功戏 – or serving simply as an enjoyable social occasion. The temporary venues usually had no barriers around the auditorium and these lax arrangements allowed anyone to witness the performance (Figures 3.8 a-b, p121). An open-air performance was a noisy affair with gongs, drums and other percussive instruments and one could hear it from afar. Lesser performers and amateurs performed at any time in markets, eateries, and ad hoc locations. Some were buskers and some simply performed because they liked doing so.

Performers wore stylized make-up and Ming dynasty hairstyles, headgears and costumes. They had their own drama-trunk 戏箱 for their costumes and other necessary items. The leads owned a collection of elaborate and glittering costumes specially made for them, beautiful headgears and expensive lengthy human hair that they could use to form different styles. Some also owned stage items such as a stage-bed with drapes for a bedroom scene. Watching performers in costumes was part of the fun. As performers owned their own costumes and did their own make-up, one could judge from their on-stage appearance which performers were more successful. I remember a particular performance where the male lead was a prisoner dressed in white. White was usually not a happy colour, being associated with funerals, bereavement and prisoners, or with special roles like White Snake 白蛇 and White Bone Demon 白骨精. In that performance the male lead looked magnificent in a well-fitted spotless white costume of good material and elegant stage make-up. The elderly emperor who appeared briefly to pardon the lead, wore an imperial gown which should have been the most luxurious costume, but was ill-fitted and in need of washing and ironing. The emperor also lacked makeup. His sallow complexion and

frail frame gave the impression that he needed a meal and was perhaps an opium addict (it was known that some performers especially the older ones had this habit). At the time the contrast between the emperor and the prisoner was so ridiculous that it made me laugh. On recollection, I feel a pang of guilt for laughing at this older performer who was down on his luck – very likely the male lead let him make a brief appearance out of charity. The demanding profession did not provide a stable living; amongst Cantonese opera performers it was survival of the fittest. Nonetheless a union for Cantonese opera, Bar-Wo 八和, whose purpose was to look after the welfare of practitioners was established in Canton in 1889. A Hong Kong branch called 'The Chinese Artists Association of Hong Kong' was founded later in 1953 (HKbarwo, 2012).

The atmosphere of a live performance was happy, lively, bustling and informal with plenty of noise and activity. Whether in a theatre or open-air venue, during the performance pedlars sold food and other items, audiences came and went as they pleased, ate and talked, with some very young children sitting on adults' laps; many of these children later became diehard Cantonese opera lovers. The atmosphere was perhaps similar to present-day festivals like Glastonbury where very young children are exposed to rock music with their families. As children did not need a ticket to see Cantonese operas at a theatre, I could walk in while others were entering the auditorium. Nobody stopped me when I ventured backstage to watch performers putting on elaborate makeup and costumes. I saw male performers put on close-fitting vests under their costume, with padded shoulders and chest, to enhance the image of the body, which must have been uncomfortably hot when performing in the summer or under theatre lighting; whilst female performers avoided wearing much under the costume so as to show off their slim bodies, no doubt they felt cold in open-air venues in the Winter. I once saw a female performer in a flannel undergarment that must have been specially tailored for her, as the sleeves and upper body fitted her like a second skin. One memorable experience was when I walked up the steps leading to the side of downstage during a performance and literally bumped into a big fat man in costume waiting in the dark. I looked up and saw Leung *Sing-Bor* 梁醒波 (1908-1981, Fig.3.9 p.122), a famous performer.

Though he was incredibly funny and lovable on stage, looking up at his big tummy and seeing his serious face heavily made up under dim light, was scary for a child. People felt happy during and after a performance as the drama inevitably had a happy ending, and the atmosphere was like attending an enjoyable family gathering.

Mingling amongst performers, the intimate, relaxed and familiar atmosphere made me feel I was in a family that was Cantonese opera.

In the 1950s many well-known Cantonese opera performers and da-lao-guans 大佬信 were active in Hong Kong. Huge flower plaques 花牌 (gigantic and colourful bamboo banners, Fig.3.8c p.121) and flower baskets 花籃 from fans were displayed at the performing venues. Performers often mingled with the masses – I sometimes saw them on the streets walking amongst crowds or eating in everyday cafes. Many lived in areas where the masses lived and people addressed them in a familiar way as brother, sister, or uncle. Fans were biased towards their favourite leads, and audiences were accepting of what performers did on stage. Some performance conventions were traditional such as giving birth: hua-dan (female lead) in elaborate costume walks to her stage-bed, sits down, closes bed drapes, then comes a familiar, mechanically produced sound “oo-ah-oo-ah-oo-ah” (baby cries), drapes open, and hua-dan in elaborate costume walks to centre stage carrying a baby doll in her arms. Nobody laughed at this routine.

The relaxed atmosphere encouraged impromptu adlibbing 爆肚, which included a performer stepping out of the drama to talk as him/herself, then stepping back into the drama as the protagonist; a practice abhorred by those in Canton and described by the epithet ‘Hong Kong don’t rehearse’ 香港唔排戏. Lacking government support and control, many performers were daring in causing a sensation. When it worked, it created a magical moment that was unforgettable.

On other occasions, adlibbing might be needed to rescue a difficult situation. It was around 1980 when Hung *Sin-Nui* 红线女 performed briefly in Hong Kong after returning to Canton. She paired up with Leung *Sing-Bor* 梁醒波 in *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* 刁蠻公主憨駙馬. By then Leung, as the blunt husband, was over 70 and quite fat. In one scene the princess, furious with her husband, locked him out and he was obliged to sit on the floor and wait (AV23 & notes p.435, with Wang *Fan-Shi* 王凡石 in the same scene). When the princess finally opened the door, Leung being elderly and dressed in cumbersome costume, had difficulty standing up. Hung, as the princess, should still have been angry with her husband, yet was forced to give Leung a hand to help him stand up, and in doing so, could not suppress a laugh. Saying that she would complain to her Imperial father, Hung quickly exited, while

Leung adlibbed in guan-hua 官话 (Cantonese opera mandarin that not every member of the audience could comprehend) in order to cover up his embarrassment and make the best of the situation. The audience knew what had happened and was roaring with laughter – not so much laughing at the leads as enjoying the stage blunder of two much loved performers. This was probably the last performance of Leung *Sing-Bor* as he died in 1981 aged 73, after starting on stage at 17. Not one of the articles I have found on the Internet which mention this incident was derogatory about Leung; instead all remember him with amusement and fondness.

More famous still than Leung was Sun-Ma *Sze-Tsang*¹⁷ 新马师曾 (1916-1997, Fig.6.5 p.402) whose name is often shortened to Sun-Ma, or the familiar form Sun-Mai-Zai 新马仔. Sun-Ma was one of the most famous male leads in Hong Kong, and was also well known in Macau, mainland China, Taiwan, Southeast Asia, and in Cantonese communities in the US. As a child I saw him perform, then later learned about him through my friendship with Albert *Sui-Kai* Tang 鄧兆楷, his eldest son, whom I met in 1966 when I was a first year student at the RAM in London and he was a private pupil of the pianist Peter Katin (1930-2015). Sun-Ma was especially loved for his unique voice and song-style 唱腔 (3.2.2 p.89, AV20 & p.434). Though small in stature, he had a commanding stage presence and personality. Apart from romantic roles, he gave memorable performances of macho roles such as general Guan Yu 关公 (160-219 AD) – worshiped in China as the embodiment of honour, bravery and loyalty – employing the traditional fashion of a painted red face and a long black beard whilst wielding the legendary weapon guandao 关刀, a spear with a long crescent blade. In the performance around 1953-54 of a drama derived from *The Water Margin* 宋江怒杀阎婆惜 Sun-Ma had to kill his female lead on stage, the famous Hung *Sin-Nui* 红线女. Albert told me his father suggested that Hung should bite the blade when he struck her face so the audience would gain the impression that the knife was embedded deep in her face. Carried out effectively by two excellent performers, some of the audience screamed in horror. In a later performance, Sun-Ma would almost certainly have chosen a different on-stage means of killing his female lead.

Albert said he admired his father's talents since he could perform so well and with such ease on stage, apparently without the need to rehearse or practise. He had

¹⁷ Sun Ma *Sze-Tsang*, literally 'New Ma *Sze-Tsang*', suggests that his performing style resembled Ma *Sze-Tsang* (Hung *Sin-Nui*'s first husband).

only seen his father practise twice at home: once when Sun-Ma worked on incorporating Peking opera style into his singing, and another time to incorporate rock style. But Sun-Ma started his stage career at the age of ten, billed as a ‘child prodigy’ (Wiki, 2015. 新马师曾 S-M-S-T) and countless stage performances followed. He effectively grew up and lived on stage, learning his craft and practising there. Perhaps this explains the epithet ‘Hong Kong don’t rehearse’ 香港唔排戏, since most practitioners, including the instrumentalists, started young and worked together on hundreds of performances. They established a strong rapport with one another, understood each other’s gestures, and instinctively knew where to stand, what to do, and how to react to unexpected circumstances. As described above, they were also quick to use ingenious adlibbing to get themselves out of tight corners. Albert told me that as a small boy he often watched his dad perform. In one performance there were oranges on stage as props. Seeing Albert in the orchestral pit, Sun-Ma gestured to his son, to ask whether he wanted an orange, then skilfully threw one to him without disrupting the performance. There are other amusing on-stage episodes and anecdotes that fans still enjoy talking about, which would never be allowed or accepted under the current state controlled system in China, nor tolerated by the more critical audiences of today.

Qin *Xiao-Li* 秦小梨 (1925-2005, Fig.3.10d, p.123) was born in Nanning, Guangxi 广西南宁 and grew up in Hong Kong. She was known for including contortion and acrobatics in her performances, and for wearing costumes that revealed her body. She caused a sensation as Daji in the new Cantonese opera *Flesh mountains hide Daji* 肉山藏姐己, which was first performed in 1945 in Canton, before the Communists took over in 1949. This opera is about Daji 姐己, the favourite consort of King Zhou 纣王 (1105-1046 BC) portrayed in legends as the malevolent fixen spirit. I remember seeing a performance in Hong Kong as a small child. Qin *Xiao-Li* was wearing a swimming suit of shiny green sequins in a swimming pool-like set; she was bathing and the green swimming suit looked like the water to imply nakedness. That was the only time I had seen a hua-dan wearing so little for make-believe nakedness on stage. *Flesh mountains hide Daji* was adapted twice as a Hong Kong Cantonese film (in 1949 and 1958). In a precious YouTube film clip (Bosham, 2008), Qin *Xiao-Li* in see-through costume revealing shiny bra and under pants, sings and dances to the popular tune *Rico vacilon – chachacha* (sung in Cantonese with new words) to entice the lustful King Zhou. What was intended in live performance as lusts of the flesh

has unwittingly become comical when captured on celluloid – though still enjoyable to diehard fans as it brings back fond memories, reflected in some of the online comments.

(v) CANTONESE FILMS

The 1950s were the golden age of Hong Kong Cantonese films. As daily escapist entertainment for the masses, a large quantity of crudely made Cantonese films were hastily produced – described as ‘seven-day-fresh’ 七日鮮 since it took about a week to produce a new film. The numerous Cantonese cinemas usually put on a new film every few days. If a film could last a week, there would be a banner saying “Now the 7th Day” as proof of a must-see; then the number on the banner would be changed daily to entice more audience members – “Now the 8th, 9th... Day”. At the time there was a large population of immigrants from mainland China. Many of the women became domestic servants and lived with their employers to have a roof over their heads, food, and regular income. It was even common for low-income families to have a live-in servant. When I first remember things, there was such a servant in the crowded flat where I lived. Nearly every evening she went to see a Cantonese film starting at 7.30pm and took me with her. A child did not need a ticket and I sat on her lap. This routine continued for some years until she left for somewhere else. Though Cantonese opera leads performed in these films, they were shot in black and white unlike the live opera performances, which were glitteringly colourful.

In many of the Cantonese films that I saw, the story, costumes and performing style were related to Cantonese opera. Even when the drama was set in the present day, there would still be singing in Cantonese opera style. The first Cantonese film that I remember was a costume drama; in it an arrogant man raised a big metal bell to show off his physical strength and unwittingly let out an evil spirit trapped inside, which then caused mayhem. The film showed the release of the evil spirit using graphics not possible in a live performance, while moving skeletons were played by men dressed in tight-fitting black costumes with a skeleton painted in white. The hua-dan Yu *Lai-Chan* 余丽珍 (1923-2004) specialised in action/kung fu roles 刀马旦 and appeared in numerous Cantonese films from 1947 to 1968. Yet her routine of performing kung fu with bound-feet 紮腳¹⁸ and walking on a row of small earthenware

¹⁸ To imitate the ancient practice of foot binding 紮腳 performers wear special shoes (Fig.3.7b, p.120).

pots 踩沙煲 looked less impressive in films as she could easily have shot a retake, should she lose her balance or break a pot.

Films made it possible for those who could not speak Cantonese or had no stage experience to take part. Yu *So-Chow* 于素秋 (1930-) was born in Beijing to a Peking opera family and was skilled in real, rather than stage martial arts. Her father Yu *Jim-Yuen* 于占元 (1905-1997) had taught well-known actors including Jackie Chan 成龙 (1954-) and Sammo Hung 洪金宝 (1952-). Dubbing made it possible for Yu *So-Chow* 于素秋 to appear in numerous Cantonese costume kung fu films. Her regular film partner Cho *Tat-Wah* 曹達華 (1915-2007) started his career as a film actor, and did not have Cantonese opera stage experience. In films, he looked tough but did not perform real or choreographic kung fu, as his performances were assisted by graphics technology.

Yam *Kim-Fai* 任劍輝 (1913-1989, Figures 3.9a, 3.10a & 3.18, pp.122-3 & 129) was a top performer who sang in low register and played male romantic/martial roles though she was female. Yam met hua-dan Bak *Sheut-Sin* 白雪仙 in 1943. They formed a legendary union, working and living together till Yam's death. On stage, their romantic scenes sparkled, and Yam was charismatic. In Hong Kong, some domestic servants were of the tradition of zi-shu 自梳 of Canton, whereby women retained their independence by working in the silkworm industry. They stayed single, avoided males and formed a strong bond with women. Many of them were diehard fans of Yam *Kim-Fai*. But those who had not experienced Yam's magic on stage were not always bewitched by her 'male' charms in the films that she made.

In the *Hong Kong Film Archive* (2011), the Hong Kong Government has compiled information on 2,280 films from 1950 to 1960 and nearly all are Cantonese films. They include Cantonese opera, kung fu, comedy, literary drama, Hollywood imitation, and musicals. Some films have ridiculous titles like *Sun-Ma-Zai pull rickshaw and was insulted* 新马仔拉车被辱 (1953); and three sequels of *Headless empress gave birth to crown prince*, starring Yu *Lai-Chan* 余丽珍 all of which were made in 1957 (無頭東宮生太子上下集, 無頭東宮救太子, i.e. 無頭東宮生太子第三集). The rising popularity of films led to fewer live performances. Without the background of live performance, these films failed to attract a younger generation of audiences.

China United 中聯, a film collective including Hung *Sin-Nui* 红线女 and her husband Ma Sze-Tsang 马师曾 (1900-1964, Fig.3.13 p.125) was set up in 1952: 'to maintain the realist tendency of the contemporary social conscience melodrama, dealing with problem of poverty, education, housing, unemployment (Lim and Ward, 2011)'. Films of better quality were produced to address real social problems, some of which were literary dramas rather than 'seven-day-fresh'. As a consequence, films no longer required their actors to possess the skills of Cantonese opera. Hung *Sin-Nui*'s disciple Nan Hong 南紅 (1935-), an excellent Cantonese opera performer, after appearing in films in the 1950s hardly reappeared on the stage again. Later, she worked in TV series. Out of her total of more than 100 films, only about ten were Cantonese opera films.

In 1958 *Run-Run Shaw* 邵逸夫 (1907-2014) founded the famous and successful Shaw Brothers Studio in Hong Kong to produce mainly Mandarin films. In the 1960s, Shaws and other Mandarin film companies in Hong Kong produced large-budget technically superior films with a mandarin-speaking cast. Shaws was commercially successful and dominated the market. Films were later taken over by TV series; and nowadays Hong Kong youngsters are busied with computer games and online entertainment. Many Cantonese films might appear crude and laughable to present-day audiences, yet those who have fond memories of live performances still hold dear to their idols' films, which are pet-named literally 'Cantonese Deficient Film 粵語殘片'. Hong Kong Cantonese film and TV series continue to be made to this day.

The 1968 Hong Kong Cantonese opera film *Tragedy of the Poet King* 李後主 is the embodiment of 'Big Drama' (Fig.3.18 p.129). It is based on the story of Li Yu 李煜 (937-978 AD), the tragic last king of Southern Tang 南唐 (937-975) and his beautiful second queen. Li Yu was an incompetent ruler but one of the best poets of China. He surrendered to Emperor Taizong 宋太宗 (939-997) of the Song dynasty (960-1279) and was later poisoned on the Emperor's order. According to legend the Emperor raped Li Yu's queen and she died soon after her husband; but the film ends with Li Yu surrendering to Song. Apart from the legendary duo of Yam *Kim-Fai* and Bak *Sheut-Sin* 任劍輝白雪仙 as Li Yu and his queen, the film featured many of their regular fellow performers and disciples, and incorporated new performing ideas and original music. It was a large budget film in the format of Cantonese opera, using

numerous performers and shot in glorious colour using advanced technology. The film was premiered in 1968 with the highest intake of a Cantonese film and was on show for 22 days. However, it still made a loss due to the huge production costs needed to meet Bak *Sheut-Sin*'s artistic ideas and high expectations. Bak *Sheut-Sin* was critical of certain parts of this film and did not want it to be re-released. But in 1990 the film was shown again in memory of Yam *Kim-Fai* who died in 1989. By then the film had deteriorated and required a lot of restoration work. After this second performance, Bak *Sheut-Sin* became protective and would not let the film be shown again. The snippets that I have seen online successfully merge artistic refinement and daring new ideas with original music that works well with Cantonese opera and is easily accessible. Like Cantonese opera live performance, it now lives in the memories of those fortunate enough to have seen it.

3.2.2 THREE INFLUENTIAL FEMALE LEADS

Traditionally Cantonese opera was male lead dominated. I was fortunate to have seen live performances by three beautiful and influential Hong Kong female leads that are well known and loved by Cantonese opera fans worldwide. They contributed much yet also pushed Cantonese opera towards a practice more akin to Western performing arts. Two of these leads, Hung *Sin-Nui* and Fong *Yim-Fun*¹⁹, dominate female singing and represent the two main female Cantonese 'song-styles' 唱腔. It is important to explain this term 'song-style' – a combination of the quality of the voice, how to use it, and how to sing existing melodies, especially the longer traditional songs often used in operas.

(i) FONG YIM-FUN 芳艷芬 (1926-, Fig.3.11 p.124, AV17 & notes p.433)

Regarded by some as the ultimate hua-dan ever, her stage name Fong *Yim-Fun* is literally fragrant-gorgeous-fragrance. She was from a poor background and given away at the age of three. Her adoptive mother was a Cantonese opera fan and Fong learned to love Cantonese opera from watching performances as a child. She was noted for her singing ability and appeared on stage aged 11 together with Hung *Sin-Nui* 红线女. She became a female lead in prominent troupes in Canton and Hong

¹⁹ It was common for Hong Kong performers to use a stage name and some of these names did not have a proper surname but to convey the literal meaning: e.g., Fong Yim Fun and Hung Sin Nui meaning 'fragrant-gorgeous-fragrance' and 'red-line-girl' respectively. Though 'fragrant (Fong)' and 'red (Hung)' are not proper surnames, they represent the two performers. Hence I use normal text for the first name, and italics for the later name.

Kong at the age of 16. She formed her own troupe in 1947. In 1953 Hong Kong fans crowned her 'king of hua-dan' even though she was female. She appeared as female lead to many famous male leads, and appeared in about 150 Cantonese films. She retired in 1959 after her marriage. She perfected her own nasal Fong-style 芳腔 which remains one of the two main female song-styles in Cantonese opera. Fong Yim-Fun was famous for playing tragic roles; and she found that allowing young children into the auditorium was disturbing when she performed such tragic scenes. She later would not permit young children to enter, though many diehard Cantonese opera fans started life sitting on adults' laps. This was a sign of Cantonese opera performers desiring the performance venue to be more like Western opera houses.

(ii) BAK SHEUT-SIN 白雪仙 (1926-, Fig.3.12, p.124)

Bak *Sheut-Sin*, literally white-snow-fairy, is the daughter of the famous male lead Bak *Keoi-Wing* 白駒榮 (1892-1974). At 13 she was apprenticed to the legendary male lead Sit *Kok-Sin* 薛覺先 (1904-1956). She became a female lead at 16. However, after a year she considered herself in need of more experience and once again became an understudy and er-bang 二幫. In 1943, in Macau, Bak first met Yam *Kim-Fai* 任劍輝, a female who played male leads (see p.87). Since then they gave numerous performances on stage and in films as lovers. In 1956, they formed the legendary troupe Sin-Fong-Ming 仙鳳鳴 with Leung *Sing-Bor* 梁醒波, Lan *Chi-Pat* 靚次伯 (1905-1992, Fig.3.10a, p.123). With preeminent librettist/playwright Tang *Ti-Sheng* 唐滌生 (1917-1959), they created and performed many memorable new Cantonese operas such as the 1957 *Emperor-Daughter-Flower* 帝女花 (Fig.6.4 p.402, AV19, AV24 & pp.435-6). Bak brought about successful Cantonese opera reform with the supportive Yam. She introduced good taste, allowed no vulgarity, imposed strict rehearsals – no more glittering costumes covered with sequins but instead beautifully designed costumes with embroidery, exquisite sets including revolving stages, refined libretti and exquisite music. Her new operas looked good, sounded good, and with moving story lines that retained the traditional feel good factor, the audience loved them – a big step in pushing Cantonese opera towards 'high art' Western opera. Together the creative partnership was known as Yam-Bak. Their close relationship was sometimes talked about, but it was accepted in appreciation of their achievements. In 1961 Bak and Yam formed a troupe for young performers called Chor-Fong-Ming 雛鳳鳴 and undertook their training. Bak and Yam retired in 1969.

(iii) **HUNG SIN-NUI** 紅線女 (1924-2013, Fig.3.13 p.125; AV18 & 23, pp. 433 & 435)

The stage name of this influential lead is literally red-line-girl; and 'Red style' signifies her song-style, stage performance and her teaching. She was born in Canton and moved to Hong Kong during World War II. She had relatives who were Cantonese opera performers, and she showed a strong interest and ability from an early age, learning to sing by listening to the radio. Her father initially disapproved of her taking up the little respected profession. But she took to the stage from 1939. She returned to mainland China with her husband Ma Sze-Tsang 馬師曾 (see 5.10 Act 10 Description, p.347) and their children in 1955.

I remember for some time that several of the low quality newspapers in Hong Kong printed malicious stories about 'Red Devil Woman', and even as a child I knew that these stories referred to Hung. I had not come across a Cantonese opera performer being attacked in such a way before. When I was about ten I befriended a rich girl from a well-known family. I was intrigued by her wearing adult-style high heel shoes, which her widowed mother had specially ordered for her. She took me home and I saw a large photo of her late father in the sitting room. The mother told her daughter that I was not high class. But I was more intrigued by the photo of her late husband, as people said he had committed suicide because of Hung *Sin-Nui*. Rich men usually considered performers as playthings, so it was remarkable that this wealthy man had killed himself for a performer. When people discussed this matter, their tone was not condemning – nobody would demand a Cantonese opera performer to be virtuous. The cheap right-wing newspapers had attacked Hung because the Communists had used her return to mainland China as big propaganda. Hung joined the Communist Party, appeared with Mao, Jiang *Qing*, Zhou *Enlai*, and represented China in international cultural events. From 1955 to 1961 she performed opposite nearly all of the male leads in Canton, as the lead in revolutionary operas, and spoke and wrote in Communist rhetoric. But fans in Hong Kong continued to love her. Cantonese opera films and records of this period that featured her, such as *College Search* 搜書院 (1956) and *Zhaojun Beyond the Great Wall* 昭君出塞 (1959, AV18 & notes p.433), sold well in Hong Kong.

During the Cultural Revolution, instead of red-line-girl, Hung *Sin-Nui* was branded as 'Black Line Girl' and forbidden to perform or even carry out her daily routine practice. Her daughter Hong Hong 紅虹 (1945-) who was a hua-dan, denounced her. Several

times, Red Guards shaved half of her head to revile her. After Mao's death Hung *Sin-Nui* re-emerged on the Cantonese opera scene, became a towering figure and a national treasure. She reconnected with Hong Kong and still sang when she was in her 80s. The Canton Hung *Sin-Nui* Art Centre 广州红线女艺术中心 was built in 1998 to celebrate her achievements. She died in 2013 aged 88. There was a beautiful funeral in Canton with her body in a glass coffin surrounded by hundreds of beautiful flowers, and those who attended brought flowers too.

While Cantonese opera was declining in Hong Kong, despite great efforts, Bak *Sheut-Sin* failed to sustain a new generation of stage performers. But in mainland Canton province, Hung *Sin-Nui* picked talented children from villages and elsewhere, and with state support, provided them with strict systematic training and stage experience. Canton has now become the centre of activity of Cantonese opera, with a new generation of excellent performers. Nearly every notable performer in Canton is trained or influenced by Hung *Sin-Nui*, and thus of Red-Style. Red-Style merges techniques from Peking opera, Kunqu 昆劇 (one of the oldest extant forms of traditional opera and dominated Chinese theatre from the 16th to 18th centuries), Western Classical vocal training, adaptations of Western opera and Shakespeare, and new stage technology. When Hung *Sin-Nui* undertook Western Classical vocal training, her style and voice were already formed. But when young students receive compulsory Western Classical vocal training, the influence is probably more significant. I have listened to Hung *Sin-Nui* and her disciple Guo *Feng-Nu* 郭凤女 singing the same song *Praise Lychee* 荔枝頌. To my ear, Guo's singing fits Western equal temperament, while Hung is more affected by the sound of Cantonese and not limited to the twelve pitches of equal temperament. Today's Cantonese opera its training and performance practice are more akin to Western performing arts.

3.2.3 OVERVIEW OF REMEMBERING

Cantonese opera was part of daily life for the masses of Hong Kong via omnipresent radio broadcasts, music making of the lower classes, accessible live performances in the theatre, and open-air shen-gong performances 神功戏. Children's early exposure resulted in diehard fans and performers.

Cantonese opera is not 'opera' as the West defines the term, as it does not require a composer at all. Only the Quben 曲本 (libretto-cum-script) is akin to an original creative work in the Western sense. Even so, work is collaborative and permits recycling and modification by others including the performers.

Cantonese opera is not about original music. Instead it uses a collection of existing melodies drawing from a reservoir of traditional or even Western tunes selected by the librettist to accompany new words to unfold the drama. It is the lead performers' creative rendition of these tunes that provides the musical interest.

Lead performers were in charge of a troupe. In addition to looking good, being charismatic, singing, and acting, they were also involved in stylized gesticulation and movements, dance and kung fu. They did their own elaborate makeup and owned their costumes. They had freedom in modifying existing materials, adding their creative input to live performances, and could give unrehearsed performances making direct rapport with audiences, sometimes even stepping in and out of the drama. It was lead performers rather than a particular opera that the audience came to see and remember.

Performers and performances were connected with the masses and lower classes, and reached even those shunned by society – the illiterate, the poor, prostitutes, beggars and gangsters – bringing them enjoyment and culture. Many performers were from the same background as their audience. There were contradictory elements in Cantonese opera: it was loved by fans yet low in social status; a mixture of high and low, refined and vulgar; it was for family/community enjoyment and always had a feel good factor – hence a happy ending even for tragedies.

Relaxed and accepting audiences allowed performers to include an element of the autobiographical in their work, such as the countless romantic love scenes portrayed on stage and film by the lifelong partnership of Yam *Kim-Fai* 任劍輝 and Bak *Sheut-Sin* 白雪仙; or the Cantonese film *Sun-Mai-Zai pulls rickshaw and is insulted* 新马仔拉车被辱 (1953) – a film that reflects Sun-Ma's unruly private life.

Lacking state support or control, and needing to please a culturally mixed Hong Kong audience, performances were multi-faceted and eclectic, sometimes including spoken

English alongside Cantonese: anything goes for survival. Their transient nature was in response to a rapidly changing Hong Kong Cantonese culture. But the Hong Kong Cantonese opera of my childhood produced unsurpassable achievements: influential male song-styles 腔 as represented by Sit *Kok-Sin* 薛觉先 and Sun-Ma *Sze-Tsang* 新马师曾; the two main female song-styles created by Fong *Yim-Fun* 芳艷芬 and Hung *Sin-Nui* 紅線女; Yam *Kim-Fai* 任劍輝, a woman praised for playing male roles; the performance duo of Yam *Kim-Fai* and Bak *Sheut-Sin* 任白; the success in reform of new operas by Bak *Sheut-Sin* 白雪仙, which remain classics to this day; and the unsurpassable Leung *Sing-Bor* 梁醒波 in comedian roles.

3.3 REVISITING CANTONESE OPERA

Despite health and finance, the Internet has made fieldwork possible via online research into Cantonese opera performances past and present, articles, discussions and other reference materials.

3.3.1 RED-BOAT AND PLUM-FLOWER-BOAT 红船和梅花船 (Fig.3.14 p.125)

Red-Boat Cantonese Opera Web is my literally translation of 红船粤剧网络. It was founded in 2001 by two Cantonese opera practitioners: Zou *Yu-Wei* 邹裕伟 (aka New-Life 新生) a song style designer 唱腔設計 (see p.183), and Xiong-Biao 雄标 (aka Local-Ginger 本地姜) a radio DJ of Cantonese opera songs. Red-Boat has close connections with the profession. It is the largest website for lovers of Cantonese opera worldwide, with 363,874 members, 865,323 articles, 36,829 journals and 146,237 photos to date (checked on 12 January 2016). 'Red Boat' signifies Cantonese opera in the eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries, when troupes of performers would live and travel in boats of this colour, performing onshore along the way (Fig.3.7a, p.120). Members of Red-Boat Web are called boat-friends, and the two founders are called Captains. I joined Red-Boat as a boat-friend on 29 August 2010 using the pseudonym AKLWHO to collate information and gather others' memories of performances. On Red-Boat, I have My Space (Fig.3.14b, p.125) where I contribute and interact in various categories – I have contributed 110 records, 22 journals, 6 photo albums, 95 articles, and 2,106 replies to date (12 January 2016). As it is a social network, interaction with boat-friends has helped me understand the

audiences past and present. The biannual Plum-Flower-Prize 梅花奖 signifies the highest theatrical award in China. Most recipients have been Chinese traditional opera performers. In June 2011, Cantonese opera male lead Li *Jun-Sheng* 黎骏声 and female lead Jiang *Wen-Duan* 蒋文端 jointly won this prize (Fig.3.17 p.128). To celebrate this event on 1st July 2011, I created a forum on Red-Boat called Plum-Flower-Boat 梅花船 (Fig.3.4c, p.125), which has been rated as No.1 out of more than 100 forums for more than four years. There I have written and contributed more than 6,686 articles and replies to date (12 January 2016).

3.3.2 PERFORMERS

The Cantonese opera that I remember was about lead performers and their unique performances. The primary purpose of my revisiting was to watch the performances of as many leads as possible. Online videos and films are often of poor quality due to deterioration, format incompatibility and problems re streaming. Spontaneity and interaction with the new online audience are invariably missing. In addition, I am no longer the child that I was. For a while I wondered whether it was wise to get so close to a beautiful memory. Yet most of the websites that show Cantonese opera are based in China, so my viewing has invariably been biased towards performances officially filmed in China. It was a treat to see performers whom I was too young to remember, and many excellent leads from Canton whom I did not see performing live.

(i) **SIT KOK-SIN** (Fig.3.15 p.126)

Sit *Kok-Sin* 薛觉先 (1904-1956) is considered by all as the greatest lead ever. He played romantic and martial roles as well as female and comedienne roles, and was a committed reformer. He left Hong Kong to work in Canton in 1954, and continued performing on stage when he suffered from a stroke and died the following day. His famous drama *Why Not Yet Returned* 胡不归 was first performed in 1939, and has been performed by other male leads. The first time I saw Sit *Kok-Sin* perform was via an online video of this drama, lamenting his late wife at her grave 哭坟. I have seen other famous leads performing this scene: Sun-Ma *Sze-Tsang* 新马师曾 with a more beautiful voice; and Sit's disciple Lam *Kar-Sing* 林家声 with better looks. Sit hardly moved on stage during this scene, yet I was completely captivated by his performance.

(ii) DISCOVERING WANG FAN-SHI 王凡石 (1947-, Fig.3.16 p.127, AV23 & AV25)

In the 1984 *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* 刁蛮公主戇驸马, Hung *Sin-Nui* 红线女 and her daughter Hong Hong 红虹 shared the role as the princess, with Wang *Fan-Shi* as the blunt husband. The drama was compiled and performed in the 1930s by Hung *Sin-Nui*'s husband Ma *Sze-Tsang* 马师曾. This Canton production was reminiscent of Hong Kong tradition. The drama is an enjoyable yarn of the not-so-easy married life of a marshal and the Emperor's daughter. I had not heard of Wang *Fan-Shi* before. I was smitten by his good looks, charisma, singing, acting and movements, and by his direct communication and winning ways with the audience. Websites listed other Canton leads performing this drama. This led me to see for the first time many excellent leads from Canton: Guo *Feng-Nu* 郭凤女 excellent in marshal and romantic roles, Ou *Kai-Ming* 欧凯明, the no nonsense tough man Yao *Zhi-Qiang* 姚志强, Su *Chun-Mei* 苏春梅 best known for her Red-style singing, excellent actor Liang *Yao-On* 梁耀安, Mai *Yu-Qing* 麦玉清, Peng *Chi-Quan* 彭熾权, and exquisite Qiong-Xia 琼霞 who reminds me of fine porcelain. Many are Plum-Flower-Prize winners.

(iii) PLUM-FLOWER-PRIZE 梅花奖 (Fig.3.17 p.128)

My forum is called Plum-Flower-Boat 梅花船 (Fig.3.13c, p.125) and contains videos, articles and discussions on all prizewinners: Feng *Gang-Yi* 冯刚毅 (1989, 2002); Ding *Fan* 丁凡 (1991); Ou *Kai-Ming* 欧凯明(1995); delightful Chen *Yun-Hong* 陈韵红 (1995); Ni *Hui-Ying* 倪惠英 (1997); Liang *Yao-On* 梁耀安(1998); Cao *Xiu-Qin* 曹秀琴 (1998); graceful Zhuo *Pei-Li* 卓佩丽 (1998); Yao *Zhi-Qiang* 姚志强 (1999); Wu *Guo-Hua* 吴国华 with an excellent performance as the Monkey (2000); character actress Liang *Shu-Qing* 梁淑卿 (2001); Ceng *Hui* 曾慧 (2002); Liang *Su-Mei* 梁素梅 (2002); Qiong-Xia 琼霞 (2003); Li *Shu-Qin* 李淑勤 (2004); beautiful Jiang *Wen-Duan* 蒋文端 (2011); Li *Jun-Sheng* 黎骏声 (2011); Cui *Yu-Mei* 崔玉梅 (2013); Mai *Yu-Qing* 麦玉清 (2015); and new comer action-packed Wu *Fei-Fan* 吴非凡 (2015) who blends her Western vocal technique successfully with Cantonese singing. Most of the prizewinners are Communist Party members, are or have been the heads of state controlled Cantonese opera troupes, and hold official posts in cultural affairs. On Plum-Flower-Boat there are discussions on those too late to be a winner as the age limit is 45, such as the learned Zhong *Kang-Qi* 钟康祺, and late comer Wang *Wei-*

Kun 王伟坤 with his excellent voice and stage presence. There are articles on potential winners like Li *Qiu-Yuan* 李秋元, Liang *Zhao-Ming* 梁兆明, Peng *Qing-Hua* 彭庆华, and everyone's favorite Ceng *Xiao-Min* 曾小敏.

(iv) NANNING, GUANGXI AND MINORITY ZHUANG 廣西南寧壯族

Until I boarded Red-Boat, I did not know that Cantonese opera has a branch in Guangxi province and centred in Nanning 廣西南寧. This is the area of the Zhuang minority 壯族 who have their own language, writing and culture. There are two Plum-Flower-Prize winners who are Zhuang: the excellent martial male lead Ou *Kai-Ming* 欧凯明 who has a strong full voice and sings superbly and works in Canton; and Liang *Su-Mei* 梁素梅, a beautiful and graceful performer who speaks standard Cantonese after great efforts and works in Nanning.

(v) AMATEURS

On Red-Boat I saw photos and reports about open-air performances by amateurs in villages and small towns. Some performers appeared to retain the tradition of adlibbing, and their performances were often criticized online as vulgar. However, in these photos I caught a glimpse of the venues of red boat performers of long ago.

(vi) NATIONAL 1st CLASS, 2nd CLASS, 3rd CLASS AND VIRTUE PRIZE

While looking into materials about Wang *Fan-Shi* 王凡石, I noticed that though his performances were loved by audiences, he is rated as national 2nd class. China rates performers as 1st Class, 2nd Class and 3rd Class. Cui *Yu-Mei* 崔玉梅 was 3rd Class for a long time and despite winning the Plum-Flower-Prize is still 2nd Class, while the younger Ceng *Xiao-Min* 曾小敏 who is not a Plum-Flower prizewinner has long been rated as 1st Class, and in 2015 received the Award of Excellence in both Art and Virtue 德艺双馨. Clearly there are discrepancies in this national system of awards. After the 1997 Handover, Hong Kong did not adopt the Chinese system.

3.3.3 NEW CANTONESE OPERAS

As Cantonese opera is about lead performers, I discuss new operas in connection with them:

(i) WANG FAN-SHI 王凡石 (1947-, see 3.3.2(ii) p.96)

Wang *Fan-Shi* speaks perfect Cantonese, though his *ji-guan* 籍贯 is Zhaoqing, Zhejiang 浙江肇庆. His performance reminds me of the Hong Kong tradition, and he could have been an heir to Yam *Kim-Fai* 任劍輝 in romantic roles (see p.87). He has written several new operas. The most well known is *Li Houzhu of Southern Tang* 南唐李后主 (1988, Fig.3.19 p.129), for which he co-wrote the script and performed as the lead. This has the same story line as the 1968 Hong Kong Cantonese opera film *Tragedy of the Poet King* 李後主 of Yam *Kim-Fai* and Bak *Sheut-Sin* 任白 (p.88, last para.), but goes further to the death of the king and his queen Xiao Zhouhou 小周后 (950-978). Wang *Fang-Shi* is regarded as giving the best ever performance of the role of this poet King, and this opera is still popular and performed today. But without warning he opted for early retirement in 2002. Some years before his sudden retirement Wang *Fan-Shi* was the first to form his own private troupe, which was not under state control.

(ii) LI SHU-QIN 李淑勤 (1971-)

Li *Shu-Qin* is a Plum-Flower-Prize winner, recipient of the Award of Excellence in both Art and Virtue 德艺双馨, and Head of Foshan Cantonese Opera Academy 佛山粤剧院. She is a beautiful performer and has produced many colourful new operas including *Xiao Zhouhou* (小周后) – based on the same story as the above but with the tragic queen as the focus, played by Li *Shu-Qin*. This opera was made into a Cantonese opera film in 2010 and according to Baidu 百度, was to be released in 2015. Her other new operas such as *Princess Butterfly* 蝴蝶公主, *Xiao Fengxian* 小凤仙 (2011, Fig.3.20 p.130) are all sumptuous productions with the focus on the female lead. She was again the focus of the drama as Li *Qingzhao* 李清照 (1084-1151) the great woman poet, in the lavish production of *Qing-guo-qing-qing* 倾国倾情 (2012, Fig.3.27 p.136), a new Cantonese opera written and promoted by the Hong Kong fengshui master 风水师 Li *Kui-Ming* 李居明. The sumptuousness of her operas, and the introduction of new elements such as those in the music have been criticized by boat-friends. From the excerpts I have watched, I suggest the criticism might be due to the use of a Western orchestra and attempts at Western harmony that have not been successfully Cantonized 粤化²⁰.

²⁰ Cantonized is my invention as an equivalence to ‘anglicized’ for 粤化.

(iii) DING FAN AND DISCIPLE PENG QING-HUA 丁凡彭庆华

Ding *Fan* 丁凡 (1965-) grew up in Canton and speaks standard Cantonese, though his ji-guan is Hunan 籍贯湖南. He is a Plum-Flower-Prize winner, recipient of the Award of Excellence in both Art and Virtue 德艺双馨, and Head of Guangdong Cantonese Opera Academy 广东粤剧院 – the most powerful state supported institution. He is both loved and hated because of his good looks, his singing with the influence of Western vocal training, and for being influential and producing big production new operas that look like Western opera or musicals (Fig.3.21a, p.131). Yet he has also brought performances of many traditional operas like the amusing and enjoyable *Legend of Lun Wen-Xu* 伦文叙传奇. I saw the young Ding *Fan* and the delightful Chen *Yun-Hong* 陈韵红 in this drama on the Net and like it so much that I watched it many times. The Academy also nurtures a troupe of new generation performers, and the leads such as Peng *Qing-Hua* 彭庆华, and Ceng *Xiao-Min* 曾小敏 are all taught by Ding *Fan*. Peng *Qing-Hua* 彭庆华 (1976-) is the head of this troupe and has produced some ground breaking new operas such as *The Assassin* 刺客 with imaginative electro-acoustic music, and *Dream of Red Boat* 梦红船 (2015, Fig.3.21b, p.131), which merges the martial art Wing-Chun 咏春 (of which Peng is a practitioner) with Cantonese opera's southern style kung fu (AV22, & p.435). Judging from the excerpts that I have seen, the drumming and choreography are imaginative and powerful and the opera should appeal to an international audience. However, Peng appears to have been put off by harsh criticism from some audiences for his inventiveness.

(iv) NI HUI-YING 倪惠英 (1956-)

Ni *Hui-Ying* whose ji-guan is Hubei 籍贯湖北 was born in Nanning Guangxi 广西南宁 but moved to Canton in the 1950s. Ni is a Plum-Flower-Prize winner and while she was Head of Guangzhou Cantonese Opera Group 广州粤剧团, produced the lavish *Wealthy Daughter* 豪门千金 after Hung *Sin-Nui's Heaven's Proud Daughter* 天之骄女, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* in Hong Kong Cantonese opera tradition (Fig.1.2d, p.30). *Wealthy Daughter* was not well received since many boat-friends are against Cantonese opera resembling a stage play in any form. I find the dialogue problematic – it was delivered as written text rather than in conversational Cantonese, and lacked overall interest. Ni's big production of 2002 *Flower-Moon-*

Shadow 花月影 (Fig.3.22 p.132) was intended as a milestone of Cantonese opera reform and this intention prompted attacks from boat-friends. In fact, it was a high quality production, which used the opera stage effectively and skillfully merged modern dance, Western orchestration and composition with Cantonese opera. The plot was daring, as it depicts corruption from the lower ranks to the very top of the government, and the male lead was an anti-hero.

(v) OU KAI-MING 欧凯明 (1964-)

A Zhuang 壮族 and Plum-Flower-Prize winner, Ou *Kai-Ming* 欧凯明 is praised for his excellence in martial roles and singing, and for his work in Canton. The new operas he brought about such as *Chu River Han Border* 楚河汉界 (Fig.3.23 p.133) with his excellent lead as the Conqueror, and *South-Yue Palace Lyrics* 南越宫词 a historic legend of the ancient South-Yue, all introduced new ideas in drama, music, costumes and staging that some boat-friends find too challenging to appreciate.

(vi) LIANG SU-MEI 梁素梅 (1963-)

A Zhuang 壮族 and Plum-Flower-Prize winner, Liang works in Nanning, Guangxi. The new Cantonese operas of Zhuang that I saw include a traditional spectacular Buddhist tale *Mu-Lian saving his mother* 目莲救母 (2012, Fig.3.24a, p.134), and the more political *Moon at Mid-Autumn* 月到中秋, a production of long ago. There are other operas for Nanning performers, such as the Zhuang-Cantonese opera *Begonia Pavilion* 海棠亭 (2012, Fig.3.24b, p.134). Liang is a beautiful performer and speaks standard Cantonese, though some Nanning performers do not.

(vii) HONG KONG

Liang *Zhao-Ming* 梁兆明 and Li *Qiu-Yuan* 李秋元, both entered the profession circa 1990 are two excellent talents of the younger generation. They had been heads of regional troupes in Canton, and have both brought about new operas for their respective troupes. Liang's *Suqin* 苏秦 is in traditional format and was enjoyed by the audience. Li's *Zhongkui* 钟馗 is an adaptation of Hebei opera 河北梆子 and his performance was highly praised. Li is also interested in adaptation of Peking opera. Both lead performers have immigrated to Hong Kong around 2012 and work with local performers. This may result in some new operas reflecting their cooperation.

Hong Kong also has Li *Kiu-Ming* 李居明, a middle aged former communication graduate of Hong Kong Baptist University best known as a fengshui master 风水师, and so wealthy that he saved a Cantonese opera theatre from demolition with his own money. He has written and promoted numerous operas including the extravaganza *Qing-guo-qing-qing* 倾国倾情 (2012, Fig.3.27, p.136), with four Plum-Flower-Prize winners – Li *Shu-Qin* 李淑勤, Feng *Gang-Yi* 冯刚毅, Yao *Zhi-Qiang* 姚志强 and his later replacement Liang *Yao-On* 梁耀安, as well as Peng *Chi-Quan* 彭熾权. The opera was performed in Hong Kong, Canton, Foshan and Macau in big venues and apparently sold well. The promotion claimed that the opera included a Western symphony orchestra, but boat-friends reported that performers sung to the recording of an orchestra. Given his wealth and influence, it is likely that Li *Kiu-Ming* 李居明 will produce more Canton-Hong Kong new operas.

(viii) HONG HONG 红虹

Hong Hong 红虹 (1945-) literally red-rainbow, is the daughter of Hung *Sin-Nui* 红线女 and Ma *Sze-Tsang* 马师曾, and an excellent hua-dan taught by her mother. She denounced her mother during the Cultural Revolution. Hong Hong left her own troupe in 1981 for Taiwan to become a Christian and later immigrated to Canada. She is devoted to 'Cantonese opera song Gospel 福音粤曲', and performs such work in missionary gatherings. Perhaps this might eventually inspire the creation in North America of a Cantonese gospel cantata or Cantonese gospel opera.

(ix) EIGHT MODEL OPERAS 样板戏

During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) traditional operas were not permitted, instead only performances of revolutionary dramas were allowed. In 1967, Jiang *Qing* 江青 held a 'model stage art' meeting in Beijing that included more than 20 model stage works. The so-called 'Eight Model Operas' 八大样板戏 are: *The Legend of the Red Lantern* 红灯记²¹, *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* 智取威虎山, *On the Dock* 海港, *Raid on the White Tiger Regiment* 奇袭白虎团, *Ode of the Dragon River* 龙江颂, *Red Detachment of Women* 红色娘子军, *The White-Haired Girl* 白毛女 and *Shajiabang* 沙家浜. Some of these have Cantonese opera versions. After the Cultural Revolution, the model operas were seldom performed again. However, there

²¹ I have seen an online sung excerpt of this work as Peking opera. The singing and music were impressive.

are new Cantonese operas that follow this tradition to educate and carry a slogan, such as modern dramas for Plum-Flower-Prize entries: *Mountain Village Wind and Cloud* 山乡风云 (2011, Fig.3.25 p.135) for Jiang Wen-Duan 蒋文端, and *Wedding at the Executions* 刑场上的婚礼 (2013, Fig.3.26 p.135) for Cui Yu-Mei 崔玉梅. Many boat-friends in Canton think very highly of these operas. To those, like myself, who have never lived under a Communist regime, their value derives from being compiled and performed by the best talents available, and from providing a historical record of the culture of the period. In *Lingdingyang* 伶仃洋, the 1999 entry of Yao Zhi-Qiang 姚志强, the plot involves the Opium wars 鸦片战争 (1839-1860) and ugly British imperialism. Writing on Plum-Flower-Boat about *Lingdingyang*, I mentioned the 1982 English musical *Poppy* – a work that does not condone Britain's imperial past – in order to provide a more balanced view. The 1980 Feng Gang-Yi 冯刚毅 entry *Return in a windy snowy night* 风雪夜归人 reminds me of literary Hong Kong Cantonese films after the 'clean-up campaign' staged by left-wing performers (p.88). *Return in a windy snowy night* is more romantic than political and Feng did not win that year.

3.3.4 AUDIENCE AND ATTITUDES

Most boat-friends are from mainland China, mainly from Canton province, with a lesser number from other provinces. There are also boat-friends from Hong Kong, Macau and Singapore, and Hong Kong emigrants living in North America and Europe. Most boat-friends are aged over thirty years; very few are in their twenties, let alone teenagers.

Red-boat has attracted fans of performers past and present, and they have formed fan clubs for their idols. Many have uploaded sound recordings, videos, photos, articles, reports and news of performers, and popular songs and their own efforts in numeral 简谱 (Fig.4.15 pp. 210-212) or gong-che score notation 工尺谱 (Fig.4.14 p.209). Some audiences are biased towards their idolized performer, and become defensive and even aggressive toward those who dare to criticize them. Some attack other performers so as to elevate their idol. Some feel it their duty to tell a performer how to perform. Some persistently attack certain performers in a malicious manner, and spread the same malicious piece on a variety of websites. Ding Fan 丁凡 (1965-) is one such figure who has inspired both adoration and hatred. One reason for the

hostility is that he is Head of Guangdong Cantonese Opera Academy 广东粤剧院, the largest state supported Academy, and thus the single most influential person in Cantonese opera.

Performing traditional dramas in the traditional way is fine with boat-friend audiences. But any performer who introduces new elements or reform is likely to become the target of an attack; and Red-Boat has witnessed online mob-style attacks on some performers' behaviours and private lives. A new opera by state supported troupes typically attracts harsh criticism from boat-friends, even before the performance. The bigger the state support the harsher the criticism. Some audiences will criticize every aspect of a new opera and its performance as if they know best. Some persistently demand the plot to be rational even when it is a supernatural drama. Some demand Cantonese opera to be 'pure' and rid of all non-traditional elements.

As Red-Boat is also a social network, boat-friends from all over the world share their lives and experiences. Apart from forming friendships on the Internet, some also meet up from time to time, sing together and upload their singing; and there are activities in Canton that are attended by boat-friends worldwide. There are frequent disagreements between Hong Kong and Canton boat-friends. Some Hong Kong boat-friends regard the reformed operas of Bak *Suit-Sin* 白雪仙 (see p.90) as the ultimate Cantonese opera. Whenever an article is posted on a new opera in Canton, they will attack the new work and simultaneously praise Hong Kong operas. Meanwhile some Canton boat-friends comment on the ignorance of those in Hong Kong, and show little interest in present-day Hong Kong performers.

It was around the end of 2010 that I noticed a popular article on Red-Boat by a Hong Kong boat-friend arguing that Cantonese opera is the best opera in the world, far superior to Western opera. She praised Chinese poetry and argued for its superiority over Western poetry, then made her case for the superiority of Chinese culture. She deleted replies that did not agree with her views and only kept those to her liking, behavior that violates the principle of a public forum. As a resident of Hong Kong she should have understood freedom of speech. In response, my Red-Boat article of 26 April 2011 *Cantonese opera needs forum, and does not need to be the best of the world* 粤剧需要论坛,不需要做世界之最 attracted online mob attacks for some time. Replies to my article from some Hong Kong boat-friends demonstrated their hatred of the British in Hong Kong, of the West, Japan and South Korea, and their hatred of

new Cantonese operas in Canton. One reply even accused me of corrupting Cantonese opera and bringing about new operas that were like an animal circus act. These replies perhaps reflect boat-friends' long-harbored resentment of the wealthy Europeans who held good posts in Hong Kong, and their disadvantage in not receiving an English education. One of the Red-Boat Captains defended my article, as did some boat-friends from Canton.

Writing in English on the Red-Boat site and using a pseudonym in the Western alphabet has offended some boat-friends in Canton, who regard it appropriate to write in Chinese. Failure to use simplified Chinese characters can also be understood as not showing sufficient respect to those living in mainland China. I have come across vehement comments describing Hong Kong residents as British slaves, and abusive comments directed towards those who returned to China after studying abroad.

Sit Kok-Sin 薛觉先 (1904-1956, see p.95) was from a Cantonese opera family and an influential reformer of the art form. He attended an English school in Hong Kong but did not finish his schooling. While in Shanghai working in silent films, he was inspired by the Peking Opera that he saw. Back in Hong Kong, he made reforms of the make-up and costume following the tradition of elaborate make-up and costumes of Peking opera. He got rid of Cantonese performers' habits of chaos in costumes and male performers wearing no make-up (at the most, blackening the eye brows), and irrational plots. He also expunged some red boat 红船 customs, such as spontaneity and flexibility in performance. Instead he practised strict rehearsals, was loyal to the Quben 曲本, and used respected performance venues. He introduced new tunes into the repertory of Cantonese opera, the use of violin, saxophone and other Western instruments, and incorporated the choreographic kung fu of Peking opera.

Those who want Cantonese opera to be traditional and pure, should consider whether they want Cantonese opera to return to Sit's practice even though he was himself an important reformer, or to return further back to red boat practices that are no longer respected or practised. I suggest that many of us yearn for Cantonese opera to be like what is in our memories, in those performances that made us become a fan in the first place.

3.3.5 OVERVIEW OF REVISTING

Internet recordings of past and present performances, social networks and amateur song clubs 曲社 are now part of daily life for Cantonese opera fans. Their age group is middle age and those approaching it. Online recordings are variable in quality and fail to capture the magic of live performance, especially as they lack interaction between performers and audiences. They are for those already converted and cannot recruit potential new fans. The 2004 animation film *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* 刁蛮公主戇驸马 sung and directed by Hung *Sin-Nui* 紅線女 with her disciple Ou *Kai-Ming* 歐凱明 as the blunt husband was intended for building a young audience (Fig.3.28 p.136). Yet this remains the only Cantonese opera animation. Fong *Yim-Fun* 芳艷芬, Bak *Sheut-Sin* 白雪仙 and Hung *Sin-Nui* 紅線女 all had early exposure to live performances of Cantonese opera; regrettably, the Internet is unlikely to entice the young to be future performers. Moreover, few Cantonese opera films are now being made, compared to Hong Kong in the 1950s.

The centre for performers and their activities is now Canton province, after which follow in decreasing importance Hong Kong, Guangxi Nanning, Macau, Singapore, then North America, Australia and Europe where there are expatriate populations of Cantonese. Lead performers from Canton deliver performances in all of these locations from time to time.

With state support and training and the lifetime efforts of Hung *Sin-Nui* 紅線女, Canton province now has excellent performers and troupes/academies that provide comprehensive training. But these performers are almost past their prime and not so active now. There are not yet sufficient young performers of the same standard. Hung *Sin-Nui* died in 2013, and China is now embracing capitalism. Few youngsters seem to be interested in a hard and non-lucrative profession.

Hong Kong still has a number of performers, including at least two excellent leads that immigrated from Canton – Liang *Zhao-Ming* 梁兆明 and Li *Qiu-Yuan* 李秋元 – and Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts has started training new practitioners of Cantonese opera. But Hong Kong has not yet produced performers of a standard to match those in Canton. Nanning 南宁 has Cantonese opera troupes and training but appears to have less resources than Canton, yet it might produce a Cantonese opera

culture related to the Zhuang minority 壮族.

State training and control have produced performers of excellence, like champions of the Olympics. Given that the goal of such performers may be state approval/awards, it is understandable that after winning a coveted Plum-Flower-Prize, they become less active in performing on stage and nearly all of them turn instead to becoming important officials in performing/cultural affairs.

An autocratic political system that indoctrinates and controls every aspect of its people's life does not permit individual expression or freedom of choice, including what audiences should watch. The policy for new operas in Canton appears to demand lavish staging and the use of a Western opera theatre and symphony orchestra. Lead performers do not always have a say in the production. Instead it is the director, scriptwriter, music arranger, composer, choreographer and designers, accompanied by officials – who may have nothing to do with Cantonese opera – that advise on all aspects of the production. Judging from the comments of boat-friends, such productions provoke hostility and do not appear to sell well. The lavish, costly performances cannot be staged for a long period and are sometimes one-off.

State policy in Canton appears to promote reform and new operas, yet many audiences seem to prefer the simple and familiar traditional operas. Most practitioners of Cantonese opera are now Communist Party members and many are officials. There is a tradition of the Chinese masses distrusting officials. The Chinese character for mouth is 口. The proverb runs: "Officials have more say because the Chinese character for official (官 guan) has two mouths, while the character for the masses (民 min) has only one mouth." This might be one reason for the hostility towards some lead performers and state supported troupes. One thing that both the officials and the masses agree on is that performers should achieve excellence in both Art and Virtue 德艺双馨. Yet few of the beloved performers of my childhood could receive this award; perhaps it was because I understood them as ordinary flawed humans, that they were all the more exciting.

Though extremely hostile audiences are in the minority, they appear to be persistent and united, and their presence sours the atmosphere. Under the cover of a pseudonym, online comments from such an audience can be foul and hurtful. There

are those who use Cantonese opera as a platform to vent their hatred for many things and to advocate racial and cultural supremacy. There are also those who call for Cantonese opera to return to a pure, traditional form, without understanding that their conception of tradition is itself the product of historical innovation and experimentation.

Communism denounces religion, hence shen-gong (god-reward) performances 神功戏 have been a casualty, though they were more about festivity than religion. Such occasions encouraged unrehearsed, flexible performance and adlibbing. Yet this unique Cantonese opera characteristic can be revived. Feng Gang-Yi 冯刚毅, twice Plum-Flower-Prize winner, in *Ah Xiang Talk Show* 阿湘讲戏 – a weekly Canton TV programme to interview famous Cantonese opera performers, expressed his respect for adlibbing and ‘Hong Kong don’t rehearse’ 香港唔排戏 (Lizaloke, 2011). Ceng Hui 曾慧, another Plum-Flower-Prize winner, who first performed in Hong Kong in 1984 with Sun-Ma Sze-Tsang 新马师曾, and later with many other Hong Kong male leads also said in *Ah Xiang Talk Show* that it was frightening at first to have no instructions on what to do and where to stand on stage, but she soon adapted and really enjoyed inducing the audience to roll with laughter (Thin-Curtain-Pale-Moon, 2011). Adlibbing is an art that requires talent and plenty of stage experience. In the words of Ou Kai-Ming 欧凯明 “Without performing hundreds of times, one cannot get a feel of the stage 不演幾百場, 對舞台沒感覺” (Chinese encyclopedia online 中文百科在线, 2010). There is evidently a pressing need to have more performances of Cantonese opera in order to build the talents of new performers and raise new audiences.

3.4 WHAT PRACTITIONERS, SCHOLARS AND FANS SAY:

The following is a short collection of quotes – just a glimpse to entice others to find out more about Cantonese opera. Bracketed text in each of the translations serves to make the meaning clearer.

3.4.1 HISTORY OF CANTONSE OPERA

Wong Tao 黄滔 (1913-2015) spent his life in Cantonese opera, involved in instrumental music, coaching Cantonese singers including some well-known lead performers, and doing troupe admin and other odd jobs. He emigrated from Hong

Kong to Canada in 1961. He talked and wrote widely about his life experience of Cantonese opera. The following is from his *Cantonese opera compilation* 黃滔粵劇彙編 (n.d. or publisher) available from the Cantonese Culture Promotion Society website 粵語文化傳播協會.

(trans.) Cantonese opera's origin happened long ago. It is difficult to research into its evolution, as official historians in the past looked down on drama and did not keep an account of Cantonese opera on record. Some busybody scholars might occasionally mention bits and pieces here and there, and one cannot see the whole picture. One does not have a clue about the history of Cantonese opera. According to legends, some said its origin was pinju (Peking opera), some said it was a branch of hanju (of Hubei province), some even said it came from caichaban of Hunan province, or from guilinban of Guangxi province, and no unanimous conclusion can be drawn... Generally speaking, during Ming dynasty emperor Jiajing 1368-1522, Cantonese opera already existed. At the time, its singing was in the tunes and style of yiyang, in the sound and tone of zhongzhou (Henan province). Later at the time of Emperor Shenzong of Ming 1573 during the years of Wanli, the popularity of kunqu (the tunes of kunju) rose above those of yiyang. Cantonese opera naturally changed from using yiyang tunes to kunqu. That was why kunqu was popular in Canton before other provinces, as the libretti for both were the same, and naturally quite easy to adapt.

(original text) 廣東粵劇，源流綿遠，如何衍進；頗難考證。因為專司典籍之史官，蔑視戲劇為小道，都沒有敘述關於粵劇的紀錄，即間有好事的文人，偶爾隨筆涉及，也是片鱗隻爪，難窺全豹。所以談粵劇史的，多摸不著頭緒，據古老相傳，有說導源於平劇，有說分流於漢劇，更有謂來自湖南的採茶班，及廣西桂林班，莫衷一是。但從歷朝諸家筆記中得些點滴，而聯想到其變化的梗概。大抵在明嘉靖（1368-1522）年間，已有粵劇，而當時的粵劇，係用弋陽腔，音韻宗洪武之中州音。後來到了明神宗（1573）之萬歷年間，崑曲盛行，於是海鹽弋陽腔，盡為崑曲所掩。粵劇既宗弋陽腔，自然也被崑曲所移易，所以廣東盛行崑曲，也比其他省份先一步。其原因是弋陽腔與崑曲的曲詞相同，自然易於轉變。

N.B. In the above quote, the information is sometimes unclear. For example Wong Toa wrote Ming Jiajing as '(1368-1522)' – this is confusing, as 1368 is the year when the Ming dynasty began, while Jiajing 嘉靖 means this particular emperor's reign from 1522-1566. If he meant 'during Ming Jiajing years', he should have quoted '(1522-1566)'. Yet he quoted 1368-1522, and to describe this period he should have said 'from the beginning of the Ming dynasty to the beginning of the reign of Jiajing'. When he said 'Later at the time of Emperor Shenzong of Ming 1573 during the years of Wanli', that should be 1573-1620, but he only quoted 1573, the year the reign began. Wang Toa was a revered veteran rather than an academic, living with the troupe according to its way of life. From his autobiographical talks and writings, one gets to know about past performers. Some of his writings are like a telephone

directory – names of those he had worked with or come across. Yet fans love hearing these names as they bring back fond memories.

3.4.2 RED BOAT TROUPES

Loretta Siuling Young says in the Abstract of her MA thesis *Red Boat Troupes and Cantonese Opera* (University of Georgia, 2010):

The Red Boat Troupes were influential in shaping contemporary Cantonese opera. They were troupes that used boats for transportation between towns and villages in the Pearl River Estuary from the late Qing Dynasty until 1938. These boats were specially designed for opera troupes. The boats also served as sleeping quarters for performers, musicians, apprentices, stagehands, and sailors. Many Red Boats were destroyed during the Japanese invasion of China in 1938. Unfortunately, in just 70 years, no more Red Boats seem to exist.

However, there are replicas in various museums (Fig.3.7a, p.120). According to Young (her thesis: 25) 'The length of a boat was about seventy-six ceks (about 82.8 feet), the width about 10 ceks (10.9 feet), and the height in the cabin was nine ceks (9.81 feet).'

3.4.3 A SIMPLE INTRODUCTION

Local-Ginger, aka Xiong-Biao 本地姜雄标 is one of the two Red-Boat Captains, and a practitioner in Cantonese opera media (a radio DJ). The following is from his Red-Boat article *A simple introduction to Cantonese opera*:

(trans.) There are far too many different ideas on the origin and formation of Cantonese opera, and it is not easy to decide which is right. Generally speaking, during mid-Ming (Ming dynasty was from 1368 to 1644) Cantonese opera had already germinated, taking form in local troupes. According to history, as early as from Ming emperors Jiajing (1522-1566) to Wanli (1573-1620), in the Cantonese cities of Foshan and Guangzhou, local troupes had already established the profession in organizing Qianghua Hall (a specific building to be used for flower shows, festive celebrations and performances etc., and used as a berth for red-boats that troupes lived in and travelled with). After unceasing development, gradually there came Cantonization of the song styles of yiyang of Jiangxi province and kunju of Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, into a form of drama to be sung and performed mainly in bong-wong (which appears to be set patterns/rules that involve percussion, tunes, singing styles, literary words, the two-string instrument used in Cantonese opera etc., and allowing some performing freedom and interpretation). This genre of drama is in fact a marriage of yiyang, kunju songs/singing and Cantonese local popular music Nanyin (an important genre of folk music with a distinct sound often heard in

Cantonese opera), many other types of folk songs and singing styles, and Cantonese instruments. Until the end of Qing (1644-1912) and early Republic (Republic of China 1912-1949), this gradually evolved into gathering and fusing the singing styles and music of the south and north, Chinese and foreign, to be performed and sung in Cantonese, that came to be the distinct form of Ningnan local drama called Cantonese opera (Ningnan is the southern China of Canton, Guangxi and nearby). Cantonese opera differs from traditional operas of other provinces, in its unique characteristics of expressive drama, free, light-hearted, cheerful and modern, adapted to new styles and change. (2007-11-24 Red-Boat article)

(original text) 关于粤剧的产生和形成，可谓众说纷纭，莫衷一是。但普遍认为，粤剧于明朝中叶开始萌芽，孕育于本地班。据史载，早在明代嘉靖至万历年间，在佛山、广州，本地班已建立了琼花会馆这一行业组织。经过不断发展，逐渐形成了广东化了的江西弋阳腔、江浙昆腔演唱梆黄为主体的剧种，这一剧种实际上是弋阳腔和昆腔与广东本地流行的南音、龙舟、木鱼、粤讴、咸水歌等民间曲调以及广东器乐乐曲结合而成。直至清末民初，逐渐演变为融集南北、中外唱腔音乐，以广州话演唱，从而形成具有鲜明岭南特色的地方戏剧——粤剧。粤剧有别于外省戏曲的独特之处在于，它既属于中国写意派戏剧范畴，又具有轻快流畅、新款善变的个性。(粤剧简介. 知识在论版)

3.4.4 HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The following is from *Cantonese Opera Grand Dictionary* 粤剧大辞典 – the standard reference book in China:

(trans.) Cantonese opera in its early stages was called 'local troupes, Cantonese big drama'. It was formed in the Guangzhou area, and was popular in Guangdong, Guangzhou, Guangbing, Hong Kong and Macao, and spread to Southeast Asia, America, Oceania, Europe and other places with overseas Chinese settlements, and exerting its impact on local dramas. Songs and styles were mainly of e-wong, ganzi, and also included Gao, Kun songs, folk, ballads and other short songs. During the Ming Dynasty Chenghua period (1465-1487), people of Guangzhou were fond of drama, outside troupes came to perform frequently, and locals also took part in performing. This sowed the seed of Cantonese opera. In early Qing there appeared the 'Tuyou' local troupe that sung in Cantonese style, forming the foundation of Cantonese opera; from mid Qing to Jiaqing (1796-1820), local troupes absorbed, learned from and competed with outside troupes and gradually formed Cantonese opera; during the late Qing Tongzhi (1861-1875) and Guangxu (1875-1908), the song-style, performance and drama, etc. were showing distinct characteristics in all aspects, and maturing artistically, with practitioners growing in number. In the early 20th century to the 1930s, Cantonese opera went through a series of reforms, leaping towards popularization, localization and modernization. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, Cantonese opera has entered a new age of development, and has become one of the major local traditional operas in China. (*Cantonese Opera Grand Dictionary* 2008:1)

(original text) 粤剧，早期称本地班、广东大戏。是形成于广州地区、流行于广东、广西、香港和澳门，并传播到东南亚、美洲、大洋洲、欧洲等华人华侨聚居之地的地方戏曲剧种。声腔以梆子、二黄为主，兼唱高、昆牌子，民间说唱，小曲杂调。

明代成化年间（1465—1487），广州地区民间好尚戏曲，外来演出戏班频繁，并有众多本地子弟参加演唱，孕育了粤剧的种子。清初出现被称为“土优”的本地戏班及其演唱的“广腔”，为粤剧的形成打下了基础；清中叶至嘉庆道光年间，粤剧在本地班既向外江班吸收、借鉴，又相互竞争中逐步形成；晚清同治光绪之际，粤剧在声腔、表演、剧目等各方面都呈现鲜明特色，艺术渐趋成熟，队伍也日益壮大。20世纪初至30年代，粤剧经过一系列的变革过程，向大众化、地方化和现代化有更大飞跃。中华人民共和国成立后，粤剧进入了新的发展时期，成为中国重要地方戏曲剧种之一。

3.4.5 THE OPERA SCRIPT (QUBEN)

Bell Yung 榮鴻曾, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Music, University of Pittsburgh, has taught at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and has several written books and articles on Cantonese opera. The following is from his *Cantonese opera: performance as creative process* on the opera script (Quben):

The script plays a critical role in the creative process of an opera. Since musical notation is seldom used either before or during a performance, the script acts as the sole fixed reference point for the coordination of scriptwriters, singers and instrumental accompanists, and as the basis for their creative process of the music. (1989:42)

The following is from *Cambridge Studies in Ethnomusicology* quoted by Professor Bell Yung on the inside cover of his *Cantonese opera: performance as creative process*:

With the guidance of only a written script and an extensive repertory of pre-existent tunes, operas are staged as a rule without rehearsal or reference to any musical notation. The few lead singers often sing as many as six or seven different operas in as many consecutive days, each one lasting about four hours. (General Editor: John Blacking)

3.4.6 SHEN-GONG PERFORMANCE 神功戏

Shen-gong, literally god-reward, is open-air performance on a temporary stage, which traditionally serves as thanksgiving and asking for god's blessing (see under 3.2.1(iv) *Live performance*, p.81). I understood no religious significance in the shen-gong performances I witnessed as a child, rather they served as festivities where people gathered to have a good time. Due to the temporary stage and other arrangements, shen-gong performance was flexible, and served as a hothouse for developing improvisatory skills and adlibbing.

Dr Sau-Yan Chan 陈守仁 studied Western Classical music at the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), but discovered his interest in Chinese music during his final year. He received a PhD in ethnomusicology from the University of Pittsburgh and has worked there with Professor Bell Yung 榮鴻曾. He taught at CUHK for two decades before retiring and is still involved with activities connected with Cantonese opera. Dr Chan translates the term *shen-gong* as 'ritual context' and in his 1991 book *Improvisation in a ritual context: The music of Cantonese opera*, writes:

Among the over 350 regional styles of traditional Chinese music drama, Cantonese opera is one of the most often performed genres in China, Hong Kong and Southern Asia. Within the genre's tradition, a systematic use of improvisation has evolved to resolve problems and respond to demands brought forth by the environment, and the ritual context in which most of the performances take place. (Back cover)

Dr Chan has written earlier concerning this subject in his 1988 book *Research on Hong Kong Cantonese Opera* 香港粵劇研究:

(trans.) In 1980s Hong Kong, it is generally believed that Cantonese opera was in decline and in need of reform. Many suggested that the tradition could be preserved and improved by employing a director, strict rehearsals and restricting adlibbing. If all these are to be materialized, Hong Kong Cantonese opera will lose improvisation to some degree, and become closer to the performance style of Western opera and theatre... The author is convinced that impromptu adlibbing is an artistic characteristic of Cantonese opera, and to say this characteristic is 'dross' is too subjective. Reform should include reviewing the use of improvisation in traditional Cantonese opera and undertaking research into enhancing performers' understanding and improvisation skills, so as not to disrupt a performance's co-ordination.

Shen-gong performance is a traditional form of Cantonese opera performance, but since the 1903s, performers began to perform in theatres, practitioners and audiences began to consider the theatre as a high-class venue, and became contemptuous of shen-gong performance. To preserve the tradition of Cantonese opera one needs to respect shen-gong as a performing practice, and should encourage more audiences to see shen-gong performances, so as to observe the characteristics of traditional Cantonese opera. Cantonese opera evolving into theatre and concert hall style performances is not necessarily an improvement. (Vol.1:157)

(original text) 在这八十年代的香港, 一般人相信粤剧趋于衰落及有改革的必要. 很多人提出保持传统、加以改良、用导演制、严谨排演及约束演出者爆肚等作为改良的方法。假若这些意见能彻底固执行, 在未来, 香港的粤剧肯定会失去一定程度的即兴性, 而在表演风格上与西方传统歌剧及其剧场形式更为接近。...本书作者深信即兴是粤剧作为一种表演艺术的其中一种特色, 评定即兴是「糟粕」是过于主观的说法。改革粤剧应包括检讨传统粤剧中即兴的运用, 研究如何加强演员对即兴的认识及即兴技巧的运用, 使之不致破坏演出的协调。

神功戏是粤剧传统的演出形式, 但自三十年代粤剧开始在戏院演出后, 不少演员、乐手

及观众开始认为戏院是粤剧戏院演出的高级场合，甚至有鄙视神功戏之态度。要保留粤剧的传统便须尊重神功此一演出场合，提倡粤剧应包括鼓励观众多看神功演出，从而观察粤剧的传统面貌。把粤剧戏院化及会堂化不一定是改良。(香港粤剧研究上卷:157)

Of the two PhD theses published in the UK that are concerned with Cantonese opera, only one discusses shen-gong performance. Dr Kevin Latham, in his 1996 SOAS PhD thesis *Cantonese opera in Hong Kong: An anthropological investigation of cultural practices of appreciation and performance in the early 1990s*, writes about his fieldwork on Cantonese opera in Tai-O 大澳, an offshore island of Hong Kong. In the course of discussing attitudes towards shen-gong performance, he writes:

In my interview with Leuhng Sang, I asked him why people organized the festival, to which he replied that the people that worshiped this deity would arrange operas each year like putting on a celebration of longevity for an old person on their birthday. (Thesis: 193)

On the next page under the heading '*Having a Good Time*', Latham continues his conversation with Leuhng Sang:

I further asked him why do people stage operas as part of the festivities, to which he replied that staging operas made people 'happier'. (Thesis: 194)

Then under the heading *A Social Occasion*, Latham writes:

People also treated the festival and operas as social occasions in a way not entirely different from the ways in which they enjoyed themselves. (Thesis: 198)

In Chapter 5: *Audience Practices in Tai-O*, Latham writes what a good friend explained to him:

A performance of Cantonese opera is like 'wind(-blown)' smoke passing the eyes, or so a good friend explained to me one day in the summer of 1993... She pointed out to me that the way I listened to and approached Cantonese opera was very different to the way she or other Chinese watched performances. For them, she said, it was not so serious, like watching smoke blowing away in the wind – an ephemeral experience. People watched it for enjoyment, and that was that, they then forgot about it... (Thesis: 209)

I, and many of the older generation in Hong Kong, have not forgotten and have fond memories of what we saw.

3.4.7 POLITICS AND CANTONESE OPERA

In the other UK PhD thesis, Dr. Cheng *Ling-Yan's Cross-Media and Cultural Study of Music in Hong Kong Film and Cantonese Opera* (2012, University of Liverpool), the abstract reads:

This especial status of Hong Kong gradually constituted its peripheral position, in which Hong Kong struggled to survive between Mainland China and the British colonial governments. Issues of diasporic consciousness, floating identity, and freedom of creativity are closely associated with the creation of experimental Cantonese operas in the 1950s and the contemporary Hong Kong cinema...

I argue the cross-media and cross-cultural adaptations of Cantonese opera and Hong Kong films demonstrate the hybrid identity of Hong Kong, which in turn signifies its refusal to assimilation into Chinese culture as it assumed quasi-colonial status.

As a child I did not perceive a political dimension in the Hong Kong Cantonese opera that I witnessed. Now, as an adult, I still feel that the Cantonese opera that I saw in Hong Kong in the 1950s and 1960s was not political. However, while using the Internet for my research, I have become aware that Cantonese opera in Canton has long been affected by politics; in fact, it has been inseparable from politics, and there is a marked difference between the tradition of Hong Kong Cantonese opera and Cantonese opera under state support and control in mainland China.

3.4.8 A TASTE OF MY PLUM-FLOWER-BOAT (see 3.3.1, p.94)

Creating an online forum had proved beneficial for my research. For example, I wrote an article titled *In search of info and reference materials of Cantonese opera* 《求有关粤剧的资料》(梅花船 2012-8-27 01:19:52). The following shows some of the replies I received, headed by the boat-friend pseudonym (the author) in bold text:

Thin Curtain Pale Moon²² 2012-9-2 11:39:49

(trans.) There is a lot of information. Here I list what I consider the most worthy references. In addition to *The Grand Dictionary of Cantonese Opera*, another set of books is *Guangdong opera series* (the book includes outstanding Cantonese opera songs and dramas, reviews on the art merit of Cantonese opera songs and dramas, research writings and reference books, history and factual records of Cantonese opera artists' creativity... and so on – edited by the Guangdong Cantonese Opera Foundation, published by Yangcheng

²² Many of the comments from this contributor have included autobiographical references.

Evening News Publisher). This book can be described as "all-inclusive", with rich contents. I think the two mentioned above will be of great help for your research, and you must try to obtain them. Other books on Cantonese opera song can also be used as reference, for example: *Cantonese opera art in Xiguan*, *History of Cantonese opera*, *Cantonese opera percussion*, *Pan Bang-Zhen dramas and songs anthology*, *Cantonese opera performers on the art of performing*, and so on. Biographies of da-lao-guan can be used for references, for example: *Hung Sin-Nui's Colorful Hungdou* (a troupe), *Southern sky touched by bright red*; *Luo Jiabao's Ups and downs in the profession for six decades*, *Luo Jiabao da lao-guan of the masses*, and so on. Too much information, I am not to list them all one by one.

(original text) 疏帘淡月 2012-9-2 11:39:49

资料很多，我列举一些我认为最值得参考的吧。除了《粤剧大辞典》，另一套书是《广东粤剧系列丛书》（这套书包括了许多优秀粤剧粤曲作品、粤剧粤曲艺术的评论和研究著作、粤剧粤曲的知识和工具书、粤剧艺术家创作的历史和现实记录……等等，由广东繁荣粤剧基金会编，羊城晚报出版社出版），这套书可以说是“包罗万有”，内容非常丰富。我觉得上述两套书对您的研究会有很大的帮助，你一定要设法找到，其他关于粤曲的书籍也可作参考，例如：《粤剧粤曲艺术在西关》、《粤剧春秋》、《粤剧音乐锣鼓》、《潘邦榛剧曲文选》、《粤剧演员谈表演艺术》等等，以及一些粤剧老馆的传记也可以作参考，例如：红线女的《红豆英彩》、《南天一抹嫣红》，罗家宝的《艺海沉浮六十年》、《平民老馆罗家宝》等等。资料太多，不一一列举了。

Distant Letter 2012-8-27 08:02:35

(trans.) In fact, Southeast Asia, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam all have a lot of Cantonese. Cantonese opera has had a thriving development – there is history, there is foundation, especially half a century ago, and closely connected with Hong Kong and Macao Cantonese Opera, and now there are troupes and instrumentalists, tutors (not many, and getting less), not only to sing Cantonese opera songs, but also to present a platform for the troupes of Hong Kong and China!

I suggest you should refer to the following!

Singapore Opera Academy, Dr. Cai Shupeng,
Singapore opera: Heritage and creation:
<http://www2.cuhk.edu.hk/corp/html/Articles/tsai-2012.pdf>

(original text) 千里飞鸿 2012-8-27 08:02:35

其实，在东南亚，新加坡，马来西亚，越南都有颇多广东人，粤剧也曾很兴旺发展，有历史，有根基，尤其是半世纪以前，与省港澳粤剧息息相关，现在还有剧团和乐师，老师（为数不多，日渐息微），不单是唱唱粤曲和为港，中剧团提供演出平台！建议你不妨参考下！

附：新加坡戏曲学院蔡曙鹏博士的“新加坡粤剧：传承与创造”

Zen Mountain Commoner 2012-8-27 18:25:01

(trans.) Re what you mentioned, I make this suggestion: you can contact Vancouver, Canada, "Zhen-hua-sheng" song art society, Mr Wong Tao, and ask this old gentleman. Though elderly, last year he still beat and sang on stage. He is a living treasure of the Cantonese opera world!

(original text) 禪山布衣 2012-8-27 18:25:01

你说之事，提一个建议：你可向加拿大温哥华的“振华声”曲艺社的黄滔老先生请教，先生年事已高，但去年仍能登台演唱拍和。他是粤剧界的一件活宝！

Sadly, Mr Wong *Tao* passed away in 2015, aged 102, but left behind writings of his long life in Cantonese opera, and contributed towards a platform in Canada for Cantonese opera, at least for the music. There were also many other useful suggestions from boat-friends such as using websites of top performing academies/troupes, CUHK, HKU, etc.

3.4.9 CANTONESE OPERA IN VANCOUVER

Mr Wong *Tao* contributed towards a platform in Canada. Elizabeth Lominska Johnson writes in her *Evidence of an Ephemeral Art: Cantonese Opera in Vancouver's Chinatown*:

Anyone who sees a Cantonese opera performance cannot fail to be overwhelmed by this experience of “total theatre” (Ward 1979, 20-1; Ward 1985, 184-6), which demands seemingly super-human skills from its performers. The Western concept of “opera” does not do justice to performances that are more choreographed than scripted. Actors continually control every muscle and facial expression, “keeping the whole body alive even in the stillest moments of the action”, as they express fundamental themes and emotions readily understood by experienced audience members.

The profound differences between the world of (Cantonese) opera and the often harsh realities of everyday life must have been especially apparent to Chinese audiences in Canada in the early decades of the twentieth century. These audiences were composed primarily of men, reflecting the impact of the head tax and then the exclusionary Chinese Immigration Act that made immigration to Canada first extremely costly and later impossible. For the most part their lives were confined to Chinatown, and those who were able to enjoy a good standard of living were the exception. They were the merchants who, among other activities, invested in the creation and travel of itinerant opera troupes. For people of all social classes, Chinatown offered much that was culturally familiar, and Cantonese opera offered not only a familiar regional form of entertainment but also diversion and a distinctive kind of beauty. (BC Studies, Winter 2005/06, p.55 & p.57)

Chapter 3 Figures

Fig.3.1: Three major rivers (p.71): The influence of the Central Plain gradually spread southwards from the lower reaches of the Yellow River to the Yangtze River and then to the Pearl River. Guangzhou (aka Canton) is the capital of Canton province.



Source: China-EnchantedLearning.com, 2000. *All About China*.

Fig.3.2: Four barbarians (p.71): Pink circle: Emperor
Yellow: Inner vassals
Green: Outer vassals
Blue/grey: Countries that pay tribute to the emperor
Outside: The east-west-north-south four barbarians



Source: Wikipedia, 中原 (Central Plain) 四夷表示圖 (Fig: The four barbarians).

Fig.3.3: An effigy of Lady Xian – the ‘First Heroine of China’ – in Lady Xian Temple 冼夫人像 (p.73)



Source: XianFuRen (Lady Xian) Research Net 冼夫人研究网 www.xfryj.com

Fig.3.4: Lady Xian Temple, Gaozhou 高州冼太庙 (p.73)



Source: Thin-Curtain-Pale-Moon. Plum-Flower-Boat topic 2013-2-13 #4 疏帘淡月

Fig.3.5: The tragic Ruan *Ling-Yu* 阮玲玉 (p.74)

Ruan, whose ji-quan 籍贯 was Canton, was born in Shanghai. Her father died when she was young and she worked as a housemaid before breaking into films and becoming a major star. She had an unhappy love life and committed suicide in 1935, aged 24. Her funeral procession was reportedly 3 miles long. The New York Times called it ‘the most spectacular funeral of the century.’ (Wikipedia, *Ruan Lingyu*, 2015.)



Source: Mtime.com, dean5, 2012-12-25 (时光网 dean 日志).

Fig.3.6: Movie queen Hu *Die* aka Butterfly Wu 胡蝶 (in the 1930s, p.74).

Hu *Die* and Ruan *Ling-Yu* were contemporaries – both were Cantonese born in Shanghai and both were top film stars famed for their beauty. In 1933 she was voted Movie Queen in China's first public poll conducted by the newspaper Star Daily.



Source: Wikipedia, *Hu Die*, 2015.

Fig.3.7a: A red boat replica – Cantonese opera troupes used red boats for transportation between towns and villages (pp. 94 & 109).

Young (2010:25) writes: 'The length of a boat was about seventy-six ceks 尺 (about 82.8 feet), the width about 10 ceks (10.9 feet), and the height in the cabin was nine ceks (9.81 feet).' Below is a picture of a Red Boat model taken at the Yuet Kek Museum in Foshan 佛山, Canton.



Fig.3.7b: Shoes representing bound feet 紮腳 (p.86, footnote 18)



A performer would undergo arduous training in order to learn to balance for long periods on shoes representing bound feet which have wooden foot supports inside and covered by the long robe to furthered the deception.

Source: Lominska Johnson, E.
Evidence of an Ephemeral Art, n.d:85

Fig.3.8: Shen-gong performance 神功戏

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Source: Sau Chan, 2014. *Chinese Opera* <www.chineseopera.co>

Fig.3.8b: A more elaborate shen-gong performance temporary venue (p.81)

Source:
orientaldaily 東方日報, 2010.



Fig.3.8c: A huge flower plaque 花牌 (gigantic and colourful bamboo banner approximately 110 feet wide and 34 feet high) – with explanations of structure. Flower plaques are often displayed at performing venues (p.83).

The flower plaque at the front of Fig.3.8a is a variance of the design.

Source: tEre-tErRiTOry, since 2000.

Fig.3.9: Leung Sing-Bor 梁醒波 (p.82)**Fig.3.9a: Leung Sing-Bor as da-hua-lian (paint-face)** with hua-dan Bak Sheut-Sin and xiao-sheng Yam Kim-Fai 小生花旦花面 任白梁醒波 紫釵記

Source: 云和月 (trans.) Cloud and Moon, 2013-12-12.

Fig.3.9b: Leung Sing-Bor in comedian roles 丑生/梁醒波

Leung Sing-Bor has been regarded as the best comedian in Cantonese opera and films though he did not receive chou-sheng (丑生) training for comedians. He was excellent in adlibbing to make the audience roar with laughter.

Source: Modern Records, 2016.

Fig.3.10: Hong Kong performers (pp. 85-90)

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Source: Apple Daily, 2005.



Fig.3.10b: Lau Hark-Sun 劉克宣 on the right, best known for playing evil characters.

Source: (trans.) Good Movie Net 好戏网, 2012-11-16.



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Source: i.ytimg.com, 2012.



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Source: (trans.) Net Yi Forum 网易论坛, 2010-04-03.

Fig.3.11: Fong Yim-Fun 芳艷芬 (p.89)



	
<p>Source: 2.bp.blogspot.com</p>	<p>Source: ivcat</p>

Fig.3.12: Bak Sheut-Sin 白雪仙 (p.90)



	
<p>Source: Google Search Images</p>	<p>Source: mypaper.pchome.com</p>

Fig.3.13: Hung Sin-Nui 紅線女 (p.91)



Fig.3.14: Red-Boat and Plum-Flower-Boat 紅船和梅花船 (pp. 94-5)

Fig.3.14a: Red-Boat Home Page



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3.15a: As Pinkerton in *MADAM BUTTERFLY*



3.15b: In romantic role



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Source: Jinming collection 今明

Fig.3.16: Wang Fan-Shi in *SASSY PRINCESS BLUNT HUSBAND* (p.95)



王凡石刁蠻公主惹駙馬

As the marshal: To appear before the emperor and meet the princess.

This is typical costume for martial roles of rank.



As the bridegroom: In the bridal chamber on the wedding night.

This is typical male wedding costume.



Awaiting to have all his hair shaved to be a monk as punishment for offending the princess.

Offenders wear white in Cantonese opera.

Source:
AKLWHO Photo Album
王凡石

Fig. 3.17: Plum-Flower Prizewinners 1989-2015 摘梅老倌 (p.78, pp. 95-96)

				
1 Feng Gang-Yi 冯刚毅 1989, 2002	2 Ding Fan 丁凡 1991	3 Ou Kai-Ming 欧凯明 1995	4 Chen Yun-Hong 陳韵红 1995	5 Ni Hui-Ying 倪惠英 1997
				
6 Liang Yao-On 梁耀安 1998	7 Cao Xiu-Qin 曹秀琴 1998	8 Zhuo Pei-Li 卓佩丽 1998	9 Yao Zhi-Qiang 姚志强 1999	10 Wu Guo-Hua 吴国华 2000
				
11 Liang Shu-Qing 梁淑卿 2001	12 Ceng Hui 曾慧 2002	13 Liang Su-Mei 梁素梅 2002	14 Qiong-Xia 琼霞 2003	15 Li Shu-Qin 李淑勤 2004
				
16 Jiang Wen-duan 蒋文端 2011	17 Li Jun-Sheng 黎骏声 2011	18 Cui Yu-Mei 崔玉梅 2013	19 Wu Fei-Fan 吳非凡 2015	20 Mai Yu-Qing 麥玉清 2015

Source: hudong.com: 1; Image.gxnews: 2; Thin-Curtain-Pale-Moon: 3; thevancouverjournal.blogspot: 4; i1.ce.cn: 5; Local Shallot: 6 7,12,15; www1.sz-art.cn: 8; i.ytimg.com: 9; wyq.jmlib.com: 10; p0.qhimq.com: 11; ccatmc.com: 13; i1.ce.cn: 14; ms00.mask.com: 16; m13.mask9.com: 17; heyuan.cn: 18; Jinming: 19; pic5.newssc.org: 20.

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Source: L: safzsd, 2010; R: Baby Wong, 2014.

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The Poet King and his queen

Source: AKLWHO Photo Album



The Emperor violates the Poet King's queen

Source: i3.ytimg.com

Fig.3.20: XIAO FENG-XIAN – Foshan Cantonese Opera Academy New Cantonese opera with Li Shu-qin 2011 佛山粤剧院李淑勤小鳳仙 (p.98).

At the beginning of the 20th Century, a prostitute called Xiao Feng-Xian 小凤仙 helped the renowned General Cai E 蔡锷 escape from his enemy Yuan Shikai 袁世凯.



General Cai E (L) and Xiao Feng-Xian (R)



General Cai E and Xiao Feng-Xian

Sources: Above - Local Ginger 本地姜 2011; Below - Jinming 今明.

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Source: Yule.sohu

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New Cantonese opera with Peng Qing-Hua 2015 彭庆华梦红船 (p.99)



The opera involves southern kung fu and Wing Chun 咏春 (L).

Below: A scene in the red boat.

Sources:
pineapple1881, and
Xijucn.com



Fig.3.22: FLOWER-MOON-SHADOW – Guangzhou Cantonese Opera Group
New Cantonese opera with Ni Hui-Ying 2002 广州粤剧团倪惠英花月影 (p.99)



This is an excellent production for performance in a Western opera house with Western orchestra and Chinese instruments. The story is about an anti-hero and government corruption from the lower ranks up to the very top.



Source: Top L: Google Search Image. Top R: Jinming.
Middle: Ms00.mask9.com 2010; Bottom: i5.xitek.cn

Fig.3.23: CHU RIVER HAN BORDER – Guangzhou Hongdou (Red Beans) Troupe (p.100)

New Cantonese opera with Ou Kai-Ming circa 2008 广州红豆粤剧团欧凯明楚河汉界



Xiang-Yu the Conqueror (Ou Kai-Ming) and his concubine (Liang Shu-Qing 梁淑卿)



The male performer is about to commit suicide with a sword!

Sources: Above: 91ddcc; Below: xijucn

Fig.3.24a: MU-LIAN SAVES HIS MOTHER – Guangxi Nanning Cantonese Opera Troupe opera based on a Buddhist tale with Liang Su-Mei 2012 广西南宁粤剧梁素梅目莲救母 (p.100)



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Source: Local-Shallot 本地葱, 2012-12-1 & 2012-11-27.

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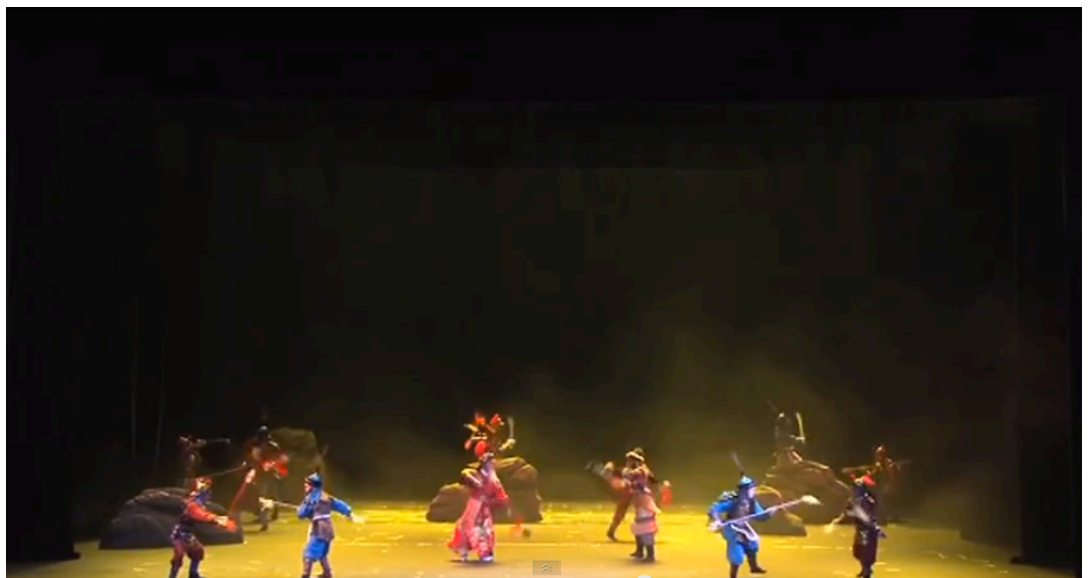
Source: i1.sinaimg.cn

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Source: sinaimg.cn 2013

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Source: Eric Cheung 2012

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《刁蠻公主憨驃馬》动画电影



Source:
Image2.sina.com.cn

Chapter 4

MY CROSS-CULTURAL COMBINED ARTS PROTOTYPE

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THE LEAD-IN NOTE:

The central purpose of my PhD is the prototype (Chapter 5) that is of use for my creative practice, for those in a similar or related practice, and for anyone who might want to make use of it. I am of bilingual and bicultural background; I had Western Classical music professional training and have also worked for long years in electro-acoustic music; my creative work and staging of performances have been deeply influenced by my impression of a short period of Cantonese opera; I have come across many very accomplished talents during my career, yet how I cross and combine cultures and art forms is flexible and naturally so, rather than studying or following anyone or any established form. For long years I have realized that my creative practice is difficult to pigeonhole (especially for funding applications). As my work involves music, dance, drama and visual arts across different cultures, I describe it as 'cross-cultural combined arts'. My prototype aims to be simple and accessible to all.

This chapter is in three parts. Part 1 is a critical discussion of cross-cultural combined arts. Part 2 is about how these thoughts affect my research and the prototype, and this leads to Part 3 explaining my cross-cultural combined-arts prototype, which is the core of this PhD thesis.

PART 1

4.1. CRITICAL THINKING ON CROSS-CULTURAL COMBINED ARTS

In Part 1 of this chapter I first discuss the crossing of cultures, then combined arts, and finally examine cross-cultural combined arts. I write about creative/performing artists whom I have encountered who work in fields that are similar or related to my own – in the UK, US, Europe, Hong Kong, China and Taiwan, and write about those composers who have influenced my work. I finish by writing about what is particularly relevant to Cantonese opera and/or my creative practice.

4.1.1. CROSS-CULTURAL ARTS

My practice is to create and stage performances. When I do so, I obey my artistic instinct following an idea rather than a definition. However, for funding, publicity and applications that require categorization in the UK, I have used the term ‘cross-cultural’ to describe my work. To those living in Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China, I would be identified as an ethnic Chinese who lives in the UK, a classical music composer who also works with other media, and as a woman – this last issue is dealt with in more detail later under (v) *Culture and Gender* (p.145) – but being cross-cultural would not be an issue. This might be due to the fact that China has a long history of assimilating different cultures; it might also be due to Chinese attitudes towards overseas Chinese; or to the fact that ‘Western Classical music’ has become cosmopolitan. I further discuss what is ‘cross-cultural’ for my project; culture and gender; the implication of race in ‘cross-cultural’; the reasons for crossing cultures; different types of ‘cross-cultural’; and the fact that ‘cross-cultural’ experience can be poignant.

(i) CHINA’S ASSIMILATION OF WESTERN CULTURE

Qing, the last imperial dynasty of China (1644-1912), towards its end was weak, corrupt and backward especially in science, technology and weaponry. Its closed-door policy was no defence to European colonial powers, the US and Japan – the countries that wanted to take advantage of China at the time. Qing was repeatedly defeated by foreign armies on Chinese soil, which resulted in unequal treaties. An example is the 1839-60 Anglo-Chinese Opium Wars (Allingham 2006) with Hong

Kong becoming a British colony under the 1842 Treaty of Nanking (effective 26 June, 1843). Anger at the corrupt government and humiliation fuelled national and anti-foreign sentiment, rebellions and revolutions. After the overthrow of Qing in 1911, China was soon plagued by warlords, and foreign powers still had control of territories and other concessions in China. Many intellectuals went abroad especially to Europe and the US (the powerful nations) to seek knowledge in a spirit of patriotism, believing that science and democracy from the West would bring about a new and strong China. Some also went to the West to study music, the arts and other subjects. This brought about a challenge to traditional Chinese values, as well as the assimilation of Western influence and progressive thought into Chinese traditional values. These ideas influenced the introduction of new political and legal systems (e.g. communism), and new culture movements. Written Chinese based on speech rather than Classical Chinese as used during imperial China has become the standard style of writing. Stage play (or spoken drama) as an import from the West has taken root and developed. What was derived from the West is in turn studied by the West as Chinese spoken drama. For example *Thunderstorm* 雷雨 (1933) by Cao Yu 曹禺 (1910-1996), a popular play that has been adapted into films and into a new Cantonese opera (2014), has also been translated and studied in the West. A recent development is the 2010 new translation of the prologue and first act with an introduction looking into traditional Chinese opera by Genevieve Andreas, Haverford college, US (Andreas, 2010). Paintings with Chinese themes expressed in Western techniques such as those by Xu Beihon 徐悲鸿 1895-1953 have become mainstream, and so is the creation of new music using Western staff notation and techniques. An example is Huang Tzu 黃自 (Huang Zi) 1904-1938, an influential composer and music educator who died young. Huang Tzu, his music is loved and revered by Chinese as Chinese, though in the Harvard Dictionary of Music Huang Tzu is only briefly mentioned under East Asia:

The faculty of the conservatory²³ included Western trained musicians such as the Oberlin- and Yale-trained composer Huang Zi (Huang Tzu, 1904-1938), who used impressionistic harmonic idioms to set Chinese words in his major choral works, and several expatriate Russian and European musicians. (2003: 263-4)

The Butterfly Lovers violin concerto 梁祝小提琴协奏曲 (1959) so loved by the Chinese and regarded as nationalistic, is written following the Western Classical

²³ This denotes the Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

model. During the Cultural Revolution, though everyone was coerced to toe the line of approved political thought, it was Western ideology that was to be shunned rather than the tools of the West. Music continued to be composed using Western staff notation and techniques. The fall of the Gang of Four was like a *deja vu* of the fall of Qing – China opened up and many went to the West and the US to bring back knowledge and ideas all over again. It has been such a long period of assimilation in so many ways that the cross-cultural aspect is no longer significant. This is similar to the fact that, although tea and tea drinking might have originated in China, tea drinking has been assimilated into English tradition and would not be looked upon as cross-cultural.

(ii) CHINESE ATTITUDES TOWARDS OVERSEAS CHINESE

A Chinese diaspora has unfolded throughout history and certainly as far back as the Qin dynasty 秦 (221-206 BC). It might have started as an unintentional by-product of imperial command. Qin Shi Huang²⁴ 秦始皇 (literally the First Emperor of Qin) sent Xu Fu 徐福 to the eastern seas to look for elixir of life in 201 BC. Xu Fu took with him 5,000 crew members including 3,000 boys and girls, none of whom returned, though he himself returned once to ask for more equipment and other necessities then never to return. The West probably knows about Qin Shi Huang because of the Great Wall of China and the Terracotta Army, but he was a most autocratic ruler reviled by the Chinese then and now (though Chairman Mao appraised him highly). There have been legends and theories about Xu Fu using the pretext of searching for an elixir to lure the emperor to provide resources for his journey of escape from tyranny, and to found his own kingdom overseas with thousands of boys and girls, presumably in Japan or beyond. There were military and agricultural colonies established towards the west and northwest of China in subsequent dynasties, and traders also settled down in many far away countries. In the Ming dynasty 明 (1368-1644), Zheng He 郑和 (1371-1433), the favourite eunuch of the Yongle Emperor 永乐帝, commanded state-sponsored sea journeys from 1405-1433 to explore Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and East Africa, and possibly contributing Chinese migration along those routes. China has a long history of large-

²⁴ Yang Hsien-Yi and Gladys Young's translation of selections from *Record of the Historian* (史记 circa 91 BC) pp. 159-196 *The First Emperor of Chin* (Qin) is a fascinating account of this amazing ruler and including the story of Hsu Fu (Xu Fu). See REFERENCES under its writer Szuma Chien 司马迁 (Sima Qian, c. 145 or 135 BC – 86 BC).

scale wars; political upheavals and calamities that made its people escape abroad. Coastal provinces such as Canton (Guangdong) 广东 and Fujian 福建 have a long tradition of emigrating abroad. People of Chinese descent have been dispersed all over the world, with different degrees of assimilation and interaction with their surrounding cultures, and inter-marrying. All the time overseas Chinese continue to assimilate Western influence, uninterrupted by the happenings in China. China has always been a vast country with a large population assimilating many races and cultures. There are 56 ethnic groups in the People's Republic of China (mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau) and the Republic of China, i.e. Taiwan (Wiki, 2014). Though the majority is Han, Han is also a result of assimilation of many races and cultures. China is in favour of assimilation and wearied of separatism, as this would lead to wars and calamity as shown in its history. Not only that, an ethnic Chinese of non-Chinese nationality is always considered as an overseas Chinese, and so are their activities. In comparison, although the British Empire was once the empire on which the sun never set, the assimilation of a wide range of races and their cultures appears not to have happened in the Empire. This might be another reason why, although I am a British national, my work is regarded in the UK as cross-cultural rather than British, but is considered as overseas Chinese rather than cross-cultural to Chinese people.

(iii) 'WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC' IS COSMOPOLITAN

'Western Classical music' in its broadest sense, which is the main area of my professional training and practice, has long ceased to be a Western phenomenon but has become cosmopolitan. I refer not to the more confined/academic definition of the 'Classical' period (1750-1820) as represented by Mozart and Haydn, but to the genre/tradition rooted in Western art music from c.1000 AD (and before) to the present day: the lineage of Medieval - Renaissance - Baroque - Classical - Romantic - Modern and finally to contemporary Classical music. A more detailed listing of composers from Gregorian chant of the Roman Catholic Church that flourished from about the 9th century along this lineage, would show a picture of gradual geographical expansion from a small area of Europe to a global presence in our time. In fact, 'Western Classical music' has been performed, studied and practised not only in every European country, but also in non-Western countries for a long time such as the Far East, and in every continent. Nowadays, those who write about or perform works from Gregorian chant to contemporary Classical music can be of any

nationality or race. The music departments of most of the universities and conservatories in the world are devoted to studying and performing this tradition of music, such as the Central Conservatory of Music and Shanghai Conservatory of Music – the two most important conservatories in China – and the universities in Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA). Contemporary Classical music is created by composers coming from any part of the world, of any race and culture, and it is quite common to freely infuse any type of cultural influence into their music. There have been practising musicians originating from the Far East for a long time, and many are on the international scene. Amongst Chinese or people of Chinese descent, I am just another one devoted to this practice.

(iv) WHAT IS 'CROSS-CULTURAL'?

How is the term 'cross-cultural' defined? In the Free Dictionary by Fairfax (F-D-B-F, 2014) there is a collection of definitions from other dictionaries, such as: 'Comparing or dealing with two or more cultures' and, 'Involving or bridging the differences between cultures'. Other dictionaries, including those of social science and anthropology, have other definitions. The following from Wikipedia is perhaps the closest I can identify with:

'Cross-cultural' is nevertheless useful in identifying writers, artists, works, etc., who may otherwise tend to fall between the cracks of various national cultures. (2014: 4. last paragraph)

Definitions change in the course of time, and creativity has a life of its own and is forever changing. Cross-cultural creativity is difficult to define, and that is what makes it interesting. I am interested in that short 'anything goes' cross-cultural period of Cantonese opera in Hong Kong – which I had experienced as a child, and which is the creative inspiration of the Prototype that constitutes the core of my PhD – precisely because it is interesting but difficult to define. The 'cross-cultural' aspect of my Prototype bears an affinity with John David Morley's *Picture from the Water Trade* (1985) – his semi-autobiographical novel on an English writer's journey into Japan. Seeing a Japanese actor's performance made him travel to that country. After steeping himself in Japanese life, he followed his instinct and went home²⁵.

²⁵ For more details with quotations from the book see 2.3.2, p.50.

(v) CULTURE AND GENDER:

An ethnic Chinese woman composer is still rare. Though for years there had been ethnic Chinese students (mostly piano, singing or violin) at the Royal Academy of Music in London, when I decided to pursue composition after an injury to my wrist prevented me from playing the piano, many doubted that I could make it as a composer in the UK, as there appeared not to be any ethnic Chinese women composers in the UK at that time. On hearing of my decision, a Chinese male acquaintance sent me a newspaper cutting of a story about a woman writer who, after being rejected by a publisher, put the manuscript in front of her heart then shot herself with the bullet going through the manuscript and her heart. In the UK, perhaps due to the adjective 'Western' in 'Western Classical Music', most people I have come across usually associate it with Europeans. From 1966 when I first came to the UK, until now, I have often come across people outside the music circle who ask me whether I am a nurse or assume that I have something to do with a Chinese takeaway (takeout) business. They find it difficult to accept that I am a composer contributing to contemporary 'Western' Classical music, as this does not fit in with their concept of the stereotypical Chinese woman. My compositions were first performed in the UK in 1974. When I ventured into electro-acoustics in 1976, with a few exceptions it was unheard of for an ethnic Chinese woman composer to do this (I was once asked whether I was the cleaner when I was in an electronic music studio), let alone to combine music, dance, drama, visual-arts and technology to create and to stage performances as I did in 1978. All the revolutions in China have not yet achieved sexual equality. Europe and the US appear to be more progressive with regard to the equality of women. Over the years I have read writings by well-known feminists such as Germaine Greer (1939-), Gloria Steinem (1934-), and Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986). These writings inevitably looked into female sexuality – e.g. Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970). I am more interested in the professional life of women. Yet I gained great respect for Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) after reading H.M. Parshley's 1953 English translation of *The Second Sex* (1949). Parshley's *Translator's Preface* says:

The central thesis of Mlle de Beauvoir's book is that since patriarchal times women have in general been forced to occupy a secondary place in the world in relation to men, a position comparable in many respects with that of racial minorities in spite of the fact that women constitute numerically at least half of the human race, and further that this secondary standing is not imposed of necessity by natural 'feminine' characteristics but rather by strong environmental forces of educational and social tradition under the purposeful

control of men. This, the author maintains, has resulted in the general failure of women to take place of human dignity as free and independent existents, associated with men on a plane of intellectual and professional equality, a condition that not only has limited their achievement in many fields, but also has given rise to pervasive social evils and has had a particularly vitiating effect on the sexual relations between men and women (1953: 9).

Through perseverance, my works have been performed in the UK, US, Hong Kong and Europe. I was listed in the *International Encyclopedia of Women Composers* (1987), *Grove's Dictionary of Women Composers* (1994), and in the yearly *British and International Music Year Book*, and in 1980 became an Associate Member of the Performing Right Society (PRS). I became aware of Women in Music (WIM) that was founded in 1987, and was involved with some of their activities in the UK, US and Paris. At this time I asked Judith Weir whether she would like to be involved with WIM, but she was not interested. Perhaps one should be a composer in one's own right rather than being labelled as a woman composer. On 30 June 2014, Judith Weir was appointed the Master of the Queen's Music.

(vi) IMPLICATION OF RACE IN 'CROSS-CULTURAL'

The quote from *The Second Sex* in the previous section says: 'women have in general been forced to occupy a secondary place in the world in relation to men, a position comparable in many respects with that of racial minorities'. In fact, the term 'cross-cultural' appears to have some racial implication, especially relating to groups of people of observable different physical traits, e.g. European and Orientals²⁶. Thus cross-cultural work might encounter assumptions, touch on sensitive issues and problems of social situations such as the suffering of disadvantaged groups, and criticism of the privileged. Living in the UK most of my life as an ethnic minority is one of the reasons why my cross-cultural projects address social issues. Although the tool I use is of Western Classical tradition, my music often demonstrates some influence from non-Western cultures. Sometimes it is necessary for me to describe my work as 'cross-cultural' or it is assumed to belong to the genre of ethnic Chinese music, though I have no training or much knowledge of that field and cannot play any Chinese instrument. Though there are many ethnic Chinese in America, when I

²⁶ Oriental: Here refers to persons of Chinese, Japanese and Korean origin. In the US, 'Asian' is now preferred in place of 'Oriental' which is considered derogatory. In the UK, 'Asian' denotes a person from the Indian subcontinent. As an ethnic Chinese myself, I do not find 'Oriental' derogatory. I use 'Oriental' here as it is clearer – to a Chinese, people of the Indian subcontinent with Caucasian features do not look so different from Europeans, but they look very different from Orientals.

visited the US in the late '70s, many Americans noticed my Britishness, including that of my music. While in the UK, I would be looked upon as Chinese despite the fact that legally I am a British national. Perhaps, in the end, it is natural to notice differences in people.

(vii) REASONS FOR CROSSING CULTURES

The exposure to more than one culture, self-advancement/self-interest either for an individual or for a group, or genuine beneficence to another people can all be reasons for crossing cultures.

(a) Reaction to exposure to more than one culture: Colonization, world events causing displacement of people, easy travelling, cosmopolitan cities, inter-marriages and the rapid advancement of IT... all have contributed towards the rise of cross-cultural activity. Everyone is influenced differently and has a different reason for doing so. Early exposure might be a reason, as the different cultures become part of the makeup of that person, causing him/her to have a tendency to reach out to other cultures, knowing there is more.

(b) Self-advancement for an individual or a group: I have mentioned in (iv) *What is cross-cultural?* (p.144) that many Chinese intellectuals went abroad especially to Europe and the US believing science and democracy from the West would bring about a new and strong China. Now that China has grown rapidly richer and stronger, many nations view China as a big market as well as a potential threat. Around the world there has been a growing interest in learning the Chinese language, learning about the country and its culture, and a related rise of cross-cultural events/projects.

(c) An act of beneficence to another people: This category includes the work of missionaries, the response to those in need in another part of the world, and events/projects to promote greater understanding between people. Those who are doing this are usually from a more privileged background. Although charity can be sweeter on the giving end, sometimes this can also be a humbling, liberating and learning experience.

(d) In my case: It is likely due to my bilingual education in the then British colony and early exposure to the cultures of East and West in cosmopolitan Hong Kong, where

there was a free press and freedom of speech, and the British more or less let the locals be, keeping their customs and traditions. Before I could remember things, I was exposed to Cantonese opera and Hollywood films. I have pursued culture and arts all my life. Hong Kong, where I spent my childhood and formative years, has been a world city that international artists frequented, and where one can gain access to many art forms and cultures. After leaving Hong Kong I have lived most of my life in cosmopolitan London, which is a world centre of arts and culture, with more than half of its population originating outside the British Isles. Though I have had opportunities to work in projects related to Japanese and Indian arts, my work has been mainly Anglo-Chinese. I have staged cross-cultural projects in the hope of removing some unnecessary barriers between people, as I have observed that people often notice the differences but ignore the similarities they have with those they look upon as 'the other'.

(viii) NATURALLY, DELIBERATELY OR SUPERFICIALLY CROSS-CULTURAL

Naturally cross-cultural: Nowadays more and more people are born into or grown up in a cross-cultural environment, and many have dual-nationality. Mixed-race people and people with a cross-cultural mindset are a fast-growing group. From an early age these people are aware of being perceived as different by the majority, and would react to this; it would also affect how they see society, the world and a lot of things. Knowingly or unknowingly, the creative/performing work of these people often has a distinct style, with cross-cultural elements, as this is their natural tendency. A few examples are the reggae singer Bob Marley and his interest in the Rastafari movement, composer Tona Scherchen 萧桐 – the daughter of Chinese composer Xiao Shu-Xian 萧淑娴 and Swiss conductor Herman Scherchen – who brought Chinese elements into avant garde music (Universal Edition, 2014²⁷), and the multi-talented British Indian Meera Syal – a creative/performing member of the BBC comedy *Goodness Gracious Me*. 'Cross-cultural' is a common trait among these people that is ingrained and life-long.

Deliberately cross-cultural: In the case of works such as Verdi's *Aïda* (1871), Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* (1885), Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (1903) and

²⁷ I chose the UE link as it has recordings of Tona Scherchen's music. I also include a Wiki link under REFERENCES, which has more info about her.

Turandot (1924), Judith Weir's *A Night at the Chinese Opera* (1987), and John Adams' *Nixon in China* (1987), the composers are not from a cultural background related to the topics. *Aida* was an Egyptian commission to celebrate the opening of the Khedivial Opera House. The *Mikado* was the result of a contractual notice for a new work:

Setting the opera in Japan, an exotic locale far away from Britain, allowed Gilbert to satirise British politics and institutions more freely by disguising them as Japanese (Wiki, 2014: 2nd para.).

Puccini got his inspiration of the topics for *Madama Butterfly* and *Turandot* from seeing a play in one case, and reading a play in the other. *A Night at the Chinese Opera* was a BBC commission for the Kent Opera. For this occasion, in Act 2, Judith Weir incorporated a Yuen dynasty drama *The Orphan of Zhao* 赵氏孤儿 which is about a story that happened during the Spring and Autumn Period 春秋 (771-476 BC) and is in the repertory of many traditional Chinese operas. I remember the 1987 performance I saw at QEH (South Bank Centre London) as being semi-staged and with a sparse sonority akin to some traditional Chinese opera; but on that occasion, it was announced that the performance was lacking one instrumental part due to unforeseen circumstances, which might have contributed to the sparsity. When I heard BBC Radio3 *Essential Classics: Rob Cowan with Alice Goodman* (BBC R3, 2014), the librettist of *Nixon in China* said that initially John Adams was not interested in the topic. In a collection of reviews (Wiki, 2014) there is no mention of any cross-cultural aspect, yet from broadcast excerpts I have heard of *Nixon in China* over the years, I have the impression that at least some of its percussion writing might have been influenced by Chinese opera. I met John Adams a long time ago at his home in San Francisco, where there is a tradition of Cantonese opera activity – even on the streets. It is likely that Adams, living there, might have heard such sound. Those who work on topics outside their culture, for whatever reason, inevitably would deliberately look into the other culture. Judith Weir would have done thorough research while working on *A Night at the Chinese Opera*. The cross-cultural elements in these works, though they initially might not be so obvious, sometimes grow with time in subsequent productions. In the case of *Turandot*, despite the adaptation of a Chinese folksong (*Narcissus* 水仙花²⁸) in *Là sui monti dell'East* (*The*

²⁸ I first learned to sing *Narcissus* when I was about ten at school, and still remember the melody and words by heart. The song is also called *Jasmine Flower* 茉莉花.

Mountains of the East), the story of a Chinese princess is in reality a Westerner's fantasy of a Chinese tale. In two stage productions of *Turandot* by two top Chinese film directors, Zhang *Yimou* 张艺谋 and Chen *Kaige* 陈凯歌 respectively – Zhang's 1998 *Turandot at the Forbidden City* (Giovanna Casolla, Sergej Larin, Barbara Frittoli etc.); and Chen's 2008 in Valencia (Maria Guleghina, Marco Berti, Alexia Voulgaridou) – both under the baton of Zubin Mehta, these directors naturally and effortlessly contributed Chinese elements that won the heart of Chinese audiences²⁹. So did the late Anthony Minghella's ENO production of *Madam Butterfly* with an element of Bunraku (Japanese puppet theatre) that I saw in the 2007/08 season. Minghella, who was married to a Chinese woman, also understood the subtle Oriental nuance.

Superficially cross-cultural: Some obvious examples are earlier Hollywood films about non-American themes and people. Britain had its fair share in the 1962 British comedy film *The Road to Hong Kong* starring Bing Crosby and Bob Hope (the only one in the series not produced by Paramount); and the BBC 1958-78 *The Black and White Minstrel Shows*. These are unlikely to have promoted greater understanding between people despite their popularity at the time; they are more likely to be offensive to the people/culture they claimed to portray, and to be seen by later generations as an embarrassment.

(ix) CROSS-CULTURAL EXPERIENCE CAN BE POIGNANT

Segregation especially of the racial and legal kind like the Jewish ghettos in Europe during WWII; black townships during the Apartheid Era in South Africa; and what happened to non-white people in the US before the civil rights movement – all these are now generally considered to be bad. However, the fact is that it is easier to live among one's own kind, whether one is classified as the majority or minority. Some people of the mainstream community might have prejudice or assumptions out of ignorance and be arrogant towards people they consider as 'not one of us', but people of the minorities can also behave the same way – whether towards the majority or other minorities – i.e. racial minorities also demonstrate racial prejudice. Living as a minority most of my life, I often come across situations that remind me of the Chinese saying 'A white horse is not a horse 白马非马'. Here I am not going to discuss the interpretations or debates about this proverb from before Qin 先秦 (before

²⁹ Zhang *Yimou* and Chen *Kaige's* *Turandot* are available for viewing on the Net, and I have included the links under REFERENCES.

221 BC) by sages, philosophers and scholars such as Zhuangzi 庄子 (c. 369-286 BC) and Gongsun Long 公孙龙 (320-250 BC) to the present time. Literally, it translates as 'white horse not horse' – ancient/classical Chinese often strips a sentence or phrase down to its bare essentials, with no article, preposition, tense, verb, object, subject, gender indication, punctuation... thus leaving it open to interpretation. When one thinks of a horse, one would not think of a white horse. When one sees a white horse, one would perceive it as a white horse rather than just a horse, as a white horse is a particular type of horse. In the same way, when one thinks of a 'human being', an English person would not think of a Chinese, and a Chinese would not think of an English person. In the UK if I make an enquiry, it would be reported that a Chinese came in and asked rather than a person. To be a person, I may need to be amongst Chinese. Nowadays the acceptable term is 'community'. In the UK, 'Chinese community' often represents a particular type of Chinese rather than the whole – Chinese in China Town (which is a form of ghetto for economic reasons) and those who would not integrate (not wanting to speak/learn English and only socialize with Chinese though living in the UK). Well-intentioned activities and policies involving this kind of 'community' tend to strengthen stereotyping rather than promoting greater understanding between people. For those who do not want to be confined to a particular culture, their cross-cultural work might face the following reactions:

(a) Both sides are not interested and do not want to know as they prefer not to venture out of their haven, with 'the other' safely labelled and tucked away.

(b) At best only part of it would be understood or appreciated as the work might appear to be in a familiar form but it is not wholly familiar, as it contains 'foreign' elements.

(c) At worst, the work will be misunderstood, or undervalued by at least one side. The music of Huang Tzu 黄自 (1904-1938), and *The Butterfly Lovers* violin concerto 梁祝小提琴协奏曲 (1959), written in Western idiom and loved by Chinese people, would not be appraised highly if evaluated from the viewpoint of 'Western Classical' music. This is an example of a work that is tipped more heavily towards one side, hence it appeals to that side. If a work is more balanced on both sides, it is very likely that it will have elements not valued by both and not easy to appreciate.

(d) Cross-cultural work and mixed-race people may be looked upon as not pure and even tainted. I argue that cross-cultural work and those of mixed race have a right to exist like other minority manifestations, and they are true and natural. On the issue of purity: Puccini is firmly anchored in Italian opera, whilst *Madam Butterfly* and *Turandot* – works on an oriental subject – are but a temporary phase. With Judith Weir, besides *A Night at the Chinese Opera*, her *Gentle Violence* (1987, Fig.4.4 p.201) for piccolo and guitar is about Tai Chi – the Chinese martial art connected to Taoism (perhaps this had something to do with the fact that the work was commissioned by Gerald Garcia who was born in Hong Kong). At the time I spoke to Judith Weir of Wong *Ching-Ping* 王正平 (1948-2013), a pipa³⁰ master active in Hong Kong and Taiwan, who was working on his thesis about Chinese music aesthetics at Kingston University, and she was happy to look at it. She also went to a Cantonese opera performance in London with me. Though Judith Weir might have a genuine interest, Chinese elements are not a constantly recurring theme in her work. In the BBC 3 programme *Judith Weir reflects on Wagner's Ring Cycle* (first broadcast 16 Oct 2012), she said that her work had been deeply influenced by Wagner. Whether or not these works are purely cross-cultural, they add an extra dimension to the home culture of their composer and cultures beyond.

'Cross-cultural' can be flexible as there are so many different cultures in the world. Cross-cultural people are not firmly anchored in one culture. They are equally at home with more than one culture, yet they can also be critical of both. The more they know, the more they see from more than one perspective, and cannot wholeheartedly accept the values and traditions of either side – especially when there is contradiction. This can create a dilemma and a sense of not belonging. At times, refusal to choose sides can lead to a painful inner conflict. In 1976 I wrote a work for soprano and string orchestra called *Shadow's Farewell* 影的告别. The words are selected and translated from *Wild Grass* 野草 (1927) – a collection of prose poems written by the radical writer Lu Hsun 鲁迅 (Lu Xun 1881-1936). I used the selected words to express this inner turmoil: what is considered to be 'heaven' in one culture may be 'hell' in another, and so is their respective ideal future. A cross-cultural person is like a shadow between light and darkness, forced into becoming the one or the other, and

³⁰ Pipa is a four-stringed Chinese instrument with frets and sometimes called the Chinese lute.

they see those confined to one culture as happy fossils or bigoted at worst. The words I selected are as follows:

There are things I dislike in heaven –
I don't want to go.
There are things I dislike in hell –
I don't want to go.
There are things I dislike in your future golden world –
I don't want to go.
Yet you are what I dislike,
Friend, I don't want to follow you.
I am but a shadow.
Darkness devours me,
Yet light makes me vanish.
Lingering between light and darkness,
I don't know whether it is evening or dawn.
I am but a shadow. (1927: pp. 8-9)³¹

Shadow's Farewell has been performed in English at the Royal Academy of Music (1976), and in Chinese 影的告別 at the 1976 Asian Arts Festival held in Hong Kong. The German version *Des Schatten Abschied* for soprano and piano has been performed at St Olave Hart Street London (2 Mar 2011) and at the Berlin Konzert Haus (8 Mar 2011).

Whether the cross-cultural message of my work has come through to different audiences, the world has become progressively more cross-cultural for economic reason. In his witty book *Borderless Economics: Chinese Sea Turtles, Indian Fridges and the New Fruits of Global Capitalism* (Guest, 2011), Robert Guest argues about the beneficial consequences of globalization, and that this is the reason for America being strong and prosperous. Though the book is about economics, it is also about people and touches on multiracialism and multiculturalism³². Nowadays 'Western Classical music' has been expanding from the developed world to developing countries, and is multi-racial and multi-cultural. Musicians of non-Western origin are not conscious about 'Western' – they just make music, and they enrich the international platform.

³¹ The words I selected and translated were taken from an old and tatty Chinese book of a collection of Lu Hsun's works, given to me when I was twelfth. The front and back covers, and info re publisher are missing. I have listed a 1931 English translation known to Lu Hsun under REFERENCES, where the text can be found on pp. 8-9, and is a better translation than mine.

³² For a short listen to Robert Guest's interview by *The Economy* on line, see REFERENCES.

I have written more on 'cross-cultural' as my PhD project has encountered some difficulties due to its cross-cultural aspect. Some well-intentioned people have advised me to confine myself to one camp: such as to change my thesis into a research project on Cantonese opera, or a pure composition PhD in the form of an opera or a piece of electro-acoustic music. I repeatedly need to explain the cross-cultural elements in the completed creative portions, as although they are natural and clear to me, they are not to others. The cross-cultural arts are a field yet to be cultivated, and this thesis should at least sow another seed in this field.

4.1.2. COMBINED ARTS

Humans have five senses. It is natural to want to see, hear, smell, taste, and feel by touching and be touched. Humans also have perception, cognition, and the ability to think. Opera, ballet, kinetic arts, film and TV are just some examples of appealing to various combined sense and sensibility, and IT has been pushing the boundary further. Even with art forms that appeal to a particular sense, such as music for hearing, and fine arts for seeing, it is not unusual for practitioners to expand beyond and work on creative collaboration with others outside their fields. Robert Wilson who is firmly rooted in fine arts is also world renowned as the American experimental theatre artist – his website constantly provides new information and update of these activities (robertwilson.com). Many in creative and performing art are multi-talented. Wagner, apart from writing music, was also a prolific writer. For his operas, he wrote both the libretto and the music. He also had specific visual ideas for staging his *Ring Cycle*. His work and ideas have deeply influenced many composers (e.g. Judith Weir as mentioned in the previous section) and later productions, and Bayreuth is dedicated to the performance of Wagner's music drama since 1876. Works of combined-arts nature are capable of growing and can have a life of their own – for even at Bayreuth, a latest production can be different from Wagner's original visual and staging ideas. Since 2008, the Richard Wagner and Wagner operas website covers many aspects of Wagner, his works and philosophy, his ideas in stage production, productions of his works, with constant updated information and activities (Wagneropera.net). Many of Schönberg's paintings and drawings can be viewed on the Net such as on the Arnold Schönberg Centre website (schönberg.at). Perhaps it is not coincidental that *Pierrot Lunaire* (1912), the melodrama for voice and ensemble, when staged, often has a surreal, striking and disturbing quality like Schönberg's paintings. After the Cultural Revolution, a group of young contemporary Classical

music composers in China were allowed out to study in the US and Europe, and have all achieved a successful career since. I met many of them at the First Contemporary Chinese Composers Festival (June 23-29 1986) in Hong Kong. Among them, Qu Xiao-Song 瞿小松 is highly accomplished in Chinese painting and calligraphy, and no doubt, his multi-talents have contributed to his music having a rich and distinct colour, and possibly ideas of staging his music drama like *The Death of Oedipus* (1993-4). As there are many art forms and different ways of combining by different practitioners, variations are endless. Combined arts have been and will continue to be popular.

4.1.3. CROSS-CULTURAL COMBINED ARTS

Genres that are combined arts in nature such as opera, ballet, film and TV are good for expressing cross-cultural topics. In the case of *Madam Butterfly* and *Turandot*, the music reflects Puccini broadening his imagination into the music and feelings of the Orient. Productions of these works are sumptuous and spectacular, and rich in imagination of what is attractively and strikingly exotic. This also allows more freedom of expression in a way that is appealing to a wide range of audience – as mentioned previously about *The Mikado* 'allowed Gilbert to satirise British politics and institutions more freely by disguising them as Japanese' (Wiki, 2014: 2nd para). *Journey to the West* 西游记 which is one of the 'Four Great Classical Novels' of Chinese literature, is considered by many to be a satire reflecting the corrupt Ming government of the time (16th century). As the happenings were in a foreign land, and better still, the deeds were of monsters and non-humans (monkey, pig...), thus would not get the writer and his family into trouble with the authority. No doubt due to *Journey to the West* being fairy tale-like and rich in exotic colour, it has been widely adapted into many types of traditional Chinese operas, and films and TV series in China and abroad – though not always presented as a satire. As mentioned previously about the Chinese proverb 'A white horse is not a horse 白马非马' (p.150), it is common for one not to perceive those originating from foreign lands as typical human, but to view them with one's assumptions of the exotic, and considering humans are attracted to exotic colour, perhaps it is natural that people and happenings in foreign lands are often portrayed as legend and fairy tale.

The South Korean composer *Isang Yun* 尹伊桑 (1917-1995), for political reasons

lived and worked in Germany for a long time. His opera *Sim Tjong* (1972) – a Korean fairy tale about a blind old man and his daughter who was also an angel – was part of the official cultural programme for the 1972 Olympiad in Munich.

According to Jeongmee Kim's *The angels and the blind: Isang Yun's Sim Tjong*:

As an Eastern composer living in Europe, Yun established his fame in the Western musical world through the novel aesthetic and compositional approaches in many of his works, including *Sim Tjong*. Yet, more importantly, *Sim Tjong* has profound implications for our global and intellectual environment at the brink of the new millennium. It is a by product of the cross-cultural experiences as a post-colonial intellectual in Europe, incorporating artists and producers from at least three continents - Asia, Europe and North America. (2001: 2nd para)

This shows that Yun's opera of Western form in Korean theme, and the cross-continental collaborative combined arts production, was a meaningful world event (Fig.4.1 & Fig.4.2, p.200).

As for the Chinese composer Qu *Xiao-Song* 瞿小松 (1952), though like Yun, using the language of Western contemporary Classical music, his opera *The Death of Oedipus* (1993-4) is perhaps more personally cross-cultural combined arts. Qu came from a Chinese background that was a closed-door to Western influence due to being sent to remote areas as an agricultural worker during the Cultural Revolution. He started studying Western music rather late and had worked as an instrumentalist in Peking opera. *The Death of Oedipus* was written after he had lived and worked in the US and Europe. Many of his works are on a Chinese theme yet for this opera, he chose a Greek myth that has deep influence on Western culture. Again, according to the Chinese proverb 'a white horse is not a horse' (see p.150), perhaps this reflects how he views the West. As he is accomplished in Chinese painting and has some Peking opera background, no doubt he would have contributed ideas in the staging. I have watched excerpts of this opera directed by Romain Bischoff online (RomainBischoff, 2011), and find the staging rather bare and static (but the video is hazy) – the motion is in the percussion that reminds me of Chinese opera. A bare stage is a characteristic of Peking opera, but the static aspect is not, as Peking opera performers are renowned for their beautiful and acrobatic movements on stage. To my ears, the music bears little resemblance to *Mists* – a work for soprano and ensemble on a Chinese theme that, funded by GLA (Greater London Art), I commissioned from Qu *Xiao-Song* for my group Inter-Artes in 1991 – which the

opera is supposed to derived from (see pp. 161-162).

The world has moved forward with the passage of time, and many who work in combined arts also portray 'cross-cultural' in real life situations rather than as exotic myth or fairy tale. The US due to it is a melting pot, as early as 1984 produced the world-popular *The Cosby Show* (1984-1992), breaking racial stereotyping by portraying African Americans as people of the mainstream community. UK has *Goodness Gracious Me* (BBC comedy), which keeps British Asian characteristics and is enjoyed by old and new generations of Asians, as well as by those from mainstream communities.

4.1.4. THOSE I HAVE COME ACROSS OR WORKED WITH

In Chapters 1 and 3, I recounted how as a child in Hong Kong, I experienced Cantonese opera at its most flexible and cross-cultural, when a Cantonese opera was about the performers – their talents in re-creating, ad lib and improvisation according to circumstances, and how they ventured into multimedia of the time – anything goes for survival. Later, I also saw first performances of some of the best Hong Kong Qubens 曲本 (quasi libretto cum script – the basis of new drama) that are now regarded as classics, and how these classics deliberately or unwittingly had pushed Cantonese opera towards incorporating Western disciplines in creation and performance: one sees fewer performers re-creating using Qubens as a basis, especially the spontaneous kind; ad lib and improvisation are now looked down on; and all these had hastened the demise of some special characteristics of the Cantonese opera of my childhood, yet the memory of these is the inspiration of this project. Due to my professional training and creative practice have been of Western principle, those I have come across and worked with in Hong Kong, China, Taiwan, Europe, the UK and the US are not from the profession of Cantonese opera, but mostly from Western Classical music and especially contemporary Classical music, from electro-acoustics, modern dance, and including actors, artists, photographers, designers, writers and some that are outside these fields. The following is a brief account of this.

(i) ELECTRO-ACOUSTICS AND MODERN DANCE

When I was a student at the Royal Academy of Music and had never heard of

electro-acoustics (called electronic music then), a friend took me to see Stockhausen (1928-2007) in action at a concert entirely of his works at Conway Hall London in 1967. The audience appeared to be either worship Stockhausen and applauded whatever he said (even when he announced there was a change of order of two pieces); or were hostile towards the music and ignorant of what to expect (thinking musicians were still adjusting/tuning – not knowing that was the piece, and were shushed for still talking to each other). I was puzzled, disturbed (some of the sound was nightmarish) but not dismissive, and was interested in Stockhausen's controlled flexibility and this new sound world that is so different from what I was taught at the RAM, and in fact unlike anything I knew. I then attended a number of Stockhausen's long lectures followed by long performances of his work, such as his opera *Donnerstag aus Licht*, an opera for 14 performers (3 voices, 8 instrumentalists, 3 dancers) plus a choir, an orchestra, and tapes, in September 1985 at the Royal Opera House, London. Stockhausen was perhaps the most combined-art oriented composer at the time, and he was also interested in cross-cultural material. His *Inori* (1973-74), which means prayer in Japanese, in the performance I saw at the English National Opera (ENO) London was for one performer – an attractive oriental lady being placed on the top of a pyramid-like installation, gesturing to modulated sound and orchestra, some of the gestures suggested to me a kind of gentle karate.

In 1976, I was chosen by the Gulbenkian Foundation as a composer to attend the First International Dance Course for Professional Choreographers and Composers, to work with Classical ballet and modern dance choreographers and dancers, under the direction of the American choreographer Glen Tetley (1926-2007). This was my first experience of modern dance, and also the work and philosophy of Martha Grahams (1894-1991) via Glen Tetley. I was very taken in by this new dance form and also Martha Graham – like my first experience of Stockhausen and electro-acoustics in late Sixties. This has also started my writing/making music for dance. Later, I was fortunate to have seen a performance of Martha Graham's *Appalachian Spring* (music: Aaron Copland) by the Martha Graham Dance Company in LA. In London I have seen performances of the dance companies of Merce Cunningham (1919-2009) and Eric Hawkins (1901-1994), who were both connected with Martha Graham. Modern dance though derived from Classical ballet, is very different and flexible, and often uses contemporary music. This 1976 Dance Course included both classical ballet and modern dance choreographers/dancers such as from the Royal Ballet and Ballet Rambert. During the first week, every choreographer was to present a new

dance every evening. Everyday they chose a composer to work with and rehearse for that evening's performance. It so happened daily a modern dance choreographer would choose me. Apart from having to write music almost instantaneously for that evening's performance, I created electro-acoustic music for the first time, as modern dance dancers respond well to this medium.

After the dance course I became more and more interested in this new sound world. At the time, it was produced and recorded in analogue format and called electronic music. I visited Peter Zinovieff to see his EMS inventions such as VCS3 synthesizers, vocoders, oscilloscopes and a lot more. I worked on electronic music regularly at various studios such as West Square that was under Barry Anderson (1935-1987). I acquainted myself with those in the field like Hugh Davies (1943-2005) and his invention of musical instruments from household items, and Brian Hodgson of BBC Radiophonic Workshop. At Dartington Summer School, I was very impressed by the sound of Serge Tcherepnin's synthesizer system, and used it to perform a piece for voice and digital delay by his younger brother Ivan Tcherepnin (1943-1998). This was my first experience of graduating from analogue to digital format. Though Ivan Tcherepnin was half Chinese and his first composition written at the age of six was of Chinese pentatonic scale, I was concentrating so hard to control a sound system I was not familiar with to perform a complicated piece by him that was beyond my level, I hardly spent a thought on noticing any cross-cultural aspect. Like many who work with electro-acoustics, Ivan Tcherepnin also worked on multimedia creation and performance (The Tcherepnin Society, 2014). Wanting to know more about digital/computer music, in 1978, I did short intensive work at the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics (CCRMA), Stanford University, under the direction of John Chowning. It was mind-boggling to use the computer to programme and understand sound, and to create music. I also heard some beautiful computer music there, including *Stria* by Chowning. However, I find analogue electronic music visually and physically more exiting, and more intuitive – one sees on the stage all those synthesizers, vocoders, oscilloscopes and other inventions, and tapes going round this and that... with performers running around to control this and that... one physically touches all these and turns knobs and putting pins in here and there, and listening and reacting to the sound... all very human – like playing on musical instruments. With computers it is neat and very controlled, a lot of math and science, yet the scope seems limitless. The MA work I did at Cardiff University (1983) under the supervision of Dr Mike Greenhough (see p.181) was to use a hybrid system

(analogue-digital) at the Physics Department to create music. However, whether it is analogue or digital, a power cut would render the most powerful system in the world to nothing – and that was what happened when I was at CCRMA, once. My MA dissertation is called *On the employment of a hybrid computer music system to produce the germ of an instrumental composition*. I am interested in the human factor – to humanize the machine by listening, to appreciate the beauty of imperfection like the flaw in the Persian carpet. I work on interchanging ideas and materials between electro-acoustics and staff notated music and vice versa. Some of the music I created for this prototype is in this direction (e.g., AV13 & notes p.432).

(ii) HONG KONG AND CHINA

Though I have made my home in the UK since 1966 and most of my creative activities have been in London, my earliest memory was that of Hong Kong. I have been back to Hong Kong from time to time for performances and events, and I know many Hong Kong composers. The older generation such as Lin *Shengxi* 林声翕 (1914-1991), a pupil of Huang *Tzu* 黃自, was more traditional and his music appeals to the general public in Hong Kong, China and Taiwan; while the music of Chen *Chien Hua* 陈健华 reflects his training in Germany. Among contemporary music composers, *Doming* Lam 林樂培 (1926-) has been a prominent figure and his music expresses Chinese spirit with avant garde techniques. Chan *Wing-Wah* 陳永華 (1954-), Victor Chan 陳偉光 and Richard Tsang 曾葉發 are prolific composers of small to large scale compositions, and are current or former Music Faculty staff of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The music of my multimedia work *Metamorphosis* is a hybrid of electronic and computer music. When it was performed in Hong Kong in 1978, this genre was unheard of there. I wrote articles in the local press about CCRMA, and electronic and computer music, and later gave several lectures, including one at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where Clarence Mak 麥偉鑄 (1959-) was a student. Clarence Mak later pursued a career in this, visited CCRMA, and in 1984 was appointed Head of Composition and Electronic Music of Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts. Richard Tsang, whose work includes the media, has composed electro-acoustic works in the Nineties. In 1989, I was moved by Hong Kong people's reaction to the Tienanmen Square Incident. At that time, I was not aware of any composer with a particular interest in combined arts in Hong Kong. Knowing some Hong Kong people would move to the UK before 1997 (the Handover),

in 1990 I staged a large scale two-week combined arts project called '*Theme Hong Kong*' at the South Bank Centre London, then the second leg in Hong Kong. This project included composers, musicians, dancers, actors, artists and writers who are either related to Hong Kong or are active in the UK.

I have never lived in China, but the colonial Hong Kong where I grew up was much affected by the happenings in China, and I have a good knowledge of Chinese culture. When China first allowed a group of young talented contemporary composers to go abroad after the Cultural Revolution, I met most of them at the 1986 First Contemporary Chinese Composers Festival in Hong Kong. Many of them have stayed for many years or lived in the US or Europe since. Among them, Qu *Xiao-Song* 瞿小松 (1952-), Chen *Yi* 陈怡 (1953-), Chou *Long* 周龙 (1953-) have all written music for the cross-cultural projects of my group Inter-Artes. Tan *Dun* 谭盾 (1957-) was supposed to write a piece, but my application to Greater London Arts to commission him did not come through. Tan *Dun* is ingenious and is probably the most prolific and cross-cultural combined-arts oriented composer (tandunonline). Chen *Qigang* 陈其钢 (1951-) was a pupil of Messiaen and had become a naturalized French citizen in 1992. His music is quite complex, but his song for the 2008 Beijing Olympics opening ceremony is simple and Chinese (qigangchen.com).

These Hong Kong and Chinese composers have all written a lot of music on Chinese themes. As the Chinese, and especially the Hong Kong composers are brought up using Western staff notation as the norm, perhaps it is when they write music using another culture as a theme that it can be described as cross-cultural. Here, I can think of an interesting example:

I mentioned earlier about Qu *Xiao-Song*'s opera *The Death of Oedipus* (p.156) that to my ears, the music bears little resemblance to *Mists* – a work for soprano and ensemble on a Chinese theme that, funded by Greater London Arts (GLA), I commissioned from him for my group Inter-Artes in 1991 – which the opera is supposed to derived from. The programme notes I wrote for *Mists*' world premiere at the Purcell Room, South Bank Centre London is as follows:

The music was inspired by the suffering of Chai *Wenjee* 蔡文姬 (Cai *Wenji* c.177-269 AD), daughter of a much respected scholar and artist, who was a talented and attractive young lady. Towards the end of the Han Dynasty, barbarians invaded China. During one invasion, Chai *Wenjee* was raped and

then carried off to foreign lands. She became a wife in the tribe and bore two children. This was a disgrace for a lady of her status. She also missed her country terribly. When a friend of her late father's, Ts'ao Ts'ao 曹操 (Cao Cao), became the most powerful man in China – the Emperor was his puppet – he paid a ransom so that Chai Wenjee could return to her country. Again she was distressed for she had to leave her children behind... *Mists* is about the state of not seeing things clearly, before enlightenment, and the confusion and distress experienced by Chai Wenjee before returning to her country. (1991)

Compare this with the following Wiki translation from Dutch Wiki about Qu Xiao-Song's opera *The Death of Oedipus*³³:

... the vocal work *Mist* (1991) lays the foundation for his successful operas: *Oedipus* (1992-93) and *The Death of Oedipus* (1993-94). Qu took the ancient Oedipus myth as the basis for the libretto quite deliberately... (2013: 3rd para.)

This cross-cultural transformation by Qu Xiao-Song from a tragic talented beauty of the Han dynasty to a tragic king of ancient Greek myth is quite amazing, and might have reflected Qu's personal perception of the West as affected by his experience and observation as an outsider while living in the US and Europe for many years.

(iii) TAIWAN

I spent some time in Taiwan as a toddler. The Hong Kong Chinese of my childhood could be divided into pro-communist China 'left', pro-Taiwan Nationalist 'right', and 'centre'. There are many people in Hong Kong who fled Communists China, and I remember they regarded Taiwan as the legitimate Chinese government. Most people in the UK appear not to know much about Taiwan, let alone its cultural life, I therefore start with a brief introduction of Taiwan. The Han Chinese began settling in Taiwan in the 13th century among hostile native tribes. The Dutch East India Company which attempted to establish trading post, was driven out by the Ming authority, but Dutch people remained in control of parts of Taiwan. When Manchus demolished Ming to establish Qing, Ming loyalists went to Taiwan, and drove away the Dutch to form a self-style government (1662-1683). Qing annexed Taiwan in 1683. After Qing was defeated in the First Sino-Japanese war (1894–1895) Taiwan came under Japanese rule. Taiwan was returned to China after World War II as one of China's provinces. In the Chinese Civil War, the Communists defeated the Nationalists to form the

³³ The Wiki quote in Dutch: '...en het vocaal werk *Mist* (1991) leggen de basis voor zijn succesrijke opera's: *Oedipus* (1992-93) en *The Death of Oedipus* (1993-94). Heel bewust nam Qu de antieke Oedipus-mythes als basis voor het libretto.' (2013)

People's Republic of China. The Nationalists retreated to Taiwan in 1949 and formed a one-party government as the Republic of China. In the Eighties I visited Taiwan, did a radio interview in Taipei on my work in the UK, and met with some Western trained composers and instrumentalists. At the time I noticed Japanese influence, and there was a divide of three groups of people – those who originally came from the mainland due to the retreat and speak Mandarin; the earlier settlers (the majority) who probably originated from the coastal province Fujian, who called themselves Taiwanese and their dialect sounded like that of Fujian; and the aborigines. As I am an outsider from the UK, those I met were happy to talk to me and I soon discovered the three groups did not seem to like each other much. I met Hsu *Tsang-Houei* 許常惠 (1929-2001), a prominent composer and educator who was trained in Japan and France. He was interested in using Western technique to express Chinese tradition and his love of Chinese and Japanese poetry. He was also a collector of folk music. The Taiwanese avant garde composer and entrepreneur Hsu *Po-Yun* 許博允 was a pupil of Hsu *Tsang-Houei* 許常惠. His music had Chinese themes and included traditional Chinese instruments. I first met Hsu *Po-Yun* and his musician wife at a festival in Hong Kong. Hsu *Po-Yun* formed the New Aspect Promotion Corporation in the late Seventies. He and his wife worked as a team to promote music and environmental art that included music, dance, drama, painting, sculpture and photography. I was particularly interested in the Amis (Taiwanese aboriginal) composer Li *Tai-Hsiang* 李泰祥 (1941-2014). Taiwanese aborigine culture is distinct from Han culture. Li *Tai-Hsiang* was first trained as a visual artist then received training in Western music. He sought inspiration from his Amis culture, and aimed at writing people-friendly music. When I met him, he told me about some of his more ambitious projects that involved spectacular visual elements, and I was impressed. However, for cross-cultural combined arts, one should see the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre 雲門 and the work of its founder Lin *Hwai-Min* 林懷民 (1947-). His *Legend of the White Snake* 白蛇傳, premiered in Singapore in 1975 is a classic (qijiezi 七階子, 2009). *The White Snake* is about a white snake (Madame White) and a green snake (Little Green) transforming themselves into two young women. Madame White marries the man who saved her life, and with Little Green as a companion, all three live happily together. A Buddhist monk comes to save the man from the forbidden union between different species. The heavily pregnant Madame White and Little Green fight the monk. After giving birth, Madame White is imprisoned by the monk at the bottom of a pagoda. This story is the basis of countless versions of traditional

Chinese operas. Lin *Hwai-Min*'s version is an excellent combination of traditional Chinese opera and instruments with modern dance, contemporary music, electro-acoustics and clean line design. Taiwan has a small population of Cantonese and some amateur Cantonese opera activity.

(iv) UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Apart from doing some intensive electro-acoustic work at CCRMA of Stanford University under the direction of John Chowning in 1978, I have been to the US many times and have had my works performed in NYC and LA. Carl Stone has compiled a programme about some of my works for Radio KPFK. My group Inter-Artes has performed works by ethnic Chinese composers based in the US and Canada, such as Chou *Wen-Chung* 周文中, *Bun-Ching* Lam 林品晶, Chen *Yi* 陳怡, Chou *Long* 周龙, Alice Ho, Chan *Ka Nin*, etc.. I have also met many talented composers, instrumentalists and artists during my visits, such as John Adams, David Harrington of the Kronos quartet, pianist Adolovni Acosta who promotes East-West music, and those who make music for Hollywood. As I spend a very short time here and there, I never get to really know or establish a working relationship with these talented people. On paying a visit to Stanford University and CCRMA in Sep-Oct 2013, I met Jaroslaw Kapuscinski³⁴, Director of Intermedia Performance Lab. He is of Polish origin, and first trained as a classical pianist and composer at the Chopin Academy of Music, Warsaw. He told me when he was a few years old he spent some time in South East Asia and came across the gamelan. This is likely to have an influence on his subsequent interest in non-Western music such as Gagaku, and Japanese and Korean traditional music, and like me, in the new sound world of electro-acoustics and intermedia creation and performance.

(v) UK AND EUROPE

I have spent most of my life in the UK. Though my works have been performed in Europe and I have participated in events in Paris and Vienna, due to being only fluent in English, it is not easy to form a working relationship when I was on the Continent. However, I would like to mention two composers of cross-cultural music: Tona Scherchen 蕭桐 (1938-) and *Isang* Yun 尹伊桑 (1917-1995) who had been based in

³⁴ Info re Jaroslaw Kapuscinski, see <<http://jaroslawkapuscinski.com/>>

Europe and whom I had first met in Hong Kong while attending festivals.

When I first met and talked with Tona Scherchen 蕭桐, I was taken by her vivaciousness, her knowledge and interest in culture. She has a natural tendency to cross-cultural creation as she is Eurasian and has lived in Europe (particularly in Switzerland) and China. According to Wikipedia: 'Many of her compositions bear Chinese titles, but the influence of Chinese arts and thoughts is more conceptual than literal (2013: 4th para)'. I saw her harp piece *Once Upon A Time* on YouTube (HarpeParis1015, 2012). To me, it is obvious that she uses the harp and electro-acoustics to capture the sound and techniques of *quqin* 古琴, a plugged seven-string instrument of the zither family that symbolises high-mindedness and subtlety. The video also shows that she is interested in the visual aspect in a performance.

When I first met the Korean composer *Isang* Yun I noticed his strong presence. I was also fascinated by stories about his being kidnaped by the South Korean Government in West Berlin, sentenced to death, then life imprisonment, and how a worldwide petition by famous composers and musicians secured his release. I bought the scores of *Loyang* für Kammerensemble (1962), *Dimensionen* für großes Orchester (1971), *5 Stücke für Klavier* (1958), and was impressed by the dense and powerful sound that might have derived from Korean music, and the solid compositional structure of German tradition. *Dimensionen* is a powerful work in the style of German contemporary music that made me think of Henze, and *5 Stücke für Klavier*, the five short pieces are rhythmically complex 12-tone music. Though *Loyang* is about the ancient Chinese capital, listening to a recording of this work, the timbre and rhythm reminded me of traditional Korean music – based on my listening to quite a lot of traditional Korean music at SOAS many years ago. At the time I was searching for a way to break away from my RAM training that could reconcile with my Eastern background, and wanted to study composition with Yun at the then Berlin Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst, but was put off by the even stricter regime than the RAM. Many years later, I reconnected with Yun and he invited me to stay at his home in West Berlin for a short visit. By then I was delighted in my new found freedom in writing music as influenced by the new sound world of electro-acoustics, and what contemporary music composers were doing in the experimental Seventies. Yun thought my music was getting dangerous. He had no interest in electro-acoustics, but he liked my string quartet, and said I should only write quartets for a period of time for 'Handwerk' – I supposed he meant 'technique'. He said to me:

'Your German no good. My English very bad.' – it was not easy for us to communicate. His publisher Bote & Bock let me take a photocopy of the hand-copied full score of his opera *Sim Tjong* (see pp. 156 & 200) back to London for studying purposes. The music is so dense and complicated that one could have written books about it. Listening to the recording, I find the music unique and powerful, Korean with German discipline, and with 'Handwerk' commanding respect. In comparison, I realized I was after simplicity, clean lines and freedom.

In the UK, one inevitably would come across Britten's music and abundance of writings about him. Britten's *Curlew River* (1964) for singers, flute/piccolo, horn, viola, double bass, harp, percussion and chamber organ, is the first of three Church Parables.

The work is based on the Japanese noh play *Sumidagawa* (Sumida River) of Juro Motomasa (1395–1431), which Britten saw during a visit to Japan and the Far East in early 1956. Beyond the noh source dramatic material, Britten incorporated elements of noh treatment of theatrical time into this composition (Wiki, 2014. 1st para.).

James Iliff (1923-2014), my composition professor at the RAM, told me he was impressed by *Curlew River* and that made me want to see it. I have seen excerpts performed by Peter Pears, and other later productions on the television and the Net over the years. An excerpt in B&W of an early performance in a church of *Curlew River*, with Peter Pears wearing half mask as the mad woman searching for her child is perhaps closer to Noh, though the later productions by others are visually more exciting. This cross-cultural creation apparently had added extra dimension to Britten's development: '*Curlew River* marked a departure in style for the remainder of the composer's creative life (Wiki 2014. 3rd para.).' I have seen excerpts of Japanese Noh 能 in the past. My impression is stylized, and the power is in its simplicity and very slow yet controlled movement. I have written music for Contemporary Noh – commissioned by the Japanese director Akemi Horie-Webber: *Journey* and *Satoba Komachi* in 1988, and *Izutsu & the Dreaming of the Bones* in 1997. She wanted very simple music to allow flexible interpretation – very different from the complexity of *Curlew River*. The simple music worked well for the performance. The scores of *Journey* and *Satoba Komachi* are included in the *Contemporary Theatre Review*, Vol 1 Part 2, (ed. Chamberlain, F., 1994: pp.162-183) – it may be of interest to see the difference between one using Noh as an inspiration

to one who is from the culture. Personally I prefer Kabuki 歌舞伎 to Noh, as it has more actions and more everything, and people-friendly, and perhaps more like Cantonese opera. As for Britten's *The Prince of the Pagodas* (1957) incorporated Balinese gamelan music, in Sir Kenneth MacMillan's 1990 Royal Ballet version (Darcy Russell, Fiona Chadwick and Jonathan Cope), the music apparently inspired some very interesting choreography. Cross-cultural inspiration appeared to be beneficial to a sometimes controversial choreographer, and to the composer as this is a definitive Britten ballet. *Songs from the Chinese* (1957) for high voice and guitar, according to Joseph Stevenson:

He (Britten) and Peter Pears had traveled around the world recently, especially enjoying various East Asian cultures... The song cycle is comprised of six songs with texts from Arthur Waley's translations of classic verses published in 1946, under the title *Chinese Poems*. The writing is remarkably condensed and terse, with the sparseness of the texture of the guitar writing seeming to reflect something of the spirit of Chinese lute or koto aesthetic. Nevertheless, there is no overt orientalism in the music. (2014: 1st & 2nd para.)

However, guitarist Gerald Garcia, soprano Francesca Chan, and myself who are originated from Hong Kong, had all programmed this work for various concerts due to its Chinese inspiration.

4.1.5. COMPOSERS WHO HAVE INFLUENCED MY WORK

As the music I listen to most, know best and love is 'Western Classical'³⁵ or from the West, inevitably I must have been already influenced. I use my Western training as a tool and can write music that does not have a trace of non-Western influence (e.g., pp. 395-6, the music *Many Happy Returns* included for Act 12 of Chapter 5 – a birthday piece in 'Western Classical' style as requested by my goddaughter Sue). While working on this PhD project, I became more and more aware that despite my Western training, the childhood imprint of Cantonese opera has influenced my work more than I was aware of. I was also surprised from time to time, that some people would mention Wagner to comment on my project. My RAM training has taught me about Western composition such as harmony and form; and of course, anyone who knows anything about music would know about Wagner and his *Ring Cycle* due to

³⁵ Marlon Feld (Columbia University), *Summary of Western Classical music history*: 'Although "Western" and "classical" are inexact terms, they do name a reasonably coherent musical tradition that stretches from the Dark Ages to the present day (n.d.: 1st para.).'

frequent performances and broadcasts and vast amount of writings about them.

Unlike Judith Weir, Wagner has never been a model for me nor an influence on my work. Just visually compare a page of our different approach to writing music about the Chinese martial art 'Tai Chi' – my *Tai Chi* for flute and guitar and Weir's *Gentle Violence* for piccolo and guitar – my music is in short sections, linear without obvious harmonic structure nor thematic development – some characteristic of Cantonese opera, while Weir's is the opposite (Fig.4.3 & Fig.4.4, p.201).

Though I do not listen to electro-acoustic music as much, Stockhausen has influenced me as he led me into a new sound world and freed me from 'Western Classical' rules. Music that reminds me of Chinese music or Cantonese opera interests me – basically I mean melodic likeness, and the features of linear structure and the freedom of a performer to control and modify the music. I can think of John Chowning's *Stria* and *Voices: Stria* (1977) – the linear structure like long parallel lines of sound combining together bears some similarity to the music of Cantonese opera, and *Voices* (2005) – the soprano's performance controls and affects the electro-acoustic music live, like the lead of Cantonese opera. Ligeti's *Atmospheres* (1961) for symphony orchestra, the structure of layers of shifting lines might have influenced how I wrote the dance music *Quarry* (1976) for the choreographer Mikloth Bond of William Louthier and the Dance and Theatre Corporation. I like Ligeti's *6 Bagatelles* wind quintet (1953) because the melodic writing reminded me of the folksongs of northwest China. The music of many East European composers reminds me of the same – perhaps due to the Mongol Invasion of Europe in the 13th century and then some Mongolians settled in Europe and brought culture from the East. Yuen 元 (1271-1368) was a Mongol dynasty in China. China agreed to Mongolia to becoming an independent state in 1949, and despite this, many Mongolians live in China's Inner Mongolia and have been one of the main racial groups of China. The Mongolian cultural link might be a reason for some similarity between the folk cultures of east Europe and northwest China.

I like and greatly admire Stravinsky from the first time I heard his work. I particularly admire *The Rite of Spring* (1913), *Fire Bird* (1910), *Petrushka* (1911), *Rag Time for 11 Instruments* (1917–18) and *Four Songs* (1954). Perhaps one is unknowingly influenced by the composer one particularly likes: on 13 April 1994, Nicholas Williams wrote in The Independent newspaper about the Inter-Artes Purcell Room premiere of my piece *Fable of the Phoenix*:

... in the *Fable of the Phoenix* by Ho Wai-On, also from Hong Kong, she was again in excellent form. Each of this cantata's eight movements was a brief tone poem mixing composed and improvised material. The conductor, Roger Montgomery, made the most of delicate textures that sometimes recalled Stravinsky's *Agon*, including a sumptuous trio for flute, viola da gamba and bass lute. (1994)

In fact I was thinking about *Fire Bird* when I was working on this piece, but *Agon* (1957) was one of my set works at the RAM – unknowingly I must have been already influenced. I had staged Stravinsky's rarely performed *Four Songs* as a dance with soprano and instrumentalists at Bloomsbury Theatre London (1989), and a new version of this at the City Hall Concert Hall Hong Kong (1990, Fig.4.5 p.202). I love this piece as it is like the folk songs of northwest China but with Stravinsky's unique rhythmical inventiveness that cannot be found in Chinese music. The Manchu guqin player Li Xianting 李祥霆 (1940-) who took part in Inter-Artes also liked this piece, but he said it is so like the string and wind music of the south of Yantze 江南丝竹.

For my MA at Cardiff University, I studied Stravinsky and Schönberg supervised by the renowned Stravinsky scholar Professor Stephen Walsh – Stravinsky's *Les Noces* (1914–17; 1919–23), *Oedipus Rex* (1927), and Schönberg's opera *Moses und Aron*. The more I get to know Stravinsky, the more I feel we have some similarities: A love for the culture we originated from but feel more at home in a cosmopolitan setting; influenced by the original ethnic culture but our respective music is not ethnic or nationalistic; interested in counterpoint more than harmony; great interest in the stage; based on the 'Classical music' tradition but not always following or limited by the system – the true inspiration often lies beyond and after freedom. I particularly admire Stravinsky's superb and unique way of using rhythm – a feature appears not to be of great interest in Cantonese opera that tends to be in simple quadruple all the time. While Schönberg, though breaking the rules of the German tradition with 12-tone music appears to be firmly rooted in the German tradition. 12-tone music is perhaps one of the strictest systems of writing music – no freedom. When I first listened to the orgy music in Act II of *Moses und Aron*, it sounded academic rather than an orgy, and reminded me of what Raymond Tuttle said in his review of Reto Nickler's 2007 *Moses und Aron* (DVD): 'Schoenberg's music is too much head, not enough heart (2007: 1st para.)'. Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* has more erotic energy than this. Apart from *Pierrot Lunaire*, I prefer Schönberg's non-12 tone music,

and I preferred Schönberg's 12-tone music to his followers', as his followers seem to be even stricter. The one feature that interests me about 12-tone music is the use of and the combination of tone rows (lines), which I had used as an inspiration for writing some of the music for my prototype (see 5.3.3(i) pp. 246-7).

Stravinsky's *Renard* (1916) was about a fox, and my dance music *Quarry* is also about a fox. I went to a performance of Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale* (1918) at the Royal College of Music London on 4 March 2014 with Mary Chorley, a keen music amateur. She said this reminded her of the Quben I wrote for this prototype, which she has read. However, a work by Stravinsky that I thought I would like due to its Chinese theme – *The Nightingale* (1914) – I did not like when I saw it as a film adaptation at the South Bank Centre a very long time ago – perhaps it was due to the fact I found the film static. I have not yet seen the highly acclaimed 2005 Christian Chaudet's film adaptation though.

My favourite composer is actually Handel – from the time I first heard the air for soprano *I Know That My Redeemer Liveth* (*Messiah* Part III, 1741) when I was in my teens, and I also love Baroque music. Handel and I are both originated elsewhere but made England our home. I admire his effective simplicity, yet perhaps this was the reason for his being under-rated for a long time, especially his early Italian operas (happily, not now). My music bears no resemblance to Handel or Baroque music, though I had directed Handel's serenata *Acis and Galatea* (1732) as a dance-opera for The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) in 1986, and unknowingly using concepts of Cantonese opera to stage it (see 1.2.2(v) *Staging and design* p.19, and Figures 1.7 a-l, pp. 35-41).

Based on 'one is already influenced', the music I have written for this prototype often has a piece by another composer which I have in mind while writing it, and I mention the composer and the piece as an alternative for using it with the prototype.

4.1.6. INTER-ARTES 通藝

In 1988 I formed Inter-Artes as a flexible force with composers, musicians, choreographers, dancers, actors, visual artists, photographers and writers to create and perform work/projects that combine music, dance, drama and visual arts across different cultures. Some projects were accompanied by relevant displays at the

venue and at public libraries to enhance greater cross-cultural understanding (Fig.4.6 p.202). With initial funding for Inter-Artes from the Gulbenkian Foundation, other funding bodies soon followed. Works I staged had included Judith Weir's *King Harald's Saga* and *Gentle Violence* as combined arts performance: *King Harald's Saga* (1979) for unaccompanied soprano singing eight roles, I included multi-slide projection and dancers, with soprano Christine Barker using a length of material to improvise based on movement called water-sleeve 水袖 of Cantonese opera; *Gentle Violence* (1987) for piccolo and guitar was a co-operation with the City Contemporary Dance Company (Hong Kong), with lighting design, instrumentalists, and danced by Willy Tsao (CCDC's founder/director) and Ringo Chan (Fig.4.7a, p.203).

Until I was under investigation for cancer in 1992, Inter-Artes projects' emphasis was more on music. Apart from ethnic Chinese composers, European composers programmed included Stravinsky, Strauss, Delage, Britten, Judith Weir, Cornelius Cardew, David Lumsdaine, Malcolm Singer, Alexander Balanescu, John Howard, Christopher Benstead... Works specially written for Inter-Artes by British composers apart from myself, included Julia Usher, Robert Sherlaw Johnson, Richard Stoker, Catherine Pluygers... For projects involving Chinese topics, composers at least read some relevant books provided by me. For the 1993 Inter-Artes project *The World of Lu Hsun* 鲁迅的世界, Julia Usher's *Hope's Perpetual Breath* for tenor and dancer based on her edited text by Lu Hsun, she used her own Chinese calligraphy as visual theatre; my music-dance-theatre *Wiseman, Fool and Slave* 聰明人傻子和奴才, I incorporated concepts of Cantonese opera in the choreography, and also used chopsticks as percussion. I was satisfied with the performance of *Wiseman, Fool and Slave* 1993 version, as it had chemistry, those who took part expressed it was a rewarding experience, and I had a feeling of déjà vu of the Cantonese opera of my childhood – 'like a family event'.

In 1994 I wrote *Narcissus & Turandot* for Inter-Artes' *Pearls of the Orient* programme which was performed at the Purcell Room, South Bank Centre, as a mild protest with humour to the *Three Tenors* concerts (Domingo, Pavarotti and Carreras) – I found out at an Arts Council meeting that a large amount of public funding for the arts was spent on the *Three Tenors* due to its popularity. What was left was like leftovers and scraps for the vast number of artists who really needed the funding. As explained in footnote 28 of this chapter (p.149), the Chinese folksong Puccini used is known as *Narcissus*, and *Three Tenors* singing *Nessun dorma* is almost narcissistic. I used

this folksong and *Nessun dorma* as material for the parody to be sung in Chinese by two sopranos rather than three tenors. The audience appeared to be amused.

While I was working on Inter-Artes, the British Indian composer Priti Patel was working on Shiva Nova – a group she formed to perform new music combining Indian and Western instruments. She commissioned me to write a piece for the 1989 Shiva Nova UK tour, and I wrote *Sa-Pa* (the names of two notes in Indian music) scored for sitar, tabla, flute, cello and harpsichord (played on an electronic keyboard). This is my first and only work that included Indian instruments, though this experience provided inspiration for new versions (1986, 2000) of a duo called *To You* that I wrote in 1977. I am not familiar with Indian culture and music and could only use features that bear resemblance to Cantonese opera such as improvisation, unusual tuning, performer re-creation and flexible interpretation etc.. I did not use bar lines but let a different performer lead at different times and experiment with rhythmic flexibility. However, apart from the sitar and tabla players, the Western instrumentalists allocated one performer to beat time to save rehearsal time rather than to experiment. This reminded me of difficulties I experienced when included Chinese instruments in my compositions or in Inter-Artes projects. Some Chinese traditional instrumentalists who claimed to know Western staff notation in fact did not have sufficient knowledge and sight reading ability required in Western contemporary Classical music. Some Chinese male musicians refused to share their knowledge saying they would only pass it on to their sons and not even to their daughters 传子不传女, let alone me, even though the music was specially written for them. Some British composers were not interested to write for non-Western instruments, as that would limit performance possibility. All these were just some unexpected difficulties in cross-cultural work. However, an unexpected outcome was the Arts Council England asked me to write reports on various Asian performing groups. From attending their performances, I learned to appreciate Asian music and dance, and was most impressed by how the harmonium has become a truly Indian instrument, like the violin has long been Cantonized³⁶ 粤化 in Cantonese opera.

The cancer experience had made me feel that staging live performance is a lot of effort for a fleeting moment, and in 1992 I began to work on a project to create a people-friendly artistic environment particularly suitable for cross-cultural combined

³⁶ ‘Cantonize’ is a word of my invention for 粤化 – from the word ‘anglicize’. It is a Chinese term frequently used in Cantonese opera, and I cannot find a suitable English word to express this.

arts activities that is based on the concepts of the dying art of Chinese landscape gardening called yuenlin 園林. I involved visual artists from China and the UK at the proposal stage, and the proposal won the Arts Council of England New Collaboration Fund and a British Airway subsidy. This enabled me to visit famous yuenlins (landscape gardens) in China from north to south and to meet with artists in 1995 to complete the blueprint. Due to my age and health, it would be difficult to build this in the real world, but to realize 'Inter-Artes Yuenlin 園林通藝' (Fig.4.8 p.204) after completing my PhD project in a realistic fashion: to build it as an interactive cross-cultural combined arts environment in cyberspace, using the experience I have gained from observing and contributing to large and complex websites like Red-Boat.

4.1.7. CANTONESE OPERA

It seems to be human nature to notice differences rather than similarities, yet those who work in cross-cultural combined arts often look into and freely use what is different or similar in different cultures and art forms for their creative work and performance. The following are some observations that are relevant to Cantonese opera.

Chapter 1 *Project Background And Metamorphosis* has mentioned that at the start of my working on this project, it was pointed out to me during a seminar that the concept of music and structure inherent in Cantonese opera bear no resemblance to their counterparts in Western opera. Chapter 3 *Cantonese Opera* explains that although 'Cantonese opera' is the accepted translation, the Cantonese term literally means 'big drama'. In the Cantonese opera of my childhood in Hong Kong, the basis of a new 'big drama' is a Quben 曲本 (quasi libretto cum script) – a librettist selected existing tunes, most of which the audience already knew, to write new lyrics to tell a story, and lead performers were given substantial freedom to modify the Quben and the tunes. The story is subsequently the basis for further new Qubens. The only opera from the West that bears some resemblance to Cantonese opera is perhaps *The Beggar's Opera* and its 'offspring' *The Threepenny Opera*. The music of *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) was arranged by Johann Christoph Pepusch, using existing music that the audience already knew, and the words by John Gay tell the love story of highwayman Macheath and Polly Peachum, daughter of a fence and thief-catcher. This story about people of low society is reminiscent of those who were part of the Cantonese opera circle during my childhood, their audience and equally the audience

and protagonists of Cantonese films. *The Threepenny Opera* (1928) is a German adaptation of *The Beggar's Opera* by dramatist Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956) and composer Kurt Weill (1900-1950). I listened to the the DECCA 1981 Richard Bonyngge recording (Gay, 1981) with Kiri Te Kanawa, Joan Sutherland, Angela Lansbury, Stafford Dean, James Morris, Michael Holden and many more. Unlike Cantonese opera, performers appear not to have the freedom to modify any part of the work so as to show off their individual unique talents; there is no music for specific types of movement on stage; and it lacks re-creation input from performers as it is to be performed with the same set of songs and words every time. I have seen and listened to Weill's *Threepenny Opera* many times over the years. I liked the work immediately because of Weill's music. As a work entirely of original music, it is not relevant to the structure of Cantonese opera, but the style of singing when sung in German, and especially by Weill's wife Lotte Lenya (1898-1981) as Jenny, reminds me of male singing in Cantonese opera which is more like the natural speaking voice, and may sound like combining singing and speaking to Western ears – perhaps a little like 'Sprechstimme' (indicated by small crosses through the stems of the notes or with the note head itself being a small cross) in the part of Moses in Schönberg's *Moses und Aron*, but more pitch oriented and often outside the well-tempered 12-tone scale (while female singing may sound high-pitched, squeaky and artificial to westerners). *Threepenny Opera* is perhaps best sung by those without Western operatic training, like Lotte Lenya. I have included a Youtube link under REFERENCES of an LP transfer of the 1976 New York Shakespeare Festival's revival production of *The Threepenny Opera*, the excerpt of a street singer singing *Die Moritat von Mackie Messer (Ballad of Mack the Knife)* of the Prologue – though sung in English, the guttural voice and the song sound very like Cantonese opera male singing.

In the Seventies, I attended a students' performance at the Royal Academy of Music of Stockhausen's *Aus den Sieben Tagen* (1968), which allows free improvisation by musicians to the text compositions unrehearsed. At this performance, for the words 'Play a vibration in the rhythm of the universe', one ensemble member hit something on stage with a stick hard (the stick broke); another shook a glass jar with beads inside very vigorously (the jar broke); the pianist kept playing double trills with both hands... The audience became very engaged in what was happening on stage, and the then RAM principal Sir Anthony Lewis (1915-1983) looked happy and laughed. In the RAM performance it would have worked had the charismatic Stockhausen been

present. In the Cantonese opera of my childhood, some performers flexibly modified the words of the Quben, and adlibbed with words and movements unrehearsed. I treasured what I saw because it was a 'one-off'. Cantonese opera da-lao-guan 大佬倌 (superstar lead performer) could make it work and the performance stayed in the audience's memory. Even when it did not work, some lead performers could step out of the drama to communicate directly with the audience who loved them and could get away with it. As Cantonese opera dwindles over the years, with less new blood that can reach the status of da-lao-guan, a less charismatic performer doing this may be more like a farce, making people to look down and dismiss this Cantonese opera characteristic.

Popular Western operas on Eastern themes have been an inspiration for Cantonese opera. Puccini's *Turandot* which includes a Chinese folk melody and a story that is a Westerner's fantasy of China has been freely adapted in 1997 by the Guangzhou Cantonese Opera Group 2 广州粤剧团二团 for their female lead Liang *Shu-Qing* 梁淑卿, and is called *Chinese Princess Turandot* 中国公主杜兰朵 (Fig.4.9 p.205).

Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* has also been freely adapted in 1952 as Cantonese opera, then as a Cantonese film by da-lao-quans in Hong Kong (Fig.4.10 p.205).

A Cantonese opera characteristic is to recycle music and story. The music of Cantonese opera is mostly recycling from the past. Recycling is also an acceptable practice in Western music, and Handel is an example. *Unto us a Child is Born* (*Messiah* Part I, 1741) and *No, di voi non vo' fidarmi*, soprano duo and continuo (no.16 HWV.189) are of the same material. The Academy of Ancient Music performed *Handel in Rome* for the 2013 *Proms Saturday Matinee* on 20 July at Cadogan Hall, London. Their conductor Richard Egarr chatted with presenter Clemency Burton-Hill, and said the young Handel, before settling in Britain went to Rome to absorb Italian music, and the impact was the creation of a vast output of music that he could live off for the rest of his life by recycling in his later works, such as in *Messiah* and *Acis & Galatea*. In 1986 I directed Handel's *Acis & Galatea* as a dance-opera for the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts, using concepts of Cantonese opera³⁷.

On the 8th August at the 2013 BBC *Late Night Prom*, Nigel Kennedy's creative

³⁷ See Chapter 1 *Project Background & Metamorphosis* 1.2.2 (v) p. 19, and Fig.1.7 pp. 35-41.

rendition of *The Four Seasons* with the Palestine Strings, performers created a new and cross-cultural version of this best-known Vivaldi, is somewhat akin to Cantonese opera and my creative practice as influenced by it.

As Cantonese opera audiences include the lower classes of society, it is often in tune with popular culture, pop music and musicals. From what I had experienced in my childhood, some dramas and performers could be vulgar yet loved by the audience – a little similar to the 1958-1992 *Carry On* franchise of low-budget British comedy films.

On 1 July 2014 at the O2 Arena in London, the remaining members of the comedy *Monty Python* performed a mixture of their hits. John Cleese, Michael Palin, Eric Idle, Terry Jones and Terry Gilliam performed classic sketches including the *Four Yorkshiremen* and the *Lumberjack Song*. In the 2 July 2014 BBC News about this *Monty Python* show, the commentator said: 'New materials with the very familiar.' This is in the spirit of Cantonese opera.

Many performers of popular music and popular culture cross cultures and art form boundaries to reach a wide-ranging audience. Bob Dylan, the American singer-songwriter is also an artist and a writer. During London's swinging Sixties, the rock group The Beatles was so popular that there was worldwide 'Beatlemania'. They used instruments associated with 'Classical music' such as the harpsichord, and Indian instruments, and also 'began to utilize in their songs music elements and influences from Asia (Reck D.R., 1985)'. Many RAM students such as myself appreciated their music, and I had seen accomplished Classical musicians studying scores of the Beatles in the RAM library. The Beatles film *A Hard Day's Night* was successful and highly acclaimed. Their music such as *The Yellow Submarine* had inspired many music videos on YouTube. For my prototype I have also made some relevant music videos (AV2-AV4, notes pp. 429-430). Cantonese opera librettists have long been selecting tunes from popular music including those from the US and the West to write new lyrics. Since the decline of Cantonese opera in Hong Kong, many Cantonese singers sing new Cantonese songs written in the style of Western pop song and perform in similar style.

The rapport and involvement between performers and audiences in Jazz and popular music performance is akin to what I had experienced in live performances of Cantonese opera. In the Thirties, Ma Sze-Tsang 马师曾 (1900-1964), a da-lao-guan

of Hong Kong Cantonese opera had attempted to introduce jazz music and instruments into his new dramas (see Act 10 Description p.347). For this prototype, I have included my own attempt in jazz and popular music (Acts 9 & 10).

According to BBC Radio 4 *Tales from the Stage - Westside Story* Episode 1 (15 Jun 2014), Sondheim's lyrics affected the creation of Bernstein's *Westside Story* – this is like the importance of the words in a Cantonese opera new drama. As a composer, Stephen Sondheim (1930-) is interesting in that he writes musicals that appeal to those who listen to 'Classical music' perhaps more than the general public. Although *Westside Story* is a musical, excerpts are often performed in concert halls, perhaps due to Bernstein (1918-1990) though fusing jazz and popular music in his work, was a very accomplished classical musician. The performers of musicals in many ways are like da-lao-guans of Cantonese opera. The format of musical is also similar to Cantonese opera to some extent. In fact, 'New Cantonese opera' of today appears to follow the footsteps of popular musicals like the delightful *Oliver* (1960) – music and lyrics by Lionel Bart (1930-1999). The creation of a production is the collaborative work of lyricist, scriptwriter, composer, director, choreographer and designer, and is no longer like Cantonese opera in the past when lead performers call all the shots. State supported 'New Cantonese opera' is more after visual spectacular on stage like Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Evita* (1978). Rock opera *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1970) is my favourite Lloyd Webber, but some of Tim Rice's lyrics is perhaps a bit way-out as a model for Cantonese opera; and Christ as the theme is not yet accepted though some Cantonese Christians sing 'Cantonese gospel music 福音粵曲' in the style of Cantonese opera. The American rock musical *Hair* (1967) despite its popularity is not relevant, as sex and nudity are still taboo in Cantonese opera.

CONCLUSION of Part One

This chapter shows that cross-cultural combined arts, or whatever one calls it, is difficult to define and the background is often complicated. There is no one way, instead it is multi-faceted, and everyone does it differently according to the life experience that leads him/her into doing such work. Hence this project is complicated and semi-autobiographical. The usage and performance suggestions of this prototype are also multi-faceted and complicated.

PART 2

4.2. CREATION OF MY PROTOTYPE

4.2.1. DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

As explained in Part One of this chapter, the nature of cross-cultural combined arts is complicated and multifaceted, and often personal. My work, and that short period of Cantonese opera which is the main inspiration of this project, are complicated and multi-faceted. A difficulty is how to explain my project to those who do not know Cantonese opera, and to those who are not familiar with Western concepts of creation and performance. The inspiration of my project is Cantonese opera. It is the lead performers who are the big egos and big stars of Cantonese opera, whereas with Western opera, it is the composer who is the big star.

It was difficult to obtain some relevant research materials in the UK, especially on Cantonese opera. As explained in Chapter 3 *Research Context And Methods* these difficulties have been resolved partly through use of the Internet: by watching videos of past and present Cantonese opera and relevant performances; by using Red-Boat 红船粤剧网络 (009y.com) the largest website for worldwide Cantonese opera lovers; by creating a forum to elicit writings and replies on relevant topics; and by obtaining books from abroad etc..

Chapter 1 *Project Background & Metamorphosis* explains how I had initially wanted to use the concept of Cantonese opera to write an opera that combines staff notated music with electro-acoustics, an opera that is suitable for multi-venue performance; then I thought my work would be better as an Internet opera in short sections; then after realising that there is a fundamental difference in the way the term 'opera' is understood in Western opera and Cantonese opera, I changed my goal to the creation of a multimedia prototype that others can modify or use to create new versions. Though it is common for creative artists to change or modify the format of a creation during the creative process, the reason for these changes was mainly due to the fact that the more I learned about Cantonese opera, the more I could see how to use it as a concept that is against my training, and to a certain extent against my own creative practice. In fact there was a time when I thought of abandoning Cantonese opera altogether. The main difficulty in this creative PhD project has been how to

create a prototype that is a compromise of contradicting concepts: my Western training and creative practice whereby an original work is created by an individual and cannot be altered; and the Cantonese opera that I remember which was collaborative, and allowed recycling and modification by others.

4.2.2. THE CONCEPT OF A QUBEN

Chapter 3 *Cantonese Opera* mentions the near 'holy' status of Chinese characters (words) in China's culture and society in its history; indeed skill in the use of characters (writing) was the way to governmental posts and power. Though words associated with enjoyment for the people (such as novels) may be taken less seriously, writing is still considered of higher status than music and the performing arts in China. Chapter 3 also explains that the basis of all traditional Chinese opera is the Quben 曲本 (quasi libretto cum script), and that in the past, Cantonese opera lead performers using a Quben had much freedom in rendition and modification. Some of the best Qubens now exist as literature and are no longer performed in their original form: the tunes for the lyrics have been lost, but the drama and the beautiful writing can serve as a basis for creating new Qubens for new performances. A famous Quben example is *The Peony Pavilion*³⁸ 牡丹亭(1598) of the Ming dynasty – the story of a young lady seeing a young scholar in her dream, who she has never met in real life. She becomes so preoccupied with her dream affair that she wastes away and dies. She then appears in this young scholar's dreams. He helps her in her resurrection, then they live as a couple in real life. Nearly every kind of traditional Chinese operas has a new Quben based on this drama. The writing of *The Peony Pavilion* is exquisite and the work is hailed as a high point in Chinese literature. The best Qubens, especially from the Yuen and Ming dynasties, are a pleasure to read and are studied as Chinese literature in universities in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore as well as in North America and Europe.

Quben 曲本, is pronounced: chuben – u, like the German ü; en as in happen. I cannot find a Western equivalence – the closest to describe it might be quasi libretto cum script. Though a Quben contains the words to be sung, a composer plays no part in it, let alone like Mozart and Da Ponte working closely together: and it is Mozart rather than Da Ponte's libretto that takes the credit of *Le Nozze di Figaro* and *Don*

³⁸ Cyril Birch's English translation of *The Peony Pavilion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980) is available with good reviews.

Giovanni; whereas with Tang Xianzu 汤显祖 (1550-1616) it is his Quben that is the drama *The Peony Pavilion*. Fig.4.11 (p.206) is an excerpt of *The Peony Pavilion* (Tang Xianzu, 1976: p.45). It reads from right to left, and from top to bottom:

1st line:

First three characters: 'Scene Ten'. Followed by two characters – the title '(The) *Interrupted Dream*'.

2nd line:

First three characters within thick brackets: The name of the tune.

Followed by two small characters in parentheses: the 1st character means 'female lead', the 2nd character denotes her action.

Followed by larger characters: the lyrics. At the end of the 2nd phrase, the small character in thin brackets with one stroke is 'one' – editor's note 1.

3rd line counting from L:

The 3rd phrase of the lyrics sounds beautiful and expresses the irony of life that even Chinese who have never read this Quben know it ³⁹.

As creative writing affected by chosen tunes, John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* of 1728 is perhaps the closest to the concept of Cantonese opera. In 1961, Argonaut Books published a faithful reproduction of the 1729 edition of *The Beggar's Opera* in three acts by John Gay, with music arranged by Pepusch, which includes the words and music of all the airs, as well as the scores of the overture. The original words of all the airs that Gay adapted for this work are at the back of this edition. Scenes are accompanied by descriptions of the characters and are like the speeches of a play, with dialogue in lieu of recitatives, and indications of where the airs should be sung. Although *The Beggar's Opera* has been studied by scholars, the words are not detached from the music and hailed as a piece of great literature like *The Peony Pavilion*. In fact, Shakespeare's plays with their beautiful and stylized writing are closer to some of the best Qubens, but Shakespeare is not written for the purpose of singing the words from beginning to end, nor is it affected by the sound of some chosen melodies.

I therefore decided on writing a Quben, to be exact, a quasi-Quben in English as

³⁹ The 3rd phrase 良辰美景奈何天 – literally: good time beautiful scene nevertheless heaven, has many interpretations, and can be interpreted as one is not happy despite a beautiful day and pleasant surroundings.

inspired by the concept of Cantonese opera to be the main part of my cross-cultural combined arts prototype. I used my cancer survival as the story for the drama, as this suits the semi-autobiographical nature of the project: it links with my concern for the survival of Cantonese opera, and the writing is with humour to lighten up what might otherwise seem gruesome to some people. The title of my Quben is *Song & Dance of a 3-time Cancer Survivor*. Many Cantonese operas and Cantonese films of my childhood had long titles telling the unsophisticated audience what the story is all about – what you see is what you get; *Song & Dance* implies self-mocking with humour; and why *3-Time* instead of *Three-Time*? This is how a Hong Kong Cantonese would write it, and it is also more eye-catching and fits the small screen of the Internet better.

4.2.3. WRITING THE QUBEN *Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor*

Chapter 3 *Cantonese Opera* explains that to write a Quben, a librettist selects existing tunes to write new lyrics to tell the story of the drama. I do not have the expertise to select existing tunes. I opt for concentrating on creative writing: to write a Quben that is suitable as a libretto or as a script, and is also a good read. This Quben can be used exactly as it is, and like a Quben, allows performers freedom in rendition, and can also be used as the basis for multi-venue performance and new versions.

To reconcile the Western concept that creative writing is an original work by an individual that cannot be altered, with the approach of Cantonese opera that can be a collaborative work allowing modification, I reconnected with Dr Michael Greenhough (Mike), my MA supervisor on electro-acoustics at Cardiff University (see p.159). He is a physicist who writes poetry and has a great sense of humour, as I am not good at writing with rhymes and not too familiar with colloquial English; and he could also contribute towards humorous puns for this cancer survival drama. Originally I had hope that Mike would co-write it with me: he and I to write respective male lead and female lead part, like the dialogue between male and female leads of a Cantonese Opera. I showed Mike the drafts of my story, and he supplied me with colloquial English phrases, puns, rhythms to choose from, and tweaking here and there. We started working on Act 11 as I had more material ready for that act then, and he let me include a poem he wrote that he had kept private until then (pp.372-3, *Male lead's song*), to go with the recycling concept of Cantonese opera. Mike was busy with

other commitments and could only spent a short time with me, and soon I had to work on my own. The Quben *Song & Dance of a 3-time Cancer Survivor* has a strong presence of me that reads like a piece of Western creative writing, yet the creating process is so different from the Western concept that Mike and I are both happy to allow flexible use by others, and allowing even the title can be changed by those who would like to make use of it as in new Qubens of Cantonese opera.

Inspired by the Cantonese opera of my childhood, my Quben aims to be simple and accessible to all. The model of my Quben is Agatha Christie, a world popular writer of a popular genre – detective stories. I have not imitated her style of writing, but her way of telling a story: however gruesome the scenario, it does not read so and will not make the readers feel depressed, and there is always hope – such as one can rely on Hercule Poirot's little grey cells. One feels good while reading it, and feels good afterwards. With a story about surviving cancer three times, this is how the tale should be told.

4.2.4. MUSIC FOR MY QUBEN

I am a composer of original music and the tools I use are Western staff notation and electro-acoustics. As my prototype is inspired by the concept of Cantonese opera, I need to approach the concept of 'original music' from a different angle. The following is some thinking about this.

(i) STAFF NOTATED MUSIC

Listening to Cantonese opera recordings and watching videos of performances, I have noticed there appears not to be the concept of original music as known in the West. On the other hand, unlike Cantonese opera, Western music is not strongly affected by the importance of the words (Chinese characters), and especially of their tones. The music of Cantonese opera is about melody rather than harmony. All these might have affected different notation methods between Cantonese opera and Western music. A more detailed discussion is as follows:

(a) Original music

The music of the Cantonese opera of my childhood was almost entirely comprised of what a librettist selected from a reservoir of existing tunes, though very occasionally

some musically gifted librettists might have written a new tune here and there. What I have come across on the Net claiming to be an ‘original Cantonese opera song 原創粵曲’ is inevitably new words written by this person to an existing tune. A nowadays Cantonese opera ‘song style designer 唱腔设计’⁴⁰ would write out his interpretation and/or arrangement of the selected tunes for every singer and instrumentalist to sing/play accordingly, and sometimes to provide short bridge sections for a new Cantonese opera. Unwittingly I had offended those who presented their ‘original’ Cantonese opera songs for mentioning the Western definition of original music when using the Red-Boat Cantonese Opera Website. Some State supported ‘New Cantonese operas’ that include the use of a Western symphony orchestra (I have not yet come across an example that use the full orchestra) would employ a composer with Western music training to write an original composition such as an orchestral prelude... however, the concept of an opera as entirely a composer's original composition as in the West is still non-existent in Cantonese opera.

(b) Melody not harmony

The concept of ‘harmony’ as in Western music is near non-existent in Cantonese opera, and even in ‘New Cantonese operas’ with some sections of original music written by a composer with Western music training. From what I have listened to, the music of these ‘New Cantonese operas’ does not present a sense of harmonic structure as in Western music – in fact it is more like some sections of the drama sound like an incomplete canon, or a fragmented attempt of quasi counterpoint. *Flower-Moon-Shadow* 花月影⁴¹, a large scale ‘New Cantonese opera’ that includes more than one composer to work on the music and with a Western orchestra (though billed as a symphony orchestra, it is not a full orchestra – an orchestra of Western and Chinese instruments is more exact). *Flower-Moon-Shadow* has some short quasi orchestral tone poem music merging with arrangement of existing music. Such original compositional efforts have evoked hostility from die-hard Cantonese opera lovers in Canton, and when I played an excerpt of this at the Departmental PhD Research Students Seminar during my first semester, the participants appeared unimpressed either. In Cantonese opera, the audience wants to hear familiar music, and it is the singer's melody and the flexibility and style of the rendition of a performer making it their own that is important.

⁴⁰ See Chapter 3 *Cantonese Opera* 3.2.2 (p.89) re ‘song style 唱腔’.

⁴¹ *Flower-Moon-Shadow* 花月影: See 3.3.3(iv) p.100, & Fig.3.22 p.132.

Melody above all else is perhaps a characteristic of many types of Chinese music. The story about two lovers who die for love then turn into butterflies is the basis of countless traditional Chinese operas, as well as *The Butterfly Lovers* violin concerto 梁祝小提琴协奏曲 (1959) written following the Western Classical model. I suggest that the reason why this work is loved by the Chinese rather than by the West, is because the theme representing the heroine and played by the violin, captures the melodic beauty and essence of female singing in Shanghai opera 越剧. It took two composers, Chen Gang 陈钢 (1935-) and He Zhanhao 何占豪 (1933-) who were both trained at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music to complete the score for symphony orchestra, yet on the Net in China it is usually represented as a single melody – to be exact, the theme of the heroine played by the violin (Fig.4.12 p.207). As for the two composers' efforts in orchestration to combine melody with harmony, I came across the unflattering description in the Western press long ago of 'second-hand Tchaikovsky'. However, I have heard this popular theme adopted and sung in Cantonese opera.

(c) Chinese characters, tones and pitches

To say that the music of Cantonese opera is a collection of existing tunes is too simple – it is an altogether different concept and system. Unlike the English language, in Chinese, whether it is Putonghua (Mandarin) or Cantonese, one cannot change the tone of a word or the meaning will become completely different. All Chinese characters are categorized into one of the four tones: ping, shang, qu or ru 平上去入 – the librettists choose a word of the correct tone to go with a particular pitch in a melody ⁴². I have written music to be sung in Chinese. I do not know the tone category of each character, my ears tell me whether the pitch/pitches I write for that character will work, but in Cantonese opera, a librettist is expected to know, and especially to know about which pitch is to go with which tone in a well-known tune. The meaning of the characters and diction in singing are very important.

AN EXAMPLE RELATED TO THE THREE POINTS MENTIONED ABOVE:

A reason why the songs of the Western trained Huang Tzu 黃自(1904-1938) are loved by Chinese people but not the West is perhaps that the West cannot appreciate

⁴² See Chapter 3 *Cantonese Opera* 3.1.2 (p.75) for more info re tones and pitches.

how well the melody works for the sound and meaning of the Chinese characters. In the case of Huang Tzu's song *Our Memory* 本事, whilst the tune is an excellent match for the Chinese characters, the simple harmony also plays an important role in supporting the words that recall innocent times with a childhood playmate (Fig.4.13 p.208). However, perhaps due to lack of appreciation of harmony and lack of respect for the rights of an original work in Chinese tradition, I have come across this song on the Net as just the melody, or rearranged as if by a nowadays 'song style designer 唱腔设计' that ruins the naivety of the song.

(d) Music notation

The Butterfly Lovers and *Our Memory*, the two music examples mentioned above, are often seen in 'numbered musical notation' (jianpu 简谱), a system related to tonic sol-fa that is used nowadays in Cantonese opera, especially in China. It reads horizontally from left to right like Western notation: 1=do, 2=re, 3=mi etc.; 0=rest; position of a dot indicates an octave above or below (nothing to do with staccato); plain number = crotchet; dashes and underlines indicate note length longer/shorter than a crotchet (single underline=quaver, double underline=semiquaver and so on). Jianpu 简谱, literally 'simple score', is more detailed and exact than the traditional gong-chi-pu 工尺谱, a system using Chinese characters and symbols (Fig.4.14 p.209).

Fig.4.15 (pp. 210-212) is the score of a new Cantonese opera song in numbered musical notation 简谱 (jianpu) by Zou Yuwei 邹裕伟, one of the two Captains of Red-Boat Cantonese Opera Website, who is a professional and prize-winning 'song style designer 唱腔设计' (see p.183). I have not transcribed this score into Western staff notation since Jianpu is a system that is easily understood, hence its popularity with the general public who might not have musical training. As it stands, the score serves as an example of Jianpu and is sufficient to demonstrate several important points. This new Cantonese opera song is a co-operation between a scriptwriter and Zou Yuwei, who was responsible for the music. The score is more detailed than most. Listening to a recording of this new song (duration 8:03)⁴³, I recognize a good portion of it as an arrangement of existing tunes. I have added bar numbers in the Jianpu score to demonstrate the following analysis:

⁴³ AV21 in Audio/Video Folder is a recording of this new Cantonese opera song. Also see notes p.435.

Bars 1-7: A bridge/intro section.

Bars 8-15: A familiar sounding tune in traditional style.

Bars 16-27: A known tune, clearly marked by name – the three Chinese characters 雪中燕 at bar 16.

Bars 28-35: A known tune, clearly marked by name – the three characters 千般恨 at the end of bar 27.

Bars 36-45: Bridge section.

Bars 46-72: Well-known Cantonese opera music clearly marked with four characters 反线二黄 at bar 46 (female 'chorus' begins at bar 64 is also well-known music).

Bars 73-81: Short duet – an attempt at simple counterpoint.

Bars 82-89: Instrumental ending.

From the recording, one can hear that a lot of the music is not written out, though Zou Yuwei has mentioned on Red-Boat that a score with accompaniment is available (Xin-Sheng 新生, 2014); the notated melody is not always performed exactly as written, and the music demonstrates some of the points I have mentioned previously regarding harmony, counterpoint, and incomplete canon. At bar 39, the score is marked as modulating to G, yet this is not in the sense of modulation in Western music. Though Zou Yuwei belongs to the new generation of Cantonese opera musicians that work on harmony and orchestration, the music does not have a sense of harmonic structure as in Western music. Since working on this project, I have learned to accept that Cantonese musicians work according to a different system and concept.

The lack of harmony, limited use of modulation, limited use of keys (do of tonic sol-fa is mostly C and G), and a restricted compass of mostly 2-3 octaves may be the reason why Jianpu, the 'numbered musical notation' system is widely used in Cantonese opera nowadays. That Jianpu 简谱 is more widely used than the traditional gong-chi-pu 工尺谱 (Fig.4.14 p.209) which is even more like a simple sketch for expansion and flexible interpretation, might indicate that Cantonese opera is assimilating more Western ideas, as apart from reading from left to right and horizontally, and using tonic sol-fa, Jianpu adopts symbols used in Western music, such as a time signature and bar lines, and is more convenient for using a conductor, like Western music. Though I have not been able to obtain the score of the *Prelude of Flower-Moon-Shadow* 花月影 that includes a Western orchestra, as the music is

more complicated and exact, I am almost certain that the parts written for Western instruments would be in Western staff notation. There might be a possibility of Cantonese opera using Western staff notation eventually.

The Beggar's Opera (1728) is the only opera from the West that bears some resemblance to Cantonese opera, as discussed previously (p.180). The music arranged by Johann Christoph Pepusch is of simplicity. According to The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians:

The first edition of *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) gave the tunes of the songs, the second (also 1728) added the overtures on four staves, and the third (1929), included the basses of the songs, and also the text and songs from *Polly*. No M.S. orchestral parts of *The Beggar's Opera* survived... Thus the third edition is almost a full score, for such songs were normally accompanied by strings alone with only the harpsichord to fill in between tune and bass. More elaborate accompaniments have been produced by Linley, Addison, Hatton, Frederic Austin, Dent, Bliss and Britten, among others, Kurt Weill composed new music for Brecht's modernized version *Die Dreigroschenoper* (Berlin, 1928). (1980 Vol.7: 203)

In a way, this is like Cantonese opera using simple notation with room for more complex arrangement and new versions by others. *Die Dreigroschenoper* (*The Threepenny Opera*), the offspring of *The Beggar's Opera*, according to Wiki:

The orchestration involves a small ensemble with a good deal of doubling-up on instruments (in the original performances, for example, some 7 players covered a total of 23 instrumental parts, though modern performances typically use a few more players). (2014: 1., 2nd para.)

Though *The Threepenny Opera*, unlike *The Beggar's Opera*, is an original composition and more complex, the music is still relatively simple than most Western operas and the instrumentation for performance allows flexibility. The Kurt Weill Foundation of Music website listed eight versions of *The Threepenny Opera* arranged by various musicians, as well as Weill's own *Kleine Dreigroschenmusik für Blasorchester* (1929), a suite arranged for wind instruments of eight movements, a collection that includes *Pollys Lied* with the flute playing the short song.

(e) Popular appeal

As the Cantonese opera of my childhood was for the lower strata of the society, I bear this in mind when writing music for my prototype Quben. My creative practice

has been mostly for the concert halls and art festivals, and I do not have much knowledge of popular culture, but I enjoy listening to popular Classics like Rodrigo's guitar concerto *de Aranjuez*, Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* and Wagner's *Tannhäuser* overture; and I also like pop music of the Sixties and some country music. For this project, I have listened to music I do not usually listen to and made attempts to write music of genre I am not familiar with (e.g., music for Act 10, pp 341-346).

MUSIC AS AFFECTED BY THE ABOVE MENTIONED FIVE POINTS:

I am a composer of original music and not an arranger or a lyricist. Instead of selecting tunes to write words, I opt for providing simple original music for selected texts from the Quben – for flexible use – and I also suggest alternative music and ideas. I listened to Cantonese opera and looked at various notation methods to understand the characteristics. Accordingly I write short simple linear pieces of music and refrain from development or putting in details. I sketch Cantonese opera excerpts by ear to use as basic melodic material to be modified by the sound of the words selected. I use popular Classics, folk/pop music and jazz (all of which have been used in Cantonese opera) as inspiration, and even make an attempt at writing music quasi-jazz/country/pop – genres I am not familiar with. The music is simple, easy listening and has room for further development and flexible use by others.

(ii) ELECTRO-ACOUSTICS

I create electro-acoustic music by listening and adjusting repeatedly. It takes a lot more time and effort to create electro-acoustic music than writing staff notated music. From 1976, I spent at least ten years creating electro-acoustic music and getting it performed. Then all my work became unplayable due to deterioration of Ampex grand master magnetic tape, or due to obsolescence of the recording formats and equipment. This put me off working on electro-acoustics. When I heard that John Chowning had successfully reconstructed his famous *Stria* after it was lost, I reconnected with him. This reignited my interest in electro-acoustics. I realized during the long period of coping with health problems, that analogue techniques had been taken over by digital, and that I needed to learn everything anew like a novice. I was keen to compose original electro-acoustic music for this project. I looked into various software such as Logic, Audacity, SuperCollider, MaxMSP and its open source equivalent Pd (Pure Data, see AV16 & notes p.432), and many more software

for Mac and PC so as to find appropriate tools, and I have created electro-acoustic music in various stages for this project. However, I think it is better to use electro-acoustics to contribute towards this project in various ways, rather than to create a finished piece of electroacoustic music for the following reasons:

(a) In the past few years I have realized that the speed of computer technology advancement is very fast: a Mac of five years old is classified as vintage and even the parts would be difficult to obtain; software and equipment are updated or obsolete before one has even learned how to use them. The tendency is that advancement will be faster still in the future, i.e. nothing is for keep. During my research, I looked into some PhD theses, and the videos submitted with one thesis are no longer playable due to obsolete equipment. An electro-acoustic work submitted is likely to be out of date soon, but relevant and useful electro-acoustic ideas are likely to survive.

(b) A priority of my project is to allow flexible use by others. The way I work to achieve a finished electro-acoustic work is so time consuming, I find it difficult to let go to allow flexible use by others. Electro-acoustic work in various stages or combined with other art forms, so as to be useful to my prototype user would be better. This is in line with my staff notated music submitted which is meant to be a basis for development and ideas.

(c) Electro-acoustics is not yet relevant in Cantonese opera. During my research, I have only come across one young da-lao-quan 大老倌 (superstar lead performer) that uses electro-acoustics creatively and well, and his efforts have aroused hostility rather than praise from the audience (see Peng *Qing-Hua* 彭庆华 p.99).

(d) After attending meetings and workshops for music software users, open-source events and East London electro-acoustics activities, I have realized that most people are not aware of electro-acoustic music associated with universities/institutes, e.g. they have never heard of Stockhausen, Chowning, IRCAM etc., and they are not interested in the maths and science involved. As this project is meant to be people-friendly, I attempt to bridge the gap by not getting into maths and science, but rather, into graphics and visual ideas related to them such as the golden means (Fig.5.2 p.357) and Lissajous figures. I provide electro-acoustic ideas that can be related to Cantonese opera or my Quben. I use electro-acoustics in my music videos submitted

as complementary material, and write about the usefulness of electro-acoustics related to them. I also write about Cantonese opera's concept of recycling and new versions as a solution to the short lifespan of electro-acoustics, and to use simple/common devices (e.g. reverb) that are unlikely to become obsolete to transform faulty recording, as demonstrated in my music videos (AV3, AV4 & AV5). I include material and information related to electro-acoustics that might be useful, in various parts of my thesis.

4.2.5. VISUAL ELEMENTS AND IDEAS FOR STAGING AND RE-CREATING

As my PhD is not to present a finished performance, I do not include my own design work in the reservoir of material for the prototype, but relevant material by others with permission, such as computer graphics and photos. I supply visual ideas related to the practice of Cantonese opera and my own, and my music videos as an example of using and developing the prototype Quben. Visual ideas include electro-acoustics related, such as sound generated patterns (Fig.5.1 p.356).

End of Part 2

PART THREE

4.3. EXPLANATION OF MY PROTOTYPE

The purpose of my PhD is not to write an opera or to realize a finished performance but to create a prototype for use by myself and by others. The main part of my creative prototype is a Quben called ***Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor***, the basis of 'big drama' as in Cantonese opera, which can also be read as a piece of creative writing for enjoyment like Qubens of traditional Chinese opera. It is an artistic interpretation of my experience of cancer and inspired by the concepts of Cantonese opera I experienced in cosmopolitan Hong Kong when Cantonese opera was in its freest and most cross-cultural combined-art period, that is roughly from the 1950s to the mid 1960s when I left for London to study Western Classical music on a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music, UK. I supply my Quben with different ideas for multi-venue performance. I submit original music for flexible use with my Quben and also suggest alternative music and other relevant complementary materials. All these are like a reservoir of materials that can be used as the basis for many new versions of creation and performance, to be used as they are, or to be developed by anyone into a full-length opera or musical, a concert piece or a dance performance, a film, a play, a folk or jazz multi-media performance, an Internet performance, an educational creative/performing workshop... in sections or in their entirety. With imagination, elements provided in my prototype are like simple pieces in a kaleidoscope, the possibilities are endless.

Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor is in twelve acts. Each act is in three parts: 1. The Quben (quasi libretto cum script)

2. Production ideas for using it

3. Complementary materials for that act including original music

4.3.1. QUBEN ***Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor***

The concept of my Quben that is the main part of my prototype derives from Cantonese opera. It is a piece of creative writing in its own right, and can also be used as libretto or script. Here, it is a combination of rhymed and unrhymed verses, prose, dialogues and stage instructions to tell a humorous story in twelve acts, using the following five characters/components to carry the drama:

(i) HEROINE**(ii) MALE LEAD****(iii) CHORUS****(iv) SCREEN****(v) STRIP****(i) & (ii) HEROINE and MALE LEAD**

In Cantonese opera, the drama is usually acted out by the male and female lead. Here, the Heroine, i.e. the cancer survivor, takes precedence, while the male character takes on many guises according to how the story develops.

(iii) CHORUS

Words under 'Chorus' can be sung or narrated by more than one person. In my recollection of Cantonese opera, the audience particularly likes it when many members of the troupe are on stage, supporting the male lead and female lead.

(iv) SCREEN

This should be a nicely designed computer graphic or illustration for typing in the text of the Quben under the heading SCREEN. It is particularly suitable if the prototype is to be realized in the format of an Internet opera, or as a DVD or film. If it is to be realized as a live performance, the text can be projected onto the backdrop, to a real screen or some surface on stage. Texts can be modified to suit different performances and versions, of course. Each section of the Quben has examples of this – here without the design and artistic typesetting. Traditional Cantonese opera is often performed in front of a large painted flat surface. Cantonese films also use text on screen to convey what is happening where this is not acted out in the film.

(v) STRIP

A STRIP is similar to a SCREEN, but is specifically for the ending of an act or an episode, and should be designed to look a bit like the conversation/thought bubbles used in comics, but more artistic, with optional voice-over where appropriate. The purpose is to tempt the audience to watch the next episode, and it is particularly suitable if the prototype is to be realized in the format of a TV series, or as a group of Internet music videos. The idea comes from a type of Chinese popular novel called zhang-hui-xiao-shuo 章回小說 where at the end of each chapter there are sentences to entice the reader onto the next chapter. In many Cantonese operas and

Cantonese films, the stories are taken from this type of popular novel.

4.3.2. USING *Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor*

Cantonese opera during that 'anything goes' period and my creative/directing practice involve or bear similarity to a variety of art forms, such as: Western Classical music, contemporary Classical music, electro-acoustics, music theatre, Western opera, musical, pop music, popular culture, jazz, film, drama, stage plays, dance, martial art, mime, acrobatics, stand-up comedy, cabaret, creative writing, literature, Shakespeare, East-West cultures, visual arts, traditional Chinese operas and more. My production ideas using *Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor* for multi-venue performance and re-creation are derived from all these mentioned above. At the beginning of each act there is a list of artists/works/genre, and procedures mentioned for quick reference. Usage ideas appropriate to a particular act appear in the 'Description' at the beginning of that act, as insertions in italic, and under 'Production Ideas' for that act. To avoid repetition, ideas for usage relevant to all 12 acts follow here:

(i) GENERAL USAGE FOR ALL 12 ACTS

(a) The Quben of *Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor* is a finished work for enjoyable reading.

(b) The Quben is best used as a libretto for an opera, or used as lyrics or inspiration to write your own music. Longer sections for a character in the Quben are especially good for writing a song, a pop song or an aria.

(c) Any part of the Quben can be used as the script for any form of performance, or to be adapted as a film or TV series.

(ii) OTHER PRODUCTION IDEAS FOR ALL 12 ACTS (in alphabetical order)

CANTATA

This can be arranged as a quasi-cantata performance comprising a combination of 'Chorus' and arias for the Heroine (and other original music for the male lead) and

other music items.

CHORUS

‘CHORUS’ is one of the five characters/components to carry the drama of my Quben. The idea was influenced to some degree by Greek chorus and the sound of Bach’s chorales. This can be a choral music performance of an arrangement of various extracted ‘Chorus’ sections from my submitted music, or other original music written for any text under ‘Chorus’. Apart from singing a cappella, this can also be sung with instruments doubling the vocal lines (a common practice in Cantonese opera), or the texture can be enriched with more elaborate harmonization. Instrumental colour not usually associated with Western Classical music can be introduced. An example is the Greek santari – its notation is simple yet it has a richness of sound reminiscent of traditional instruments used in Cantonese opera, as well as being similar in its form to a type of zither used in Cantonese opera called yangqin 扬琴 (Wiki, 2014). Another example is the Turkish qanun, an unequal-tempered instrument producing a sound similar to some instruments used in the Cantonese opera of my childhood. Both santari and qanun were introduced to me by Dr Jon Banks, one of my supervisors, and are available at Anglia Ruskin University.

COMBINED ARTS

My own specialty is to combine music, dance, drama and visual art across different cultures (especially Anglo-Chinese) with an emphasis on music. Many other artists are talented in more than one field and are from different cultural backgrounds, and may be inspired by this work to find other ways of doing this.

CONCERT

The music submitted for the 12 acts of the Quben can be mounted as a concert of 12 pieces (total duration: 1hr 30 mins to 2 hrs).

DANCE

Music submitted and some of the shorter Quben sections are particularly suitable for dance. Some text passages can be chanted rhythmically with added percussion corresponding to the choreography.

INTERNET VIDEOS

I originally envisaged this project as an Internet opera, as this would be more

financially viable. Having used the Internet for some years, I now realize that many people do not watch long items or do not watch a long item all the way through. It may be more practical therefore to present this as a group of short videos.

NARRATION WITH MUSIC

Narration by actors is the simplest way to perform this Quben. A more interesting way to perform it would be as dialogues with accompanying percussion and music. In Cantonese opera, performers are trained to deliver stylized speech with accompanying percussion, as well as making conversation on stage with music accompaniment.

STAGE/RADIO PLAY IN 12 ACTS

A radio play of 12 episodes may be practical and financially viable.

VISUAL ARTS

The Quben can be used as inspiration to create any form of visual art.

WORKSHOPS

The Quben could be used for a creative writing workshop, by expanding a chosen section or a chosen passage from a particular section. It could also be used for a songwriting workshop – for example, the soprano part from any act could be used as the basis for a workshop on song arrangement.

Zhe-Zi-Xi 折子戲

This is a term in Chinese opera to describe the realisation of any small part of a Quben, to produce a satisfactory dramatic effect within the confines of available resources. This practice often permits modification and adjustment of the original and is common in all types of traditional Chinese opera.

4.3.3. COMPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Each of the twelve acts of the Quben has original music by myself (total duration approx. 1½ -2 hrs). Some acts have my original music videos as examples of possible usage of the Quben, and some acts have relevant graphics with suggestions. There are also relevant audio and video examples in the enclosed Audio/Video Folder, such as excerpts from Cantonese opera to explain certain points.

(i) MUSIC

I submit my own music in every one of the 12 acts of the Quben. In some acts I ask for tighter authorial control (the music should be performed much as it is), whilst in other acts there is looser control and interpretative freedom is encouraged, following the tradition of Cantonese opera. I sometimes cite the work of other composers (e.g. *Song to the Moon* of Dvorak's *Rusalka*, see 5.11.3(i) pp. 377-8) that has inspired my music in a particular act, and suggest that the interpreter may refer to this other music for use with the Quben or as a stimulus to create their own music for that act.

These short simple pieces composed by me are like the standard tunes regularly used in Cantonese opera that can be performed as written, or for different voices/instruments according to availability, such as Chinese and oriental instruments, and/or used as a framework for further embellishment and development. Though written for relevant acts, they can be freely used as thematic material flexibly adapted to the text of that act or other acts – for any form of singing, for interludes as required by dramatic situations, as dance music, background music or music for other purposes. I also include the Heroine's part (soprano) for writing new arrangements, as it is the singer's melody that is the essence in Cantonese opera. Cantonese opera is made up by mostly existing tunes and songs, which are then re-arranged or re-created. Hence, most of the written music is deliberately simple and without expression marks or with few markings, so as to leave room for this purpose. Some instrumental parts are deliberately written beyond the normal range or not in the best range of that instrument, as the part can be played on electric keyboard. This to me is a more imaginative way of using an electric instrument than to mimic an acoustic instrument – i.e. playing what that acoustic instrument cannot achieve rather than attempting to mimic what that instrument can do better. If the music is to be played by an acoustic instrument, transposition can easily remedy this.

My music's horizontal structure (melody and counterpoint) is mostly inspired by fragments of tunes used in Cantonese opera, especially from the 1984 version of *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* 刁蛮公主戇驸马 that is available on Youku and Tudou – the two largest video websites in China. The vertical structure (quasi harmony, since harmony is not yet an issue in Cantonese opera) is inspired by popular classics of Western Classical music – my humble attempt to provide some enjoyable music as Cantonese opera is to be enjoyed. Though Cantonese opera has long been adopting

some melodies from the West, it has overlooked the harmony that is the essence of Western Classical music (e.g., AV26 a&b, notes p.436). Mine is an attempt to marry the two from a different angle for the purposes of this cross-cultural project. I also include a few old works by myself as they are particularly suitable and this fits in the concept of recycling in Cantonese opera.

CHORUS:

I was influenced by the idea of Greek chorus and the sound of Bach's chorales to some degree. Apart from singing a cappella, this can also be sung with instruments doubling the vocal lines, or the texture enriched with more elaborate harmonization. Instrumental colour not usually associated with Western Classical music can be introduced. An example is the Greek santari – its notation is simple yet it has a richness of sound reminiscent of traditional instruments used in Cantonese opera, as well as being similar in its form to a type of zither used in Cantonese opera called yangqin 扬琴 (Wiki 2014). Another example is the Turkish quanun, an unequal-tempered instrument producing a sound similar to the instruments used in the Cantonese opera of my childhood. Both santari and quanun are available at ARU.

ELECTRO-ACOUSTICS:

Under 4.2.4 (ii) Electro-Acoustics (pp.188-9), I have explained why I do not submit a finished piece of electro-acoustic music for the thesis. However, Act 10 *Radio Fun & Chemo Comedy*, the music is affected by the electro-acoustic music I have created for this act (explanation of this: 5.10.3(ii), pp. 358-360); there is a recorded narration of part of the Quben with an electro-acoustic treatment example in Act 11 *You Are Not Alone* (AV16 & p.432); my music videos as complementary material have used electro-acoustics to demonstrate my attempt to improve/rescue recordings of staff notated music – e.g., AV3 (Act 1), AV4 (Act 11), and AV5a-c for Act 1 (p.222 & notes pp.429-430). The music of these videos also included treated sound fragments from live performances of Cantonese opera taken from the Net (compare percussion of AV25 with the beginning of AV3, see notes pp.436 & 430).

(ii) AUDIO/VIDEO FOLDER (enclosed)

This contains:

- (a) My original music and videos, which serve as examples.
- (b) Excerpts from Cantonese opera to explain certain points, and other relevant audios/videos.

(iii) GRAPHICS & RELEVANT MATERIALS

These are provided for use with the Quben, or simply as visual suggestions e.g., Marcus West's computer graphics (pp. 357-358).

4.3.4. SYNOPSIS OF THE 12 ACTS***Act 1 A Kaleidoscopic Prelude***

The heroine, the 3-time cancer survivor, calms a woman who is thought to have cancer. This leads to humorous dialogues on the creation of a dozen song & dance pieces like twelve pieces of a colourful kaleidoscope.

Act 2 Mister Dracula, A Man with No Name

The heroine's first hospital appointment – in her fevered imagination the masked surgeon becomes a weird mix of the devil and a movie star.

Act 3 Revolving Clockwork Figures

Heroine's stay in hospital – like going through a production line, yet there is human failing.

Act 4 Operation Blind Date

The heroine makes fun out of having operations – suggests it is like having a blind date with the surgeon.

Act 5 Still Desirable?

The heroine is unprepared for the disturbing and frightening scenes that confront her in the cancer ward, where patients carry the marks of surgery.

Act 6 The Best Cancer to Have!

The consultant tries to make light of the heroine's predicament. Medical staff launch into a song-and-dance routine.

Act 7 Single or Return?

The heroine faces the stark realities of illness and treatment, and is tempted by thoughts of suicide.

Act 8 *Getting to Know You*

In photographs and diagrams, the malignant cells are strangely beautiful. But how closely does one dare to know this new enemy?

Act 9 *No Money, No Choices*

Not content with its own awesome powers, the enemy, cancer, now seems to be in league with NHS bureaucracy.

Act 10 *Radio Fun & Chemo Comedy*

The heroine now finally faces the facts of therapy – a disturbing mixture of the frightening and the farcical.

Act 11 *You Are Not Alone*

Deserted by friends in her hour of need, the heroine re-evaluates the meaning of love and friendship.

Act 12 *Postlude Bouquets*

At the end of the performances bouquets are usual... like a recapitulation, with flowers... and a surprise coda!

– End of Chapter 4 –

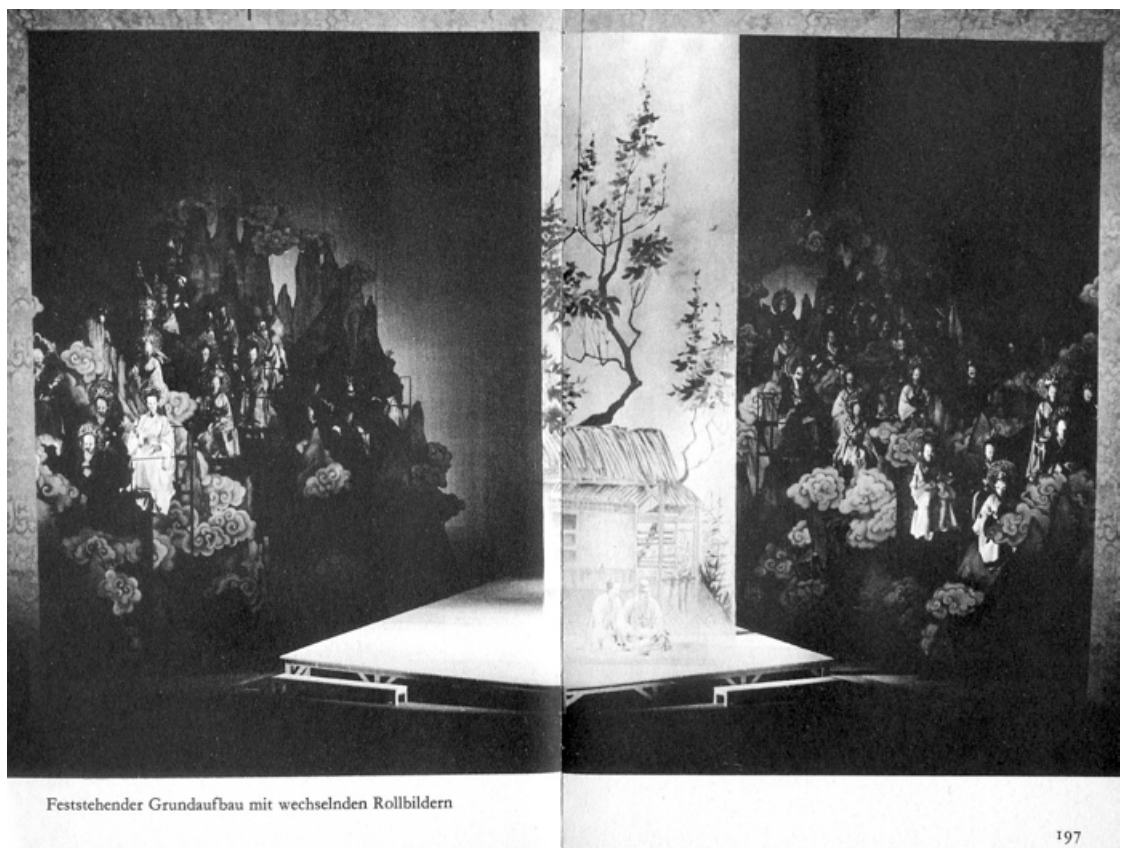
CHAPTER 4 FIGURES

Fig.4.1: Isang Yun's opera *SIM TJONG* production photo (p.156)

– Sim Tjong and her blind father



Fig.4.2: Another *SIM TJONG* production photo (p.156)



Source: Rennert, G., 1974: 194 & 197

Fig.4.3: Ho Wai-On TAI CHI for flute & guitar, p.168 (Ho Wai-On, 1977:1) – visually compare the different approach to writing music of the martial art ‘Tai Chi’ – my *Tai Chi* for flute and guitar and Judith Weir's *Gentle Violence* for piccolo and guitar: My music is in short sections, linear without obvious harmonic structure nor thematic development – some characteristic of Cantonese opera, while Weir's is the opposite.

[illegible]

Fig.4.4: Judith Weir *GENTLE VIOLENCE* for piccolo & guitar, p.168 (Weir, 1987:10)

♯108 With rough energy: abrupt

as if snatched

damp each chord immediately

mf

5

4

mf

2

4

Fig.4.5: Stravinsky *FOUR SONGS* Inter-Artes 1989 performance (p.169) at the City Hall Concert Hall Hong Kong with Soprano Mary Wiegold (Inter-Artes records)



Fig.4.6: An Inter-Artes cross-cultural display at the QEH (p.171)
South Bank Centre London (Inter-Artes records)



Fig.4.7a: Combined arts performance of Judith Weir *GENTLE VIOLENCE* –
Inter-Artes project *THEME HOING KONG* 1991, City Hall Concert Hall (p.171)



Fig.4.7b: Ho Wai-On *THE LIVING TRADITION* (p.47) combined arts performance
with images from local museums. The two performers in the front represent
the British and Chinese in Hong Kong respectively – 1991, City Hall Concert Hall.



Fig.4.8: My Inter Artes Yuenlin 園林通藝 (p.61)

My proposal won the Arts Council New Collaborations Fund award and I have visited China for project research and development.



My preliminary design for *The Stones* as part of *Inter-Artes Yuan-Lin*.



Part of a Yuan-Lin.



A bird's eye view of a Yuan-Lin.

Embryos of future projects

1. *Inter Artes* as a permanent artistic environment as inspired by the art of Chinese landscape gardening called *Yuan-Lin*.

The blueprint has been completed after many years' research and visiting many *Yuan-Lins* in China from north to south. This will be a large plot of land, with permanent and temporary artistic installations. The principle of *Yuan-Lin* is man and Nature in harmony. The garden signifies Nature, and is functional for humans. The *Inter Artes* artistic environment is for human activities. It will be a place where the general public come to admire the view, to relax, to read a book and to eat food prepared artistically, and which will also be particularly suitable for combined-arts cross-cultural activities. The included illustration is my preliminary design for a part of this environment called *The Stones*. People can walk round them for pleasure, but the stones can also be used as unusual projection screens, or be used as huge artistic looking TV monitors showing images of painting, calligraphy, photographs, audio-visuals, dance and music performances. Live performances such as music and dance, and special events can be created involving *The Stones*.

An alternative version will be presented as a video with interesting images and stories, to be realised as a computer generated experience which others would be able to develop and extend.

Fig.4.9: Cantonese opera *CHINESE PRINCESS TURANDOT* 中国公主杜兰朵 (p.175)

Turandot stands in the middle with two executioners on her L and R. In the front row are two unfortunate suitors to be executed, and with a midget eunuch poking fun at them (Plum-Flower-Boat 梅花船 2012-8-24 topic video screenshot).

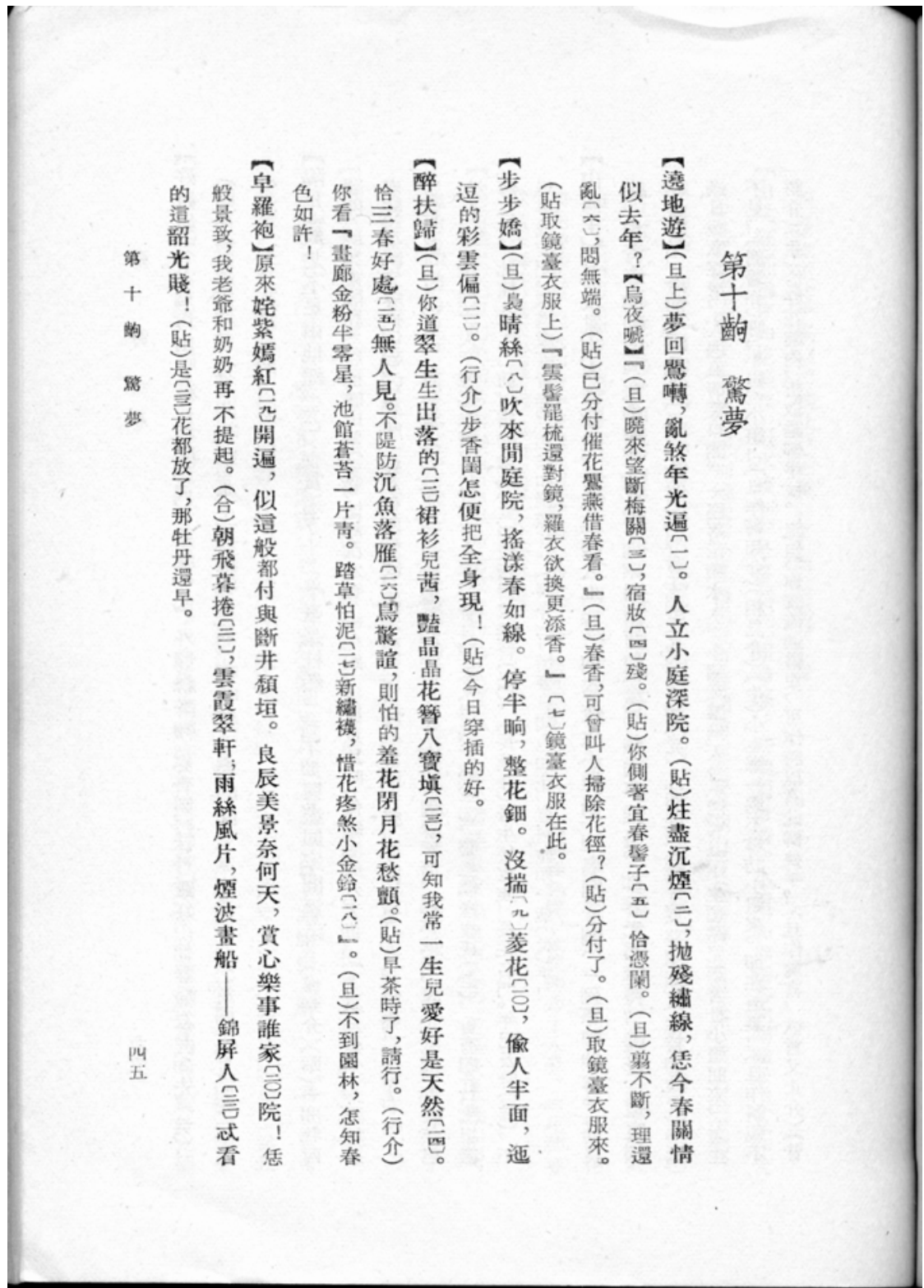
**Fig.4.10: Cantonese opera *MADAM BUTTERFLY* 蝴蝶夫人 (p.175)**

Pinkerton and Cio-Cio San played by Ma Sze-Tsang 马师曾 and Hung Sin-Nui 红线女 (Source: 金羊网 ycwb.com 2007-03-31)



Fig.4.11: Tang Xianzu Quben THE PEONY PAVILION 汤显祖牡丹亭

See 4.2.2 The Concept of a Quben (p.180).



(Source: Tang Xianzu, 1976: 45)

Fig.4.12: THE BUTTERFLY LOVERS violin concerto 梁祝小提琴协奏曲 is often appeared as a single melody on the Net – the heroine's theme (p.184).

V-no solo 1

梁山伯与祝英台
小提琴协奏曲
"The Butterfly Lovers" Violin Concerto

何占豪、陈 钢
He Zhan hao . Chen Gang
(1959)

抒情的慢中板 (Adagio cantabile) $\text{♩} = 50$

rit. 1 A tempo *mp*

10 20 25 30

(Source: www.tiqinpu.com, 2013-03-17)

Fig. 4.13: Huang Tzu OUR MEMORY 黃自本事 (p.185)

Whilst the tune is an excellent match for the Chinese characters, the simple harmony also plays an important role in supporting the words that recall innocent times with a childhood playmate.

151

本 事
Our Memory

黃 自
Huang-Tzu

p 記 得 舊 時 年 紀 小 我 愛 談 天

你 愛 笑 有 一 回 並 肩 坐 在 桃 樹 下

風 在 林 梢 鳥 在 叫 我 們 不 知 怎 樣

困 覺 了 夢 裏 花 兒 紅 多 少

rit

(Source: Chao Mei-Pa 趙梅伯 ed. *Songs Evergreen for juniors*, 1957: 151)

Fig.4.14: Gong-chi-pu 工尺谱 (pp. 102, 185, 186)

The following are the first two pages of an ‘original’ Cantonese song in gong-chi-pu by Red-Boat boat-friend Yan-Qu-Sheng – he wrote the lyrics and chose existing tunes, with indication of pitch and rhythm using Chinese characters and symbols. (Source: Yan-Qu-Sheng 言曲聲, 2013)

唐明皇像夢楊妃

反工六工尺 上上 六反工尺尺上士合士上乙士上士合
【生合尺首板】驚驚 瓦冷添 愁 慟。(尺)

仁合士上合 六反工六工尺尺上 尺上尺工尺工 工尺

【生起二黃板面白】失卻楊妃心微痛，幸存鬼斧塑嬌容。且待我燈前細看花模樣，悲情一敘話愁濃。【的的】哎呀，這真是我的太真，我的玉環呀。

【生唱長句二黃下句】仙姿佚貌下深宮，窈窕幽閒，堪贊頌 比昭君增妍麗，較西子 倍神 丰。是嫦娥，靈犀暗通，夜寒秋凍，暗把相思 投 種。【收攝】

【生白】妃子，妃子。孤皇思念你呀。哎呀。

【生重一槌沉花下句】哎吔吔，畢竟是香檀木塑楊妃像，難迴笑臉沒玲瓏。

【生禿起血淚花】念玉 士合士上合 乙士合士上合 上士尺工尺乙 乙士合士上(六工尺)上尺工尺工六尺上上尺工尺工六尺(工六尺)合實教難自控， 太真 妃 香香 仙 踪， 天人 乙士上上合仁合士上(五生)六工六 工尺上上上尺工尺工六尺相隔令我無 窮恨痛， 盼夢裡 驚驚再次 相 擁。

【生叫頭入夢介】妃子，太真，玉環！

上乙士合士上尺工乙士合仁合士上(工尺) 落 葉滿階， 紅途凝露凍， 上上上·尺工六工六工尺上尺上 (尺工)乙士合仁合士上·尺工乙 更有那 子規泣 聲 縱， 舊地重 臨 往，

哭像夢楊妃一

撰曲：伍時本

士合上·尺尺·工六·工六工尺上(尺工)乙士合士合(士合上士合仁尚見 未央宮 柳 太液芙蓉。

仁伏仁合上合士乙·尺士合士上合士合 工尺乙士上)合士上乙 人去

士合仁合伏仁合士合) 尺工乙士合乙士合仁合)尺工六工六工尺物仍 同， 依舊池 林 花 枝

上尺工上(工六尺上尺工上六尺上尺工上) 乙乙士合乙士合仁合士)種， 往日玉 樓

乙·尺工六尺六工尺乙尺工尺工合仁合士(合仁合士·上乙) 士上渡 春風， 鳳 簫舞曲同 弄， 今宵

士上士合仁·尺上尺仁合·士乙尺合士乙士(合士乙士) 尺乙士上合士宮 內，秋雨 梧桐， 伴君皇 遺夢， 刻盼夢

上·工尺乙仁合士上合 慰 主情 濃。

【旦反線中板上句】今復到 驪宮， 往事重上心頭，已惹得思潮浪湧。我記 當年 帝主憐香惜玉，萬千寵愛全在 阿 儂。

難得 皇寄意， 賜浴於華清

【旦轉士工花】羞得我緋紅頻送。君愛我一笑回眸生百媚，六宮粉黛盡妙玉環容。朝朝暮暮伴君旁，誰料戰火烹紅，拆散鴛和鳳。解慰相思憑此夢，待我低聲喚主若鳴蟲。

【旦白】主上，主上。

【生醒介白】哎呀，哎呀，何以耳伴微聞楊妃呼喚呢吓？

【生花上句】呀，定是方才哭像淚如泉，魂魄憐孤來入夢。

Fig.4.15: A new Cantonese opera song by Zou Yuwei 邹裕伟, 3 pages (see pp. 185-6).
An example of jianpu 简谱. Recording: AV21 in Audio/Video Folder (notes p.435).
Page 1

粤剧《如姬与信陵君》
对明月寄心声

编剧: 章耀明
作曲: 邹裕伟

洞箫 $1=C \quad \frac{2}{4} \quad \frac{4}{4}$

古筝

男 (5) rit $\text{♩}=66$

(女声独唱)

柳 营 检 战 马 虎 将 夜 谈 兵

宵 寒 露 冷 霜 风 劲 沙 场 刁 斗 传 更 声

(雪中燕) (慢渐快)

(信) 身 登 楼

踏 夜 静

望 眼 穿 空 朗 月 清 在 我 心 里 情 难 定 侯 先 生 已 捐 命

烈 魄 忠 肝 鬼 神 惊 想 如 姬 她 深 明 大 义 火 海 刀 山 甘 去 承 命 她

安 危 生 死 我 梦 萦 挂 念 不 知 此 刻 可 闻 叫 认

6 - 6 0

$1=G \quad \text{♩}=54$

如姬 (1)

Page 2

(45)
Rit

2 3 4 5 3 2 2 7 6 1 5 6 7 6 | 5 6 1 6 5 4 3 2 3 | 2 3 4 3 4 5 3 5 3 | 2 3 5 7 6 5 6 1 -) |

(反线二王) ♩=35

6 1 5 5 3 5 6 7 6 5 6 1 7 6 7 6 | 5 1 6 5 3 6 4 3 2 (1 2 3 5 2 3 1 2) | 1 1 2 5 3 2 2 3 5 (6 1 5 6 5) 0 2 7 |

如)忍痛 伤 血 泪 凝 冷 宫 之 人

(50)

6 6 7 6 5 3 5 1 7 6 1 5 (6 7 6 5 3 5 1 7 6 1 | 5 6 3 5) 3 6 4 3 2 3 1 2 3 2 3 5 1 6 5 3 |

自 怜 独

2 3 1 (6 5 3 5 2 3 1 2 3 2 3 5 1 6 5 3 2 1 2 3 1) | 6 5 6 1 5 6 1 6 1 1 7 6 5 3 |

影 公 子 他

7 3 2 7 6 5 5 1 2 4 3 2 (1 2 3 5 2 3 1 2) | 2 3 2 3 5 2 3 7 6 5 2 (3 5 2 3 2) 0 3 2 7 |

阵 前 可 得 胜 应 知 我 舍 生 忘 死

(55)

6 3 2 3 2 1 6 1 5 1 1 2 3 4 5 3 (2 3 1 2 | 3 4 5 3) 6 5 1 7 6 1 5 1 6 5 3 5 2 |

玉 汝 于

1 6 1 2 3 5 6 1 6 5 3 5 2 3 2 1 1 6 1 2 2 1 | 2 2 3 2 3 2 1 5 1 5 0 1 1 2 3 5 2 |

成 (信) 她 似 釜 中 之 鱼 四 时 战 战 兢 兢

(60)

^P (0 1 6 5 3 5) 2 3 5 5 4 6 5 3 2 5 3 4 3 2 | 1 (0 1 6 5) 4 6 5 4 5 6 5 3 2 6 6 5 3 |

伶 仃 凄 苦 含 悲 独 自 鸣 我 有 心 痛 惜 她 愁 哀 光

6 5 (1 6 5) 4 5 6 5 3 2 3 5 3 2 1 6 2 5 | 6 5 3 2 3 5 2 5 6 1 2 3 1 | 1 6 1 1 1 7 6 6 (2 7) |

景 只 因 我 碍 于 叔 嫂 辈 份 之 情 心 照 不 宣 情 在 心 中 铭 (如) 酬 深 恩

(65)

6 6 7 6 1 5 6 1 1 5 6 1 0 3 5 6 7 6 | 3 4 5 3 3 5 3 2 5 6 1 6 1 6 5 |

伴) 对 月 夜 诉 心 衷 情 深 回 报 相 知 (如) 愿 已 成

4 3 4 5 3 3 6 4 3 2 3 6 1 2 6 1 2 3 5 6 1 | 5 6 1 5 0 6 3 6 3 5 6 3 2 1 2 3 | 5 6 5 2 1 1 4 5 3 5 6 1 5 |

(女伴) 只 愿 她 大 军 驰 骋 一 战 成 功 解 困 景 虽 是

Page 3

Figure 3 shows musical notation for a piece, likely a Cantonese opera, with lyrics in Chinese. The notation includes numbered notes (1-7) and rests (0), with some notes circled (e.g., 40, 75, 80, 85). The lyrics are: 身困因笼仍觉心中高, 兴对明月寄心声, (信)对明月寄心声, 只望好人有好报早日返归程, 啊, 程, 啊, (3. 5 6 2 | i 2 i 6 5 - | 3. 5 6 2 i 6 5 | 6 - 6 5 6 i | 2. 3 i 2 | 6 i 5 4 3 3 5 6 i | 2 3 5 7 6 5 6 | i - - - -) ||

Figure 3 shows musical notation for a piece, likely a Cantonese opera, with lyrics in Chinese. The notation includes numbered notes (1-7) and rests (0), with some notes circled (e.g., 40, 75, 80, 85). The lyrics are: 身困因笼仍觉心中高, 兴对明月寄心声, (信)对明月寄心声, 只望好人有好报早日返归程, 啊, 程, 啊, (3. 5 6 2 | i 2 i 6 5 - | 3. 5 6 2 i 6 5 | 6 - 6 5 6 i | 2. 3 i 2 | 6 i 5 4 3 3 5 6 i | 2 3 5 7 6 5 6 | i - - - -) ||

加图 (3)

(Source: Xin-Sheng 新生, 2014.)

Chapter Five

SONG & DANCE OF A 3-TIME CANCER SURVIVOR

The Prototype Proper

A Quben in 12 Acts with Production Ideas and Original Music

This chapter is the main part of my thesis – an artistic interpretation of cancer survival in 12 acts called *Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor*. It is in the form of a Quben (quasi libretto cum script) as influenced by the Cantonese opera of my childhood, an art form that is in need of revival if it is also to survive. I submit original music and alternative music for each act, and suggest production ideas for multi-venue performances and the creation of new versions.

Act 1 **A KALEIDOSCOPIC PRELUDE** (reason for *Song & Dance*) p.214

Act 2 **MISTER DRACULA, A MAN WITH NO NAME** (hospital appointment) p.230

Act 3 **REVOLVING CLOCKWORK FIGURES** (hospital stay) p.241

Act 4 **OPERATION BLIND DATE** (the operation) p.260

Act 5 **STILL DESIRABLE?** (disturbing scene) p.270

Act 6 **THE BEST CANCER TO HAVE!** (doctors and nurses sing and dance) p.285

Act 7 **SINGLE OR RETURN?** (suicidal thoughts) p.300

Act 8 **GETTING TO KNOW YOU** (beautiful cancer cells) p.315

Act 9 **NO MONEY, NO CHOICES** (NHS) p.335

Act 10 **RADIO FUN & CHEMO COMEDY** (treatments) p.347

Act 11 **YOU ARE NOT ALONE** (love and friendship) p.368

Act 12 **POSTLUDE BOUQUETS** (a surprise coda) p.388

Please read DECLARATION (p.xv)

5.1 Act 1: A KALEIDOSCOPIC PRELUDE

DESCRIPTION

The Cantonese opera of my childhood was like a kaleidoscope, perhaps not valued or respected because it was simply for enjoyment: a toy consisting of a tube containing mirrors and pieces of coloured glass or paper, not of much value, yet the reflections produce endless fascinating patterns visible through an eyehole when the tube is rotated. The trailer at the end of Act 1 (p.219) is an exposition of all twelve acts, with images and excerpts of music from each of them.

Mentioned in Act 1 – useful for reference, image and ideas

Choreography of words, computer speech, dance, electro-acoustic laughter, film trailer, Jinming photography 今明摄影, kaleidoscope, prelude and fugue, roller-coaster, *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* 刁蛮公主戇驸马, sonata form, surround sound, *Three Times No Less* (music, and music video).

Contents

5.1.1 The Quben p.215

5.1.2 Production ideas p.221

5.1.3 Complementary materials p.221

(i) Original music *Three Times No Less* soprano aria pp.224-229

(ii) Sound files for electro-acoustic performance (AV5 a, b & c, notes p.430)

(iii) Music videos:

Ha Ha Ha (AV1, notes p.429)

Three Times No Less (AV2, notes p.429)

5.1.1 The Quben

Act 1

A KALEIDOSCOPIC PRELUDE

SCREEN 1 ⁴⁴

Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor

An Internet opera (or whatever medium to be used) in 12 acts for your enjoyment

SCREEN 2

This is also a tribute to Cantonese opera – which was my very first experience of music and multi-media performance. Though I have lived most of my life in the West and received Western professional training in music, that first encounter deeply influenced my creativity and staging of performances.

— Ho *Wai-On*

Male lead:

The heroine, the 3-time cancer survivor, sees a woman at her friend's who is thought to have cancer. She calms the woman down. This leads to humorous dialogues on the creation of a dozen humorous song & dance pieces like twelve pieces of a colourful kaleidoscope, for everyone to enjoy.

SCREEN 3

A glimpse of a dozen humorous song & dance pieces for you to enjoy –
like twelve pieces of a colourful kaleidoscope.

(Performers & other credits)

Heroine's opening speech:

I saw this woman, the cleaner, actually, at my friend's. She was in a hell of a state. My friend said she's suspected of having cancer. I am a very private person, but seeing her like this, I said to her who was a stranger: "I had cancer three times". She

⁴⁴ SCREEN: Projection of computer graphic text. See 4.3.1(iv), p.192.

looked at me, and she calmed down. This was a reason behind my creating this Internet performance (*or whatever media chosen according to circumstances*) based on my cancer survival experience – as an artistic interpretation, with original music, images, story and... humour!

Heroine's Song⁴⁵:

I saw this woman at my friend's
 in a hell of a state –
 the lump, suspicious,
 perhaps, pernicious –
 and my heart went out to her
 for I had been there myself,
 in terror so private and personal,
 three times, no less.
 But each time I came back.
 So, calmly, I told her
 “I had cancer three times.” –
 in one short simple sentence.
 She looked at me,
 and all was calm.

Conversation with male lead and chorus

Heroine:

I am the 3-time cancer survivor.
 I survived.

I will even write an opera about it.

(At the time I was thinking of realizing the story as an opera. The word 'opera' can be substituted by whatever media this is to be realized.)

Chorus:

Survived – might even write an opera about it!

⁴⁵ See *Three Times No Less*: music score (p.224), music video (AV3, notes p.431) and audio files (AV5a-c, notes p.432).

You must be joking.

This is funny. (*ha ha ha! – musical/electro-acoustic laughter*)⁴⁶

Heroine:

Once I lived for music and art, for dance and drama –

I created them.

I combined them.

Then cancer came to destroy me, and them – to tear us all apart.

But time was given back to me – time to live,

time to reconstruct,

time to make . . . an opera – what I have always wanted to do!

Chorus:

An opera! Of course! (*pause, looking around wide-eyed in wonder*)

And this must be it!

We owe our existence, to you! (*Heroine: a little moment of self-reference!*

– *meant to be amusing for the audience*)

Male lead (*with a sense of importance*):

The creation has begun! (*to Heroine, referring to Chorus*)

They are living, singing, proof of your survival –

your life is their life.

As long as you live, they live.

Heroine:

They live while I live while they live . . .

Mmm — a dozen songs and dances will sustain us all,

and so we all go on.

Male lead:

That goes for me too!

I depend on you.

⁴⁶ See AV1, *Ha Ha Ha* animation example & notes p.429.

We sing each other's worlds into being.

So keep it up!

Please don't stop!

Heroine:

A non-stop opera of songs and dances . . .

Looking back – though it was not funny at the time,
there're things I can now laugh about.

You know,

a sense of humour helps,
even if it is black humour.

Chorus:

Cancer, and humour?!

You must be joking! (*ha ha ha ha ha!*)

Heroine:

Yes, a dozen humorous song & dance pieces for you to enjoy,
like twelve pieces of a colourful kaleidoscope –
Yes, the scope, the kaleidoscope, kaleidoscopy –
Whoops! Not funny anymore!

Chorus (*possibly sung*):

This is the prelude of the songs & dances.

If this is the prelude can a fugue be far behind?

Fugue – Italian for 'flight',

is flight from reality – denial. (*getting serious with poker faces*)

(*possibly computer speech – robot-like, for the next two lines*)

Also used for episode of memory loss

following life's stressful situations. (*short pause*)

But our heroine does not forget, (*smile, and human speech again*)

and she also sees the funny side;

Surprise, Surprise!

Here comes the trailer!*(images and excerpts of music from each of the 12 Acts)***Male lead & Chorus:**Here comes the trailer! *(music from Act 1 A Kaleidoscopic Prelude)*

Hold on tight to your trolley

as we follow our heroine on her roller-coaster ride

through that dreaded disease – *(music from Act 8 Getting To Know You)*

at the mercy of the forces of good and evil,

friends and foes.

But which is which?

Is he saviour,

or vampire? *(music from Act 2 Mister Dracula, A Man with No Name)*The NHS itself, *(music from Act 4 Operation Blind Date)*

strangled by confusion and bureaucracy,

*(music from Act 3 Revolving Clockwork Figures)*seems far from benign. *(music from Act 9 No Money, No Choices)*

Who is the smiling surgeon who drops the bombshell?

*(music from Act 6 The Best Cancer To Have)*Will it be defused in time? *(music from Act 7 Single Or Return?)*

Then there are the expected visitors who don't visit.

*(music from Act 11 You Are Not Alone)*Are they indifferent to her plight, *(music from Act 5 Still Desirable?)*

or just terrified for themselves?

But this is about seeing something good in every situation,

with a sense of the ridiculous and of ambivalence...

(music from Act 10 Radio Fun & Chemo Comedy)

You survive, yet there's a surprise awaiting – *(sigh then smile)*

That's life! *(music from Act 12 Postlude Bouquets)*

STRIP 1⁴⁷

(with words appearing with Chorus chanting)

What fun! But wait!

Who's this – approaching?

Oooooo! Noted killjoy –

Dressed to kill, and thrill, in white

Oooooo – chill!

Hold on to your crucifixes!

Dr Whoooooooo?

It's Mr Dracula,

Even worse than Dr Dracula –

Heroine:

Mister means surgeon, it means an operation!

All: Groan!

STRIP 2

See next, Act 2:

MISTER DRACULA, A MAN WTH NO NAME?!

The heroine's first hospital appointment for 'investigations' –
in her fevered imagination

the masked surgeon becomes a weird mix of devil and movie star.

Quben for Act 1 ends

⁴⁷ STRIP: Computer graphic and text looking like the conversation/thought bubbles used in comics at the end of an act. See 4.3.1(v), p.192.

5.1.2 Production ideas for Act 1 A KALEIDOSCOPIC PRELUDE

Music: Act 1 is like the exposition – as in sonata form. Original music is submitted in 5.1.3 *Complementary Materials*: the soprano part and full score provide thematic material that can be used for writing an exposition, development and recapitulation for this act or for later acts.

Visually and musically this act can also be like the twelve pieces of a kaleidoscope, using materials from other sections as suggested at the end of Act 1 Quben '**Here comes the trailer!**' (p.219) to form an exposition of the entire work: cut an image or images from each of the 12 acts as a wedge of a kaleidoscopic pattern for visual variations.

Dance: 'Kaleidoscopic' in the title of this section suggests a constantly changing pattern or sequence of objects or elements. This can be a dance of dancers moving in a kaleidoscope of colour. This can also be image choreography of the titles of all twelve sections, which can be achieved by using software for film/video titles. AV1 *Ha Ha Ha* in 'Audio/Video Folder' (notes p.429) is an example of choreography of the words, and another example is the music video *You Are Not Alone* of Act 11 (AV4, notes p.430), which has a section of choreography of words.

5.1.3 Complementary materials for Act 1 A KALEIDOSCOPIC PRELUDE

(i) ORIGINAL MUSIC ⁴⁸

Three Times No Less (pp. 224-229), aria for soprano, flute, B♭ clarinet (or trumpet), violin 1, violin 2, viola & cello. An attraction in the Cantonese opera of my childhood was the 'Theme Song 主题曲', which is similar to an aria and sung by a lead performer. In Chapter 3 *Cantonese Opera* and in various sections of Chapter 4 *My Cross-Cultural Combined Arts Prototype*, I have explained that the essence of the music of Cantonese opera is the singer's melody, and that there is freedom in

⁴⁸ See Chapter 4 Part 3 *Explanation of my prototype*: 4.3.3(i) *Music*, pp. 196-197.

rendition and arrangement of the song. I therefore present the soprano part on its own to be used for song arrangement, followed by the full score of my own rendition but with few expression or performance indications to allow for free interpretation. The soprano part and the full score follow at the end of Act One. Instrumental parts according to the concepts of Cantonese opera can be substituted by other instruments and freely rearranged. All these points apply equally to original music submitted for each of the twelve acts.

The melody for the soprano came from writing down by ear the melodic shape – pitch only – of a short tune from the 2nd Act of the 1984 version Cantonese opera *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* 刁蛮公主戇驸马⁴⁹ (AV25), which was then used as raw material and modified to suit the following text from *Heroine's Song* of my Quben (p.216):

*I saw this woman at my friend's
in a hell of a state –
the lump, suspicious,
perhaps, pernicious –
and my heart went out to her
for I had been there myself
in terror so private and personal,
three times, no less.
But each time I came back.
So, calmly, I told her
"I had cancer three times." –
in one short simple sentence.
She looked at me,
and all was calm.*

(ii) ELECTRO-ACOUSTICS (in enclosed Audio/Video Folder – see 4.3.3(ii) p.197)

AV5a, 5b & 5c (notes p.430): Three tracks of electro-acoustically treated rehearsal recordings of the above mentioned soprano aria *Three Times No Less*, with added treated percussion sounds taken from the 1984 version Cantonese opera *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* 刁蛮公主戇驸马 (AV23 & AV25). This material can be used to experiment with surround sound, and as a basis for further treatments. Selected sections can be used as background music when performing any part of the text. A suggestion for using this material as electro-acoustic music performance is to play

⁴⁹ See Chapter 3 *Cantonese opera* for information of *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* (p.96), AV23 (notes: p.435) and AV25 (notes: p.436).

back and boost AV5a from a speaker on centre stage, while AV5b and AV5c are played back from speakers at L and R respectively for stereo sound; or with live soprano performing at centre stage, play the live soprano's track, AV5a, 5b and 5c from speakers at four corners of the venue respectively, with real time control of all four channels.

(iii) VIDEOS (in enclosed Audio/Video Folder)

(a) Video *Ha Ha Ha* (AV1, notes p.429)

A short example of choreographing words – here, using 'Ha Ha Ha' – for laughter in the Quben.

(b) Music video *Three Times No Less* (AV3, notes p.429)

This music video (4:38) is a short example of using the Quben for Internet performance, using recordings of staff notated music, electro-acoustics and materials from Cantonese opera. Images of lotuses are from Canton and taken by Jinming 今明⁵⁰ – a photographer specializing in Cantonese opera performance. N.B. The chosen photo at the end of *Three Times No Less* shows a type of martial art performance that is a specialty of Cantonese opera (see AV22 & notes p.435).

Music score of the soprano part (1 page) and the full score (5 pages) of *Three Time No Less* follow:

⁵⁰ Jinming 今明, his numerous photos can be seen at: <http://www.009y.com/forum-17-1.html>

Soprano part. Words: p.216

Soprano Solo

Three Times No Less : Sop Aria

Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor Act 1

words: Ho Wai-On & Mike Greenhough

Ho Wai-On

♩ = 56

I saw this wo-man at my friend's, in a hell of a state: the

lump sus-pi-cious, per-haps per-ni-cious, and my heart went out to her,

my heart went out to her, my heart went out to her, Ah

for I have been there my-self, in ter-ror so-pri-vate and per-son-al, three times

no-less, three times no-less. But each time I came back, each

time I came back, I ah came back. Ah

So calm-ly I told her "I had can cer three times."

In one short sim-ple sen-tence. She looked at me, and all was

calm, and all was calm, and all was

calm. Ah

Full score

A Kaleidoscopic Prelude : Sop Aria

Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor Act 1

words: Ho Wai-On & Mike Greenhough

Ho Wai-On

$\text{♩} = 56$

Flute *mf*

Clarinet in B \flat *mf*

Soprano Solo $\text{♩} = 56$ I saw this wo-man at my friend's, in a hell of a

Violin 1 *p* *mp*

Violin 2 *p*

Viola *p*

Violoncello *p*

4

Fl. *p*

Cl. *p*

S. Solo *p* state: the lump sus-pi-cious, per-haps per-ni-cious, and my heart went out to her,

Vln. 1 *p*

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

2

Ho Wai-On A Kaleidoscopic Prelude : Sop Aria

8

Fl.

Cl.

S. Solo

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

mp

sul G

mp

p

my heart____went out to her, my heart went out to her, Ah____



12

Fl.

Cl.

S. Solo

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

mp

p

— for I have been there____ my- self, in ter-ror_ so_ pri- vate and

Ho Wai-On A Kaleidoscopic Prelude : Sop Aria

3

16

Fl.

Cl.

S. Solo

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

per-son-al, three times no_less, three times no_less. But each time I came back, sul D

21

Fl.

Cl.

S. Solo

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

each time I came back, I_ ah_____ came_ back. Ah

mp

4

Ho Wai-On A Kaleidoscopic Prelude : Sop Aria

26

Fl.

Cl.

S. Solo

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

So calm-ly I told her "I had can- cer. three times."

sul D



31

Fl.

Cl.

S. Solo

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

In one short sim-ple sen- tence.

mp

p

Ho Wai-On A Kaleidoscopic Prelude : Sop Aria

5

35

Fl.

Cl.

S. Solo

She looked at me, and all___ was calm, and all___ was calm, and all___ was

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

mp *p* *mp*

40

Fl.

Cl.

S. Solo

calm. Ah_____

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

5.2 Act 2: MISTER DRACULA, A MAN WITH NO NAME

DESCRIPTION

Cantonese opera freely combines many art forms, and a portion of the opera can be like a stage play, i.e. acting with speech and movement/action. A male performer often delivers speech in his natural speaking voice, but females are trained to sing and deliver speech in a high-pitched voice so that one never hears their natural speaking voice. This mixture of real and unreal speech can be exploited in the performance of Act 2, which is about what happens in reality and what the Heroine sees (unreal) in her imagination when under the shadow of cancer.

Mentioned in Act 2 – useful for reference, image and ideas

Binary bit, Cantonese film & nowadays new Cantonese opera, Cantonese opera: male and female lead speaking voice/*Sassy Princess Blunt Husband*/speaking aside to the audience, changing the sound of natural speaking voice, Clint Eastwood: *A Man with No Name*/*A Fistful of Dollars*, computer graphics, computer speech, Dante: circle of hell/*Divine Comedy* /Inferno, Dracula & films, echo-loop, film, Freudian, hospital: elevator/operating theatre/trolley/waiting rooms, Internet video, *La Folia*, low budget films, mask, music: varied repetitions of a sung melody, pop song: Gloria Gaynor *I Will Survive*, radio & stage play, real & unreal, Spaghetti Westerns, Solzhenitsyn *Cancer Ward*.

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5.2.2 Production ideas p.237

5.2.3 Complementary materials p.238

(i) Original music: *Dracula* p.239, AV6, notes p.430

Electro-acoustic music with notated materials for instrumental improvisation.

(ii) AV23 (notes p.435):

Sassy Princess Blunt Husband instrumental interlude 刁蛮公主戀驃馬.

5.2.1 The Quben

Act 2

MISTER DRACULA, A MAN WITH NO NAME

SCREEN 1

The Heroine's first hospital appointment for 'investigations' starts with interrogation by an unsympathetic medical technician. Then comes a long wait for the test. In the Heroine's fevered imagination the taciturn surgeon becomes a weird mix of Dracula and the taciturn film star in Spaghetti Westerns.

Heroine's opening speech:

I feel afraid at my first hospital appointment for cancer investigations – waiting to go through medical procedures, and to see *Mister (with fear & emphasis)* – the surgeon.

(An image of Gloria Gaynor singing or other relevant images)

Chorus:

I will survive! I will survive...*(echo-loop)*

(A computer graphic image of Ms Cross or an actress looking annoyed)

Heroine:

That woman who takes some sort of diagnostic photo
was annoyed with me
when I didn't know the answers to some of her questions.
She's bad tempered –
perhaps she had a row with her husband this morning?
And that makes me feel better!
But she should know better –
anyone would be a bit confused
when it is suspected they have cancer!

(Instrumental and/or electro-acoustic music)

Now more waiting, (*emphasize the naming distinction of Mister and Doctor*)

for *Mister* – the surgeon!

O hell! Surgeons only know about one thing!

I'd be less scared to see a *Doctor*.

Chorus:

Waiting rooms! ... (*echo loop*)

Waiting games! ... (*echo loop*)

(*A suitable dark and scary image*)

Heroine:

Trying to find this place and that place

for different medical procedures!

(*Images of an elevator/operating theatre*)

Using the elevator in this large hospital –

large and bright, like an Operating Theatre –

descent into darker and scarier places!

(*An image of Dante's Inferno or relevant images*)

Chorus:

Dante's circles of Hell! ... (*echo loop*)

Circles of Hell! (*echo loop*)

Heroine:

It's my turn to see the surgeon –

waiting all alone,

partially clothed and feeling exposed,

lying on this trolley-like bed, (*an image of a hospital trolley*)

in a tiny cubicle!

(*Instrumental and/or electro-acoustic music*)

Here comes the surgeon –

dark, and with hair styled like Count Dracula.

He does not smile, but is taciturn and monosyllabic.

He has no expression on his face.

(The face of the surgeon is cut to an image of Dracula. Ideally, the male lead as the surgeon is in his thirties, tall, dark and handsome. There is a Freudian element behind the heroine seeing the consultant surgeon as Dracula and 'A Man With No Name' – there are sexual overtones in the Dracula films, and Clint Eastwood's 'A Man With No Name', and something to do with power. It's partly the large numerical ratio that arises from being a specialist – one consultant can 'take care of' many patients. The common male/female set-up accentuates this. Big imbalance of power.)

Chorus:

The mask that masks both smiles and frowns.

The mask! The mask! ... *(echo loop & image of a mask or masks)*

(Speaking aside to the audience was a common device used by performers in the Cantonese opera of my childhood and added a dimension beyond the confine of the stage and the on-going drama, and for the real and unreal.)

Surgeon: *(thinking – aside to the audience)*

She's afraid, and her eyes are THIS BIG.

(Speaking to the heroine slowly, like Clint Eastwood as A Man With No Name in 'A Fistful of Dollars' in his first Spaghetti Western):

Needle test!

(An image of Clint Eastward in this film or the actor mimics this.)

Heroine: *(thinking – aside to the audience)*

That's all he said when he took a sample from me!

He probes, he invades,

and very likely the decision will lead to an incision.

(Close-up of the wide-eyed heroine)

Surgeon: (*thinking – aside to the audience*)

She would not take her eyes off me

and her eyes are still This Big. (*Close-up of the wide-eyed heroine*)

(*speaks slowly, to the Heroine, like A Man With No Name in 'A Fistful of Dollars'*)

Not that bad, was it?

Chorus:

Behind the mask another one that's not yet desensitized.

Behind the mask!

The mask! ... (*echo loop*)

(*Close-up of the surgeon's face superimposed on or covered by a mask – quick repetitions of this*)

Heroine:

He's left the cubicle –

So much waiting for this man with so few words,

and nurse says, go home and wait!

Chorus:

Waiting games! Waiting games! ... (*echo loop*)

Heroine:

Waiting rooms, waiting games.

We wait in line for the medical circus.

I feel like hell in this hospital!

(*Image of Dante's Hell*)

Chorus:

Dante's Circles of Hell! Circles of Hell! ... (*echo loop*)

Heroine: (*smiling*)

You know, later,

when getting to know this surgeon better,

he's kind,
he's well dressed under his white coat.
Nurses and women patients think he's a good-looker.
Yet to me, he was as attractive as Dracula!
When I was under the shadow of cancer.

Male lead: *(the surgeon in everyday clothing)*

You know, when Solzhenitsyn was in the hospital for the same,
only when he began to win the battle
did he notice nurses were attractive!

Chorus:

Ha ha ha ha ha! ... (echo loop)

Heroine:

Well, at least, I am a woman –
It seems to affect men more when they lose their libido in this battle –
Some male thing!

Chorus:

Ha ha ha ha ha! ... (echo loop)

All:

Hopes and fears at unpredictable, stressful times –
Waiting game –
Fear of waiting for diagnosis –
Malignant or benign?
Surgeon Mr Nasty or surgeon Mr Nice, Nice, Nice?
Bad medical team or good team?
Tails you lose and heads you win –
ultimately, death or life?
Life, life, life... (echo loop)

Chorus: (*computer-like speech*)

This binary division

is at the heart of the fear of waiting for diagnosis.

A single, literal bit as in computing – binary digit of information,

(*human speech*): We tell you this,

because the heroine also uses the computer for her music creation.

Ha ha ha ha ha! (*echo loop*)

Ah, she sees specialist, consultant as Dracula.

Because she's on his territory, in his den or castle.

He has power

and she has no mirrors, crosses, and garlic,

and daytime is like night.

She feels helpless –

this big imbalance of power!

Who is that masked man?

The man with no name,

Namelessness of doctor!

Dr Who!? O no, no,

Dr No!? O no no,

not a doctor, much worse,

He's a Mister, a surgeon!

Namelessness of disease,

Anonymity, like spies,

Dare not speak its name –

The name we all fear!

SCREEN 2

Heroine's stays in hospital – like being on a production line,

yet there is human failing that causes unnecessary suffering.

See next, Act 3:

REVOLVING CLOCKWORK FIGURES

STRIP

What fun!

Tick Tock Tick Tock

Quben for Act 2 ends**5.2.2 Production ideas for Act 2 MISTER DRACULA, A MAN WITH NO NAME**

When facing dwindling demand for full-scale traditional stage performances in Hong Kong in the 1950's, performers of the Cantonese opera ventured into popular low-budget Cantonese films. To adapt to the medium, traditional stylized make-up, costumes and movements were modified and simplified. Performance became more naturalistic with less singing and more dialogue, with male as well as female performers delivering dialogues in their natural speaking voices. Film devices and effects were employed to enhance the drama, especially for those with a supernatural theme. Performers also appeared in popular films with a contemporary storyline and dress, but with opportunities to show off their singing, acting and other skills. Act 2 Quben has film influence, and is suitable to be realized as a low budget film or video for the Internet.

Another simple way to use Act 2 Quben is to present it as a radio play or a stage play with music and sound effects, preferably to deliver speech in both natural and unnatural speaking voices for dramatic effect. If this is to be a stage play, perhaps one could explore the use of speaking 'aside to the audience' – a common device in Cantonese opera for the real and unreal, which is what this act is about.

ELECTRO-ACOUSTICS: To produce 'echo loop' and sounds mentioned in Act 2 Quben that cannot be produced using acoustic instruments, and explore devices for changing the sound of the natural speaking voice – live or recorded (AV16 & notes p.432 for Act 11 re treating a fragment of AV15, can serve as an example).

GRAPHICS: Use relevant images as suggested in Act Two Quben (e.g., Miss Cross, elevator, masks...).

5.2.3 Complementary materials for Act 2 *MISTER DRACULA, A MAN WITH NO NAME*

ORIGINAL MUSIC

Dracula: This consists of electro-acoustic music **AV6** lasting 8:18 (see below), preferably to be played softly as a background for instrumental improvisation using materials provided in the score of two pages (pp. 239-240, sections A-F).

Electro-acoustics AV6 (notes p.430): This can be used in sections and modified, and may be controlled with a mixer during performance. It consists of modified repetitions of materials similar to those of the notated score. The music of Mr Dracula is like bats – high frequency sound waves that bounce back, but of course not ultrasonic like real bats. In reality the repeated high frequency is more like birdsong – the sound of the Cantonese language is often described as being like birds, and Cantonese opera female singing sounds a bit like that too. The music is punctuated by sounds like sonar/submarine – sounds that, like bats, also bounce back.

Notated score: Sections **A-F** (at the end of this act) are materials for instrumental improvisation with electro-acoustics – to be used freely like the existing modes/tunes of Cantonese opera that are freely re-created in performance, whether it is the notes or rhythm that are preserved. It is best to get the idea of how to play this from listening to the electro-acoustics, which consist of varied repetitions similar to the written materials – e.g. **AV 6** circa 0:57 the high frequency bird-like sound as frequent repetition is related to the first phrase of Section **B**; and circa 3:08 is a section of jerky sequential short phrases of detached notes related to Section **C**.

ALTERNATIVE MUSIC

The music for this act is for short and simple instrumental interlude of varied repetitions. In Cantonese opera, instrumental accompaniment often repeats (though not necessarily identically) a portion of a sung melodic phrase, and sometimes functions like an echo. When a performer is performing stylized movements or dialogue without singing for a long duration, instrumental music accompanies what is going on. This music usually takes the form of varied repetitions of a pleasant tune particularly suited for accompanying the movement. **AV23** (notes p.435) is the

instrumental music in Act 4 of the 1984 Cantonese opera *Sassy Princess Blunt*

Husband 刁蛮公主戇驸马. These varied repetitions remind me of the charm of **La**

Folia, which can be used as an inspiration to marry up melodic fragments from this Cantonese opera example as alternative music for Act 2 of my Quben.

Music score of sections A-F materials for *Dracula* instrumental improvisation (2 pages):





5.3 Act 3: **REVOLVING CLOCKWORK FIGURES**

DESCRIPTION

This act is about CONTRAST such as the contrast between clockwork efficiency and human error, and it features an attempt to introduce quasi 12-tone music influenced by the particular sound of Cantonese language and melody.

Mentioned in Act 3 – useful for reference, image and ideas

Cantonese language and melody, Cantonese opera: *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* 刁蛮公主戇驸马, clock face, clockwork figures, contemporary Classical music and 12-tone music, contrast, 4/4 & 6/8, harmony, Kodaly: *Viennese Musical Clock/Harry Janos, Oh Susannah* (Stephen Foster), Schönberg: *Moses und Aron/Pierrot Lunaire*, Stravinsky *Oedipus Rex*, regional characteristics, Miklos Szinetar, well-tempered.

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5.3.3 Complementary materials p.246

(i) Original music pp. 250-259

Revolving Clockwork Figures for soprano, SATB choir, flute, B flat clarinet, trumpet in C, keyboard, steel pan, violin 1 & 2, viola and cello.

(ii) **Electro-acoustics:** midi playback of the above (**AV7**, notes p.431)

(iii) **AV26 a & b:** Cantonesse opera excerpts (notes p.436)

5.3.1 The Quben

Act 3

REVOLVING CLOCKWORK FIGURES

SCREEN 1

Heroine's stays in hospital – like going through a production line, yet there is human failing that causes unnecessary suffering.

Heroine's opening speech:

During my long battle with cancer, I was in and out of many hospitals for this and that.
Let's see how I can entertain you with my experience – *(with an enigmatic smile)* –
and there's a message too – *(with gesture)*

Now the music begins:

(‘Tick Tock’ instrumental music accompanying the following or as brief interludes)

Chorus:

Time for your pill.
Time for your blood test.
Time for your drip.
Time to get undressed...

Heroine:

Time to undress!
Into this gown that splits at the back
and does not cover your behind!

Chorus:

Convenient for nurses and doctors
at the expense of patients' dignity.

Heroine:

Ah! That clever woman has learnt to walk
holding the splits at the back of her gown together.

Male lead:

You should be glad you were not put into a mixed ward wearing this,
and surrounded by men wearing all-front-but-no-back gowns.

Heroine:

They take your blood, your clothes, your dignity
and give you in return –
pills and jabs and skimpy gowns.
Some deal!

Chorus:

No time to be ill.
No time to be depressed.
No time to be still.
No time for a rest.
Tubes, tests, tablets –
tabs, jabs, tabs, jabs.
Tick! Tock! Tick! Tock!

Heroine:

Amidst routines that seem reassuring,
there is human failing:
This nurse ticks all the wrong blood tests.
Once the blood is put in the wrong tube,
it is wasted,
and I have to go through all this hell again!

Chorus:

Any human failing

may lead to unnecessary suffering.

Male lead:

At such a traumatic time,
no time to complain.

Heroine:

All those unnecessary sufferings
caused by human failings.
When one has cancer,
one still needs to think.

When clockwork can go wrong –
not so much the consultant,
but the lower ranks,
one cannot leave everything in the hand of others.
For self-preservation and survival
I must think and be alert.
No time to die,
But be alive!

SCREEN 2

The Heroine had many operations.
So how did she make fun out of this?
Go see Act 4:

OPERATION BLIND DATE

STRIP

Ouch! Ouch! Operations!
Joking about an operation!
You must be joking!

Act 3 Quben ends

5.3.2 Production ideas for Act 3 *REVOLVING CLOCKWORK FIGURES*

When staging this section, it might be best to explore and emphasize elements of CONTRAST: clockwork efficiency and human error, order and chaos, human and machine, consonance and dissonance, and also to explore regional characteristics. For more about this see 5.3.3(i) *Original Music* (p.246).

The Chinese government has been enforcing everyone in China to speak Putonghua 普通话 which is standard Chinese based on the Beijing dialect (Mandarin).

Cantonese is a language incomprehensible to Putonghua speakers, with its distinct sound, words and structure; and the spoken (especially colloquial) language is different from the written language that is Putonghua in Cantonese pronunciation. In fact, some Cantonese have invented Cantonese characters and also borrowed some Putonghua characters for sound-purpose to write the spoken Cantonese (see p.76). During my three years of using the Cantonese opera website Red-Boat (紅船粵劇網絡) undertaking research for this project, time and time again I have come across boat-friends (Cantonese opera lovers) expressing their concerns about the gradual loss of their regional culture and young Cantonese not speaking Cantonese correctly or not speaking it at all. Many boat-friends have criticized the state-supported new operas for using dialogues in written rather than spoken Cantonese. When staging or modifying the Quben *Revolving Clockwork Figures*, it might be a good idea to introduce elements of one's own regional culture, such as music and dance.

Music:

For those who would like to write music for the Quben *Revolving Clockwork Figures*, it might be good to write mechanical music in 4/4 for the movements of clockwork figures (which is standard in Cantonese opera), in contrast with 6/8 for the singing, as I feel compound time is good for the sound of English. Perhaps one can use more conventional harmony for the Chorus in contrast with quasi 12-tone music for the male and female leads. Percussive 'Tick Tock' instrumental music would be good for this section too. The chorus sections for 'Tick Tock' in the original music that I have submitted in 5.3.3 can be used as material and expanded into interludes.

Visual ideas:

(i) Use images of hours on the clock-face.

(ii) Use images of the number 12, and a cycle of tone rows.

(iii) Use images of those large clocks high up in grand buildings, with clockwork figures moving mechanically to music before chiming – such as those in Vienna, or London's Fortnum & Mason and Swiss Centre.

(iv) Use relevant or similar images as suggested in the Quben *Revolving Clockwork Figures*.

Staging ideas:

(i) Watch staged performances of *Pierrot Lunaire* for inspiration. A number of these are available on YouTube.

(ii) Watch the film version of Kodaly's *Hary Janos* for inspiration:

There is a strong folk element as well as a sense of humour that is in sympathy with this project. There are two film versions: 1941 in B/W, and 1965 in colour directed by Miklos Szinetar – excerpts are available on YouTube.

(iii) Create an interpolation of animation of clockwork figures and actors/singers performing.

5.3.3 Complementary materials for Act 3 *REVOLVING CLOCKWORK FIGURES***Suggested alternative music**

Schoenberg *Pierrot Lunaire*

Kodaly *Viennese Musical Clock* from *Hary Janos Suite*

(i) ORIGINAL MUSIC

Revolving Clockwork Figures (pp. 250-259)

In traditional Cantonese opera, the melodies often have big leaps. This might be due to the influence of the sound of Cantonese – a language of angular sounds – and these melodies may only sound good to Cantonese ears. This may be one reason

why Chinese traditional opera varies according to dialect and may not sound good to a person who cannot speak that dialect. Many Chinese in the West and the US are Cantonese. I have come across Westerners and Americans making fun of the Cantonese language (often in films) by mimicking its sound; to my ears, people who do not know 12-tone music make similar sounds when they mimic 12-tone music. One reason for 12-tone music being difficult to sing is the awkward leaps in the melody. For this act I have written some quasi 12-tone tunes ('quasi' as I do not have an aptitude for the real thing) modelled on Cantonese opera melodies that I hope are easy on the ear. 12-tone music is important in contemporary Classical music. Those who have expertise or would like to venture into this area are welcome to use the Quben *Revolving Clockwork Figures* for creating 12-tone music.

Cantonese opera has attempted to cantonize 粤化 Western tunes by substituting Western harmony and well-tempered pitch with the unique sound of Cantonese language and singing style. **AV26** a & b (notes p.436) are excerpts of a live performance as an example of a librettist wrote new lyrics for *Oh! Susanna* by Stephen Foster (1826-1864) in Act 4 of the 1990 version *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* 刁蛮公主戇驸马⁵¹ – the tune is first sung by the eunuch out of tune in an effeminate way to show the princess what to say in order to win back her husband, then the princess sings the same tune (what the eunuch taught her) in a style that is very Cantonese. These excerpts also demonstrate Cantonese opera is only interested in the tune and not the harmony that comes with it. This Singapore production is of uneven standard, but the two leads are both da-lao-quans 大老倌 (superstar lead performers): the female lead Lu *Qiu-Ping* 卢秋萍 is a Macau native trained in Canton and the male lead as the husband is Wang *Fan-Shi* 王凡石 from Canton but does not sing in these excerpts.

There have been various attempts to incorporate into Cantonese opera other western features such as elementary harmony and counterpoint or even the use of a symphony orchestra, but I am not aware that Cantonese opera has ever ventured into 12-tone music. This might be due to the fact that most potential audience members are unable to sing 12-tone vocal music, let alone sing that tune from memory for enjoyment after hearing it during a performance – an important element in the popularity of Cantonese opera.

⁵¹ See Chapter 3 *Cantonese opera* re Cantonese opera adopting Western elements.

Stravinsky and Schönberg are two influential figures on contemporary Classical music. I studied Stravinsky's neoclassical opera-oratorio *Oedipus Rex* and Schönberg's opera *Moses und Aron* for my MA at Cardiff University as preparatory work for a new creation related to opera that eventually developed into this project. *Oedipus Rex* is easier to sing, memorize and enjoy. That the music is difficult to sing and memorize may be a reason for 12-tone music not reaching the masses. Yet Schönberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* is popular, especially when it is staged. The music I wrote for the Quben *Revolving Clockwork Figures* is quasi 12-tone music (an impression rather than following the rules), bearing in mind the sound of Cantonese language and that the music is intended for enjoyment. Western inspiration on my music for this act includes Schönberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and Kodaly's *Viennese Musical Clock* from *Hary Janos Suite*, and they are suggested alternatives.

The music ***Revolving Clockwork Figures*** is scored for soprano, SATB choir, flute, B \flat clarinet, trumpet in C, keyboard, steel pan, violin 1 & 2, viola and cello. Note the following:

(a) Steel pan is deliberately written disregarding its range for the purpose of playing on an electric keyboard so as to achieve sounds an acoustic instrument cannot play. If this is to be played on a real steel pan, transpose to suit the instrument.

(b) Transpose keyboard part to suit available instrument.

The music is for the following text from the Quben (pp. 242-244):

Chorus:

*Time for your pill.
Time for your blood test.
Time for your drip.
Time to get undressed...*

Heroine:

*Time to undress!
Into this gown that splits at the back
and does not cover your behind!*

Chorus:

*Convenient for nurses and doctors
at the expense of patients' dignity.*

Heroine:

*They take your blood, your clothes, your dignity
and give you in return –
pills and jabs and skimpy gowns.
Some deal!*

Chorus:

*No time to be ill.
No time to be depressed.
No time to be still.*

Heroine:

*Amidst routines that seem reassuring,
there is human failing.*

Chorus:

*Any human failing
may lead to unnecessary suffering.*

Male lead:

*At such a traumatic time,
no time to complain.*

Heroine:

*All those unnecessary sufferings
caused by human failings...
When one has cancer,
one still needs to think.
When clockwork can go wrong –
I must think.
No time to die,
But be alive!*

Chorus:

Tick! Tock! Tick! Tock!

(ii) AV7 (notes p.431): Midi playback of *Revolving Clockwork Figures*

This can be used as music for film/video or to experiment with electro-acoustics.

(iii) AV26 a & b (notes p.436): Cantonese opera excerpt examples for p.247 2nd para.

The soprano part (2 pages) and the full score (8 pages) of *Revolving Clockwork Figures* follow:

Words: pp. 242-244

Soprano Solo

Revolving Clockwork Figures

Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor Act 3

Ho Wai-On

words: Ho Wai-On & Mike Greenhough

The musical score is written for Soprano Solo in 4/4 time, featuring a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The score consists of ten staves of music, with lyrics written below the notes. The lyrics are in English and Chinese. The score includes various musical notations such as treble clefs, key signatures, time signatures, and lyrics. The lyrics are: "Time to— un dressed in-to this gown that splits at the back and does not cov-er your be- hind! At the ex - pence— of pa tient's dig-ni- ty! They take your blood, they take— your— clothes, your dig - ni - ty, your dig - ni - ty ee— A-mist rou - tines_ that seems re-a - su- ring, there is hu-man fail - ing."

15 12

28

Time to— un dressed in-to this gown that splits at the back and does not

33

cov-er your be- hind! At the ex -

39

pence— of pa tient's dig-ni- ty!

45

They take your blood, they take— your— clothes, your

49

dig - ni - ty, your dig - ni - ty ee—

52

13 2

A-mist rou -

68

2

tines_ that seems re-a - su- ring, there is hu-man fail - ing.

73

2

2

Soprano Solo

Ho Wai-On Act 3 Revolving Clockwork Figur

75



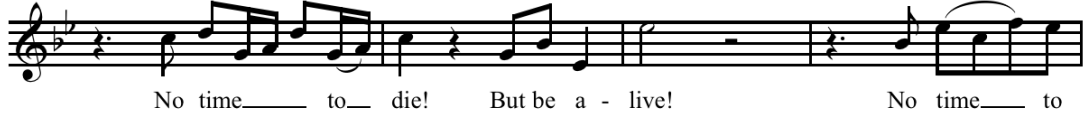
78



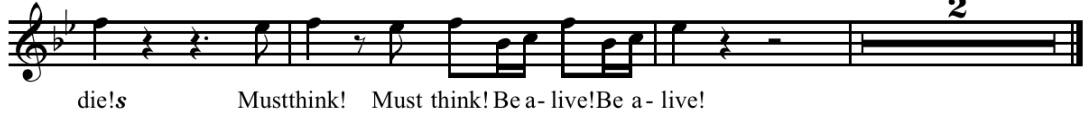
82



89



93



See notes (a) & (b), p.248

Revolving Clockwork Figures

Ho Wai-On

Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor Act 3

words: Ho Wai-On & Mike Greenhough

Musical score for 'Revolving Clockwork Figures' (Measures 1-7). The score is for Act 3 of 'Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor'. The instruments listed are Flute, Clarinet in B♭, Trumpet in C, Keyboard (with a 'Tubular Bells' annotation), Steel pan, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The music features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and dynamic markings like 'f' (forte).

Musical score for 'Revolving Clockwork Figures' (Measures 8-15). The score continues from the previous page. The instruments listed are Fl. (Flute), Cl. (Clarinet in B♭), C Tpt. (Trumpet in C), Tub. B. (Tubular Bells), S.p. (Steel pan), Vln. 1 (Violin 1), Vln. 2 (Violin 2), Vla. (Viola), and Vc. (Violoncello). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4. The music continues with the same rhythmic pattern, featuring eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests and dynamic markings like 'f' (forte).

2

Ho Wai-On Act 3 Revolving Clockwork Figurd

16

S. Time for your pill. Time for your blood test.

A. Tick tock tick tock Tick tock tick tock Tick tock tick tock

T. Time for your pill. Time for your bloos test.

B. Tick tock tick tock Tick tock tick tock Tick tock tick tock

Tub. B.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

=

22

S. Time for your drip. Time to get un - dressed.

A. Tick tock tick tock tick tock tick tock tick tock tick tock

T. Time for your drip. Time to get un - dressed.

B. Tick tock tick tock tick tock tick tock tick tock tick tock

Tub. B.

S.p.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Ho Wai-On Act 3 Revolving Clockwork Figurd

28

Fl.

Cl.

S. Solo

Time to un- dressed in-to this gown that splits at the back and does not cov-er your be-hind!

Tub. B.

pizz

Vln. 1

pizz

Vln. 2

Vla.

pizz

Vc.

pizz

34

Fl.

Cl.

C Tpt.

S. Solo

S.

Con-ven-ient for nur-ses and doc-tors.

A.

Tick tock tick tock Tick tock tick tock

T.

Con-ven-ient for nur-ses and doc-tors.

B.

Tick tock tick tock Tick tock tick tock

Tub. B.

S.p.

Vln. 1

arco

Vln. 2

arco

Vla.

arco

Vc.

arco

At the ex -

4

Ho Wai-On Act 3 Revolving Clockwork Figur

39

Fl.

Cl.

S. Solo

pence... of pa tient's dig-ni-ty!

S.

Con - ven-ient for nur-ses and doc_tors.

A.

Tick tock tick tock Tick tock tick tock Tick tock tick tock

T.

Con - ven-ient for nur-ses and doc_tors.

B.

Tick tock tick tock Tick tock tick tock Tick tock tick tock

Tub. B.

S.p.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Tubular Bells

45

Fl.

Cl.

C Tpt.

S. Solo

They take your blood, they take your clothes, your dig-ni-ty, your dig-ni-ty ee.

Tub. B.

Piano

Vln. 1

pizz

Vln. 2

pizz

Vla.

pizz

Vc.

pizz

Ho Wai-On Act 3 Revolving Clockwork Figur

51

Fl.

Cl.

C Tpt.

S.

A.

T.

B.

Tub. B.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

No time to be ill. No time to be de -

Tick tock tick tock Tick tock tick tock

pizz

arco

arco

pizz

57

Fl.

Cl.

C Tpt.

S.

A.

T.

B.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

pressed. No time. No time to be still. No time for a rest.

Tick tock tick tock Tick tock tick tock tick tock tick tock tick tock tick tock

pressed. No time. No time for a rest. No time for a rest.

Tick tock tick tock Tick tock tick tock tick tock tick tock tick tock tick tock

6

Ho Wai-On Act 3 Revolving Clockwork Figur

63

Fl.

Cl.

C Tpt.

S. Solo

Tub. B. Tubular Bells Piano

S.p.

Vln. 1 pizz

Vln. 2 pizz

Vla. pizz

Vc. pizz

A-mist rou - tines_ that seems re-a - su-ring, there is

70

Fl.

Cl.

C Tpt.

S. Solo

Tub. B. Tubular Bells Piano or glockenspiel

S.p.

Vln. 1 arco

Vln. 2 pizz

Vla. pizz

Vc. arco

hu-man fail - ing. At such trau-ma-tic time, no time_ to com

Ho Wai-On Act 3 Revolving Clockwork Figurd

77

Fl.

Cl.

C Tpt.

S. Solo

plain. When clock-work can go wrong, when one hsd can- cer, one still-needs to think! One still-needs to think! think! One stillneeds to think!

Tub. B.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.



83

Fl.

Cl.

C Tpt.

S. Solo

I___ must think! No time___ to___ die! But be a -

S.

You must think!

A.

No time to die!

T.

8

You must think! No time to die!

B.

No time to die! No time to die!

Tub. B.

Tubular Bells

S.p.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

8

Ho Wai-On Act 3 Revolving Clockwork Figur

91

Fl.

Cl.

C Tpt.

S. Solo

S.

A.

T.

B.

Tub. B.

S.p.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

live! No time___ to die!s Must think!Must think! Be live! Be a- live!

But be a - live! You___ must think! You must think and be a- live!

But be a - live! You___ must think! You must think and be a- live!

But be a - live! You___ must think! You must think and be a- live!

But be a - live! You___ must think! You must think and be a- live!

5.4 Act 4: OPERATION BLIND DATE

DESCRIPTION:

Quasi-musical. The stars of musicals are, in some ways, like the leads in Cantonese opera – they have charisma, good looks and youth (at least they try to convey this with make-up, costumes and other means). They are good at singing, acting, dancing, gesticulation and movement...

Mentioned in Act Four – useful for reference, image and ideas:

Ad lib/improvisation to involve interaction with audience, combined with Act 6 *Best Cancer to Have*, impersonation, magician, one-act musical, overtones, poking fun, pop music, overture, radio black comedy, short music theatre, slapstick humour, stand-up comedy, unrehearsed performance (like the Cantonese opera of my childhood), Kenneth Williams, zhe-zi-xi 折子戏.

Contents

5.4.1 The Quben p.261

5.4.2 Production ideas p.265

5.4.3 Complementary materials p.266

Original music *Operation Blind Date* for voice and piano (pp. 267-269)

5.4.1 The Quben

Act 4

OPERATION BLIND DATE

SCREEN 1

The Heroine had many operations.

Let's see how she makes fun out of this...

Heroine's opening speech (*mixing speech and singing*)

I don't like any kind of operation –

not even of the mild, cosmetic sort.

(Think) Now how to best exploit this situation?

(Give an impression of "I got it!")

Well, dental treatment, too,

makes me distraught,

(getting animated)

so I said, wheel me to the dental department

while I am still out cold, and fix my teeth –

making the most of the anaesthetic and NHS funds!

(A smile that conveys "wouldn't that be great?" – then "aren't I clever?" – then disappointed)

They refused. Of course!

(Ad lib by any member on stage to poke fun at the current NHS or other shortcomings – this can happen at any other suitable moment in Act 4 as well)

Chorus:

Pre-op, pre-med,

Overture to your op.

Heroine:

Overture has overtones of opening up

An investigative beginning –

Ah, a bit grim!

Surgeon (*smile benignly*):

We have a date at an operating table for two –
by the window.

Heroine:

This is a blind date –

an NHS patient cannot be sure of which surgeon.

But at least please don't be late –

you doctors are so used to being late!

You can't keep time.

You would never make it as musicians!

(It may be a good moment to poke fun at something.)

There is this "Nil by Mouth" sign hung high above my bed.

Nurses/chorus:

Nil by mouth –

nothing but a tiny, tasteless pill, by mouth.

Though you wilt and plead starvation –

it is still, Nil, by Mouth.

Heroine:

I am to be emptied inside out.

What a preparation for this blind date!

Nurses/chorus:

We prepare ourselves – 'scrubbing up'.

You have a pre-med 'cocktail' beforehand.

Heroine:

Not wearing Chanel No 5,
but some potent antiseptic for our date!

Anaesthetist: (*with gestures like a magician*)

I will put you under my spell – anaesthetic.

Nurse: (*with anxiety*)

The patient has already had anaesthetic –
she's nearly unconscious,
but the surgeon is still not here!

Heroine: (*mumbling, worried*)

I am still conscious –
I can hear you!
Where the hell is he, the surgeon, my date?!
Surely he won't be so late,
that I'd come to in the middle of the op?!

Surgeon: (*rushes in, cocksure of himself*)

Eh, dress-code,
I am spick and span, wearing a dashing white suit.

Heroine:

I have a blue gown –
With a fine cut – exposing the part.

Chorus:

What sinister intimacy!
Sinister intimacy!
Intimacy!

Heroine:

No soft lights this date of ours
but blinding bright ones.
When I wake in the morning
Will I have flowers by the bed?

Chorus:

When you wake you will look like an octopus
with tubes like arms, extending from your body –
the aftermath of this intimacy!

Heroine's final speech:

Surprise, surprise!
When I wake
there are flowers from unexpected visitors –
while I was still in a blissful sleep,
a friend has placed photos on my bedside table
for me to see faces that I know when I come to.

SCREEN 2

Some cancer operations make patients feel incomplete!
Some cancer treatments make one feel deficient!

STRIP

What did our Heroine see?
She sees some strange behaviour.
Is she frightened?
Is she... what?
See next Act 5:

STILL DISIRABLE?

Quben for Act 4 ends

5.4.2 Production ideas for Act 4 *OPERATION BLIND DATE*

Staging ideas:

This can be staged as a one-act musical or a short piece of music theatre, or combined with Act 6 *Best Cancer to Have* as a performance in two acts – the first act with more emphasis on singing, the second on dancing (song & dance). Whether performed individually or together, Acts 4 and 6 should include slapstick humour, ad lib, improvisation that involves interaction with the audience, and should poke fun at happenings of the day to amuse the audience – these are some of the characteristics of the Cantonese opera of my childhood that are disappearing or are looked down upon due to the tendency to value well-rehearsed performances.

State supported Cantonese opera copies the model of Western opera house performance, abandoning flexible spontaneity, ad lib, and performers freely stepping out from the drama to speak directly to the audience about any occurrence in the venue in real time and then stepping back into the drama. This tradition is unlikely to be valued or revived in Cantonese opera, and performers have also lost the ability that they had in the past to make the audience laugh out loud, or to make fun of current affairs as I experienced in my childhood. An example of ad lib/unrehearsed performance similar to this might be that of the British comedian Kenneth Williams (1926-1988). Fellow actors recalled that when William's trademark nasal voice induced laughter, Williams could not resist stealing the show by ad libbing, making the audience roll with laughter, leaving the other actors on stage not knowing how to cope with the situation. In Cantonese operas that I saw as a child, seeing the awkwardness of the other actors on stage was part of the fun. Western stand-up comedy also explores the audience's reaction, but stand-up comedy is not about drama and is not often combined with singing dancing and more. I held all of the above in mind when writing *Operation Blind Date*, and would like to see some of these ideas used as inspiration when realizing a performance.

The male lead can take on more than one role, especially if this is to be staged as a radio black comedy, and members of the chorus can also play other parts in the Quben. An actor or an impersonator can easily perform this on stage as a piece of stand-up comedy.

5.4.3 Complementary materials for Act 4 OPERATION BLIND DATE

Original music:

Operation Blind Date for voice and piano

Many years ago, I was intrigued by the mass appeal of pop music and wrote a love song called *To You*. As I have never been partial to music with regular drumbeats, it was a challenge for me and the result did not sound like pop music. As the song for this act is about a date, this is my attempt to write a piece like sheet music of a musical solo number, using materials that resemble drum beats from *To You* as repetitive motifs to support melodic phrases of the following text from the Quben (pp. 261-262, 264):

*Pre-op, pre-med,
Overture to your op.
Nil by mouth –
nothing but a tiny, tasteless pill, by mouth.
Though you wilt and plead starvation –
it is still, Nil, by Mouth.
What sinister intimacy!
No soft lights this date of ours
but blinding bright ones.
When I wake in the morning
will I have flowers by the bed?
When you wake you will look like an octopus
with tubes like arms, extending from your body –
the aftermath of this intimacy!
Surprise, surprise!
When I wake
there are flowers from unexpected visitors –
while I was still in a blissful sleep,
a friend has placed photos on my bedside table
for me to see faces that I know when I come to.*

Alternative music:

This should be a piece of light-hearted ensemble vocal writing supported by pulsating instrumental music. I am sure young people who are into popular music will have no problem using the Quben to make music in this genre.

The music score (3 pages) of *Operation Blind Date* for voice and piano follows:

Words: pp. 261-262, 264

Act 4 Operation Blind Date

Words: Ho Wai-On & Mike Greenhough Ho Wai-On

$\text{♩} = 60 \text{ or slower}$

Voice

Piano

P poco rubato

con ped.

Pre - op, pre- med, o-ver-ture to your op.

5 Nil_ by mouth. No thingbut a ti-ny taste-less pill by mouth. Though you

9 wilt and plead_ sta-va-tion, it is still Nil_ by mouth.

12 What sin-is-ter in-ti-ma-cy! No soft lights_ this day of

2

Ho Wai-On Act 4 Operation Blind Date

15
ours but blind-ing bright ones. When I woke_ in the morn-ing will I have

18
flow ers_by the bed? When you wake_you will look like an oc-to-pus with tubes like

22
arms ex-tend - ing_ from your bo-dy the af-ter- math of this in-ti-ma-cy.

25
Sur - prise! Sur - prise! When I

Ho Wai-On Act 4 Operation Blind Date

3

29

woke there are flow-ers from un-ex - pect-ed vi-si-tors . While I was still in a bliss-ful sleep, a

33

friend has placed pho - tos on my bed - side ta - ble for me to

36

see fac - es that I know when I come to

Hold ped

5.5 Act 5: *STILL DESIRABLE?*

DESCRIPTION:

A section that is good for actors' creative vocal rendition and their interaction with chorus and instrumental music.

Mentioned in Act Five – useful for reference, image and ideas:

Actors creative vocal rendition, actor director, Michael Bogdanov, Richard Burton, chang-qiang (song style) 唱腔, choir, film, narrator, Shakespeare: *Henry V* Act III – *St. Crispin's Day Speech* (Kenneth Branagh - David Giles - David Gwillim - Lawrence Olivier); *Merchant of Venice*; *Pericles Prince of Tyre*, stage play, Stravinsky *Oedipus Rex*, *Trumpet Voluntary* (Jeremiah Clarke), wu-sheng 武生, xiao-sheng 小生.

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(i) Original music: *Still Desirable* pp. 278-284

SATB chorus, trumpet in B flat and organ

(ii) Cantonese opera audio excerpt *Emperor-Daughter-Flower* 帝女花

AV19 (notes p.434)

(iii) Cantonese opera video excerpt *Emperor-Daughter-Flower* 帝女花

AV24 (notes p.435)

5.5.1 The Quben

Act 5

STILL DESIRABLE?

Narration:

The heroine is unprepared for the disturbing and frightening scenes that confront her in the cancer ward, where patients carry the marks of surgery only too clearly. In spite of, or perhaps because of, their now blemished bodies some flirt with the male staff, angling for reassurance that they remain attractive. They compete too for the attention of the most senior surgeon. But is getting the top man so flattering, or does it rather reflect the seriousness of their case?

Heroine's opening speech:

What I saw and experienced when I was first put into a cancer ward deeply affected my subsequent actions and thoughts.

(Instrumental music)

Heroine:

Why was I not warned
before they put me into a cancer ward
with about 20 woman patients?
Many of them had already lost parts of their bodies.
The sight of them frightened me to death!

Chorus:

Medicate me,
Vali-date me!

Heroine:

I saw such a woman patient in this ward

making sexual overtures to a male nurse.

I did not consider this disgraceful,

but felt very sorry for her.

Male lead:

No, you should not have felt sorry for her –

she's brave to have done that.

Chorus:

Medicate me,

Vali-*date* me,

Date me

Please don't hate me

Take me, take me,

Take me as I am!

Heroine:

I saw this woman

being disagreeable

while waiting for her aftercare appointment.

Male lead:

She lost her job as Headmistress before the appointment,

'cause she couldn't cope with cancer aftermath.

Now she works as a receptionist...

She's frustrated and bad tempered.

Heroine:

I did not consider her behaviour disgraceful,

but felt very sorry for her.

Chorus:

Medicate me,

Vali-*date* me,
Keep me
Please don't spurn me.
Take me, take me,
Take me as I am!

Male lead:

Well, 'still desirable?'
is a very important,
and a specific question...

Heroine:

I survived cancer,
but it's not easy to overcome the aftermath –
a general loss of confidence,
a feeling of deficiency...

Chorus:

Still desirable!
Take me, take me!
Take me as I am!

(Instrumental music)

Heroine:

Male consultants come for their rounds
with their entourage.

Male lead:

Women patients,
crave his attention –
One feels the power of the top consultant,
like the sultan in a Harem.

Chorus:

Women patients,
will the best consultant surgeon come to your bed?

Heroine:

And it's the locum who visits my bed –ah!
Because the team decides, wrongly,
that I have only a benign lump.

(Instrumental music)

Heroine's final speech:

Funny thing –
after surviving cancer,
I don't care whether a man finds me desirable or not.
Quite liberating.

SCREEN

Who is the smiling surgeon who drops the bombshell?
Want to see doctors and nurses sing and dance?

STRIP

(Perhaps as rhythmical chanting with simple percussion such as using a small drum.)

Doctors sing!
Nurses dance!
Doctors and nurses sing & dance!
See next Act 6:

BEST CANCER TO HAVE!

Quben for Act 5 ends

5.5.2 Production ideas for Act 5 *STILL DESIRABLE?*

The ideas stem from Stravinsky *Oedipus Rex* and a short passage from Shakespeare's *Henry V*, Act III:

(i) Stravinsky *OEDIPUS REX*

Stravinsky's neo-classical opera-oratorio *Oedipus Rex* was one of the set works for my MA as preparation for a new creation related to opera. This work is often staged as a concert performance with actor/narrator, solo singers, choir, orchestra and conductor, which can be used as a model to expand and develop Act 5 Quben *Still Desirable?* into a performance that involves interaction between actor-singer-chorus-instrumental music.

(ii) Shakespeare *St. Crispin's Day Speech, HENRY V, Act III*

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Cantonese opera has a tradition of adapting Western drama/plays such as Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*. Nowadays audiences who do not like a new Cantonese opera may criticize it for being like a stage play, claiming there is too much spoken dialogue, especially if this is delivered in written Putonghua with Cantonese pronunciation rather than colloquial Cantonese. Drama or stage play is hua-ju 话剧 in Chinese (literally speech drama), and is an introduction from the West in the early twentieth century (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2015)⁵², unlike English drama that has a long tradition culminating in Shakespeare. While I enjoy Cantonese opera, I have not enjoyed the performance of Chinese plays as much as I have enjoyed English plays – I think this might have to do with the language. Chinese language, whether it is in Cantonese or Putonghua, is fix-toned, monosyllabic, and the consonants at the end of a word are not pronounced. In the context of a performance when words are spoken, a performer employs different emotions but cannot employ different tones. In Chinese, changing the tone changes the word – e.g. 'mother 妈' becomes 'horse 马'⁵³. All this rather restricts the natural pitch/rhythmic variation, i.e. the inherent musicality of the spoken language. By contrast in the English language, when one speaks the word 'script' for example, the vowel and consonants of the six letters are all pronounced and one can also use changes of

⁵² Encyclopaedia Britannica is brief and concise and in English. For a more detailed reference in Chinese see Baidu 百度 '话剧'.

⁵³ See Chapter 3 *Cantonese opera* re the nine tones of Cantonese (p.76).

tone – or intonation – to express a polite or a sarcastic mood 'good morning' (hinting you are late). The re-creation of existing melodies in Cantonese opera specifically for an individual's singing style, called 'chang-qiang' 唱腔 (literally sing style, but 'song style' is more appropriate, see 3.2.2, p.89), is in my opinion somewhat akin to Shakespearean actors' very individual vocal rendition of the text.

I have watched and listened to various versions of *St. Crispin's Day Speech (Henry V)* on YouTube, and the comments on the actors are akin to the comments on 'chang-qiang' 唱腔 of lead performers from Cantonese opera audiences. A video called *Four Versions of the St. Crispin's Day Speech from Henry V* (YouTube, no longer available), I remember well as it depicts four very different renditions:

- (a) Lawrence Olivier, *Henry V* (1944) directed by himself
- (b) David Gwillim, *Henry V* (1979) directed by David Giles
- (c) Michael Pennington, *Henry V* (1989) directed by Michael Bogdanov
- (d) Kenneth Branagh, *Henry V* (1989) directed by himself

Both Lawrence Olivier and Kenneth Branagh also directed, and this is akin to the male and female leads of the Cantonese opera of my childhood who were often the main force in realizing a new version of a Cantonese opera.

It is also of interest to listen to *Richard Burton- Henry V St. Crispin's Day Speech* on YouTube (stevewatto 2011). In Cantonese opera, xiao-sheng 小生: male leads who specialize in romantic roles, and wu-sheng 武生: male leads who specialize in martial roles, have different vocal/singing styles⁵⁴. When I was a student at the Chinese University of Hong Kong studying Chinese and English Language and Literature (1.1.3, p.23), an English tutor with knowledge of Chinese culture told me that in his opinion, the vocal style of Laurence Olivier is xiao-sheng 小生, whilst Richard Burton is wu-sheng 武生.

Some of Shakespeare's plays use a narrator or a chorus to describe the plot, such as in *HENRY V* where the chorus opens each act, and in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* (part written by Shakespeare) a narrator comments on the action on stage. I suggest that

⁵⁴ Basically the singing of xiao-sheng is of higher tessitura, finer and florid; and wu-sheng is of lower tessitura, coarser and macho.

one way to perform or develop the Act 5 Quben *Still Desirable?* is an actor-based staging with simple music and chorus – an approach quite common in English theatre – and to employ interaction between actors (speech/music), chorus (music/speech), and instrumental music.

5.5.3 Complementary materials for Act 5 *Still Desirable?*

ORIGINAL MUSIC:

The Quben for Act 5 reminded me of the well-known *Trumpet Voluntary* by Jeremiah Clarke. This act is about the courage of cancer survivors facing the reality of their now blemished bodies, and it suggests the celebration of a new approach to human relationships. It seems apt to write music inspired by the *Trumpet Voluntary* since it is popular as wedding music. In the YouTube example *Richard Burton- Henry V St. Crispin's Day Speech* mentioned above, there is music with trumpet.

The music is to be scored for SATB chorus, trumpet in B flat and organ for the following text from Act 5 Quben (p.272):

Chorus:
Medicate me,
Vali-date me,
Date me,
Take me, take me!
Take me as I am!

The melody of the unusual wedding scene in the famous Cantonese opera *Emperor-Daughter-Flower* 帝女花 inspired the trumpet part of *Still Desirable*. **AV19** (notes p.434) and **AV24** (notes p.435) are the audio recording and video recording respectively (for more info see Chapter 6 *Conclusions*, 6.1.2(iii), p.402)

Alternative music:

Jeremiah Clarke *Trumpet Voluntary* ⁵⁵

AV19: *Emperor-Daughter-Flower* 任白帝女花

The full score (7 pages) of *Still Desirable* follows:

⁵⁵ Included in Desmond Ratcliffe's *Wedding Album* selected pieces for organ. See REFERENCE.

Words: p.272

Act 5, Still Desirable

Ho Wai-On

Maestoso

Trumpet in B \flat

Choir

Maestoso

Organ

Pedals



6

Tpt.

Choir

Org.

Ped.

Med-i -cate— me,



2

Ho Wai-On Still Desirable

10

Tpt.

Choir

Val - i date__ me, Take me, Take me, Take me as I am.

Org.

Ped.

14

Tpt.

Choir

Org.

Ped.

Ho Wai-On Still Desirable

3

18

Tpt.

Choir

Org.

Ped.

Med-i- cate_me, Val-i- date_me, Med-i- cate_me, Take me, Take me as I am.

Med-i-cate me, Val-i-date me, Take me, Take me, Take me as I am.

23

Tpt.

Choir

Org.

Ped.

Med-i- cate_me, Val-i date_me, Med-i- cate_me Take me

Med-i-cate me, Take me as I am. Take me as I am. Med-i-cate me,

4

Ho Wai-On Still Desirable

27

Tpt.

Choir

Org.

Ped.

Take me as I am.

Take me as I am.

31

Tpt.

Choir

Org.

Ped.

Med-i cate - me, Val-i- date_ me, med - i- cate_ me,

Val-i-date me, Val - i-date me,

Ho Wai-On Still Desirable

5

35

Tpt.

Choir

Org.

Ped.

Take me, Take me as I am. Med - di cate— me,
Take me as I am. Val - i - date me,

38

Tpt.

Choir

Org.

Ped.

Val - i - date— me, Med - i - cate— me, Take me, Take me as I am.
Take me, Take me, Take me as I am. Take me as I am.

6

Ho Wai-On Still Desirable

42

Tpt.

Choir

Med - i cate__ me, Val - i - date__ me, Med - i - cate__ me,

Val - i - date me, Take me,

Org.

Ped.

45

Tpt.

Choir

Take me, Take me as I am. Take me as I am. Med di - cate me,

Take me, Take me as I am. Take me as I

Org.

Ped.

Ho Wai-On Still Desirable

7

50

Tpt.

Choir

Org.

Ped.

Val - i - date me, Take me as I am.

5.6: Act 6 THE BEST CANCER TO HAVE!

DESCRIPTION:

This section can be paired with the Act 4 *Operation Blind Date* (see Act 4, 5.4.2, p.265) but is more film/video oriented, with more emphasis on comical songs and dances, and 'ASIDE TO AUDIENCE'. Cantonese opera performers often speak or sing aside to the audience: A performer in Ming Dynasty costume (the standard) with long wide sleeves reaching to the ground would raise one arm, so that it looks as if the sleeve is blocking whoever else is on the stage and only the audience can hear what he/she says or sings, and this is one of the many gestures with meaning that the audience understand. This device might be used for capturing the attention of an unruly, unsophisticated audience so that they behave better during a performance: to prevent them from getting up to go to the toilet, buying all sorts of food that cannot be eaten quietly from those who sell it during a performance, walking to near downstage where there is usually a temporary stall that sells theatrical swords and other props to buy as toys for their children (performers probably rely a little on this to earn a crust), and at least to be quieter not to converse loudly. It is natural for one to listen when being addressed directly, especially if that person is your favourite performer. One can usually tell when the lead is on stage by how quiet the audience is.

Mentioned in Act 6 – useful for reference, image and ideas:

A-Man-with-No-Name, aside to audience, ballroom dancing, *Can-Can* (Offenbach), *Carmina Burana* (Carl Orff), comedian, film/video, Latin chant, mime, props for comical effect, red boat, song-and-dance routine, surgical uniform, theremin, unreal and tipsy world.

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for keyboard (use xylophone sound) pp. 293-294

(ii) Original music: **Song of Buddha** SATB choir pp. 295-299

(iii) **AV17** (notes p.433)

Fong Yim-Fun, **Glamorous Sun Red Phoenix** 芳艳芬艳阳丹凤

5.6.1 The Quben

Act 6

THE BEST CANCER TO HAVE!

Narration:

To cover up possible misjudgements by his colleagues, the consultant desperately tries to make light of the heroine's predicament. Medical staff launch into a distracting song-and-dance routine, but if they convince anyone it's only themselves.

SCREEN 1 (*with lighthearted music*)

Smiling surgeon drops the bombshell !!!

Narration:

Believing her stay in hospital had been to remove what was a benign lump, the heroine went to her follow-up appointment totally unprepared for the devastating news!

In the Consultant's Room

The Surgeon can be played in two different ways – according to the availability of actor/singer:

1. As the continuation of Mister Dracula in Act 2, tall dark and handsome, the taciturn A-Man-With-No-Name.

2. A comedian

As this section has the 'aside to audience' feature, if this is to be a film or video, it might be good to film at least part of it live with an audience – anyone you can get hold of – might be quite interesting for the performers to perform in front of an unruly audience; or use actors as an unruly audience.

(Heroine walks into the Consultant's room, quite relaxed)

Heroine: (*aside to audience*) I assume this to be a routine appointment – probably just to tell me the benign lump has been removed successfully, as everyone here assured me that it was definitely not cancer.

(Heroine sits down in front of the Consultant Surgeon)

Consultant Surgeon:

*(1. Very hesitatingly, with a sheepish grin; or
2. Bit like a pompous, devious, waffling politician)*

Well, what a surprise!

It's not... at all...as we thought.

But, the news . . . is . . . in a way . . . good.

(Aside to audience) Relatively speaking.

(To the Heroine) The tumour ... eh... cancer...

Heroine: *(gaspingly)* t u m o u r ... cancer !!!!!?

Consultant Surgeon:

(Aside to audience) She's not happy, eh...

(To the Heroine; with increasing, barely controlled, excitement)

It's no ordinary type,

in fact, it's, interestingly rare!

Really rather . . . special.

Heroine: *(wide-eyed)*

Special ?!

Chorus: *(Latin chant – Carcinoma chanting)*

It's...bro-ma...co-ma...li-o-ma...ro-ma...to-ma...sar-co-ma...car-ci-no-ma

(Shrinking reaction by heroine to this scary chant)

Consultant Surgeon:

It just means that the cells, kind of, stick together –

(Aside to audience) keeps them out of mischief!

(To the Heroine, in a 'trust-me' kind of voice)

It's The Best Cancer To Have !!!!!

A sudden change into a song-and-dance celebration:**DOCTORS AND NURSES SING AND DANCE****SCREEN 2**

Celebrations !!!

Doctors sing!

Nurses dance!

Doctors and nurses sing & dance!!!

(Enter into doctors & nurses singing and dancing, celebrating with champagne, while Heroine stays still and bewildered, nurses kicking their legs – a mixture of cancan and ballroom dancing... Everyone except the heroine mimes drinking or uses props such as those unbreakable glasses or beer tumblers made of soft transparent rubber-like material, that one cannot really put liquid in as the shape will change, but the flexibility of these props might be used for comical effect – thus showing 'Doctors and Nurses Sing and Dance' is an unreal and tipsy world.)

Explanatory notes: *Cantonese opera performers are experts in mime – perhaps as a means to enable performance at various venues without the expense of transporting too much stage scenery and too many props. Up until less than one hundred years ago, a Cantonese opera troupe would live on a longish red boat (p.120), carrying all they needed for performing. The red-boat travelled from place to place and the troupe gave performances wherever and whenever – so miming would be very useful. There are some basic mimes that all performers know – such as to mime drinking, riding a horse, to give the impression there's a wall and door (all invisible, of course) on stage... and they are judged by how good they can mime these. Apart from singing, performers are trained to move well on stage – some sort of quasi-dance movement.*

Chorus:

(Aside to audience) As malignancies go it's a great one.

(To the Heroine) It's a first-rate one, lucky you!

(Aside to audience) As malignancies go it's a stunner,

(To the Heroine) A front-runner, that's true!

Consultant Surgeon:

(Aside to audience) The news is good, or could be worse, much worse,

(To the Heroine) Ideal disease, specially chosen –
Best cancer to have.

Chorus:

(To the Heroine) You Did It! Hurrah!

(Aside to audience – getting a bit tipsy)

Rumours of tumours,

Bodily humours!

Topping,

Top-notch tumour!

(To the Heroine) Toast,

Here's to you.

Glasses clinking -

Cheers to you.

Consultant Surgeon:

(Aside to audience) Bubbly goes to my head,

(To the Heroine) As malignancies go it's a good one!

Lucky you!

Chorus:

(To the Heroine) We can fix it!

Lucky you!

(Aside to audience) Good health! Zum Wohl! Prost (German, not the surname)!

Willkommen, Bienvenue, Welcome!

Consultant Surgeon:

(To the Heroine) It has chosen you –

Chorus and Consultant Surgeon:

You have been specially chosen.

Best cancer to have!!!!!!

(zoom in to close-up of Heroine – wide-eyed; then only her eyes)

SCREEN 3

On the ward after the consultant dropped the bombshell, the heroine faces the stark realities of illness and death, and is tempted by thoughts of suicide.

STRIP

To be or not to be...

She decides to allow her artist self to take over.

See next Act 7:

SINGLE OR RETURN?**Quben for Act 6 ends****5.6.2 Production ideas for Act 6 *THE BEST CANCER TO HAVE!***

At the beginning under DESCRIPTION and where appropriate in the Quben, there are already sufficient suggestions for usage and performance.

Visually, the most hilarious scene of Act 6 is *Doctors and Nurses Sing and Dance* (p.288). It may be fun to have dancers/singers/actors in doctor's white coat and nurse's uniform (or an artistic design that is a hilarious variation of these) to perform this song and dance routine to elicit the title *Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor*.

Electro-acoustic ideas:

The electro-acoustic instrument, the theremin can be used for music or dramatic effects for this act: I have watched the Russian electro-acoustic master Leon Theremin playing his own instrument on various YouTube videos – he plays it to perfection. In fact, it is a very difficult instrument to play let alone to master, but to use it for comical or dramatic effect would be much easier. As the theremin interacts with movement in real time, this can be used for dramatic effect, combining visual and sound. The use of the theremin can also be a link to perform Act 6 with Act 11

You Are Not Alone as the use of the theremin is suggested for the appearance of aliens like Martians for the twist at the end of Act 11 (p.373).

5.6.3 Complementary materials for Act 6 THE BEST CANCER TO HAVE!

(i) **Song and Dance:** My rendition of *Distant Fairy Trail* 渺渺仙踪 – a tune used in Cantonese opera – for keyboard (use xylophone sound)

(ii) **Song of Buddha:** Original music for SATB choir

Under DESCRIPTION, I explained that this act is more film/video oriented. Many years ago, at an event on film music organised by the SPMN (Society of Promotion of New Music) and co-chaired by film director Brian Gilbert and composer Debbie Wiseman, some examples of their co-operation were shown. Some time after that, I became acquainted with Brian Gilbert. When we had tea at the Groucho Club in London's Soho, I mentioned that whilst watching the excerpt of his film *Tom and Viv* shown at the SPMN event, though the music was by Debbie Wiseman, what I heard in my mind was the music nicknamed as *Elvira Madigan* (Mozart Piano Concerto No. 21 in C, 2nd movement). Brian was amazed and told me he had exactly this music in mind when he was working on *Tom and Viv*. Other film directors have also mentioned they had some music in mind when working on a film. When I was working on the Quben of Act 6, the music I could hear in my head was Offenbach's *Can-Can* for *Doctors and Nurses Sing and Dance*, and Carl Orff's *O Fortuna* of *Carmina Burana* for the CHORUS *Latin chant – Carcinoma chanting*.

(i) **Sing and Dance:** The Cantonese opera that I remember was about rendition of existing tunes. The masses sang and played what they remembered and what they were accustomed to, and did not use a score. I remember a tune called *Distant Fairy Trail* 渺渺仙踪 that can marry well with my impression of Offenbach's *Can-Can*. **Sing and Dance** is my rendition based on what I remember of this tune and influenced by the simple style of *Can-Can*. It is for keyboard/xylophone as the recording I heard long ago had a prominent xylophone part (AV17, notes p.433).

(ii) **Song of Buddha** for SATB choir is an early work (1975) by me that I feel is suitable to sing in a style like Carl Orff's *O Fortuna* of *Carmina Burana* for the carcinoma chanting section of the Quben (p.287). In Hong Kong I have heard Buddhist monks and nuns reciting 'nam-mor-or-mi-tor-fu' 南无阿弥陀佛 repeatedly for great length of time in a half singing, half speech-like manner – 'nam-mor': save and help all ('a' as in 'ah'); 'or-mi-tor-fu': limitless Buddha. The moderato section is based on a song about a monk descending to hell to save his mother 目连救母.

(iii) **AV17** (notes p.433):

Fong Yim-Fun, Glamorous Sun Red Phoenix 芳艳芬艳阳丹凤

The above mentioned *Distant Fairy Trail* 渺渺仙踪 is included in this 1958 classic recording (see 6.1.2(i) p.400 for more info).

Alternative music for Act 6:

Offenbach's *Can-Can*

Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana* ⁵⁶

Glamorous Sun Red Phoenix 艳阳丹凤 (**AV17**): Write your own rendition.

The scores of *Sing and Dance* (2 pages) and *Song of Buddha* (5 pages) follow:

⁵⁶ Due to its popular appeal and the music is often associated with sinister scenes in films, *O Fortuna* is particularly suitable for the CHORUS' chanting of this act. Other movements in Latin for the choir of *Carmina Burana* could also be used for any part of Act 6.

My redition of of *Distant Fairy Trail* 渺渺仙踪 (listen: AV17 from 1:47, notes p.433)

Sing and Dance

Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor Act 6

Ho Wai-On

Use xylophone sound

Keyboard

Lively

mf

3 3

5

Kbd.

9

Kbd.

13

Kbd.

17

Kbd.

21

Kbd.

3 3

2

Ho Wai-On Sing and Dance

The musical score is written for piano (Kbd.) and consists of four systems of music. Each system is labeled with a measure number at the beginning: 25, 29, 33, and 36. The notation is in treble and bass clefs, with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score features a variety of musical elements, including eighth notes, quarter notes, and half notes, often grouped with slurs. There are also triplets indicated by a '3' over the notes. The bass line is consistently active, providing a rhythmic foundation for the melody in the treble. The piece concludes with a final chord in the bass line.

The score of *Song of Buddha* follows (5 pages):*Song of Buddha* p.1

flowing, flexible in rhythm
Andantino ($\text{♩} = 80$)

HO WAI-ON

5

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

mp NAM MOR OR - MI TOR - FU - , NAM MOR OR - MI - TOR - FU - , NAM MOR ,

mp NAM MOR OR - MI -

TOR - FU - , NAM MOR OR - MI - TOR - FU - , NAM MOR ,

- FU - , NAM - MOR - OR - MI - TOR - FU .

OR MI TOR - FU , NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU ,

10

TOR - FU - , NAM - MOR - OR - MI TOR - FU - , NAM MOR OR - MI

OR MI TOR FU - , NAM MOR , OR MI - TOR FU . OR MI

NAM MOR OR MI TOR - FU - , NAM MOR OR - MI TOR - FU .

OR - MI TOR FU , NAM - MOR - , OR MI

Song of Buddha p.2

115

TOR — FU , NAM MOR — OR MI — TOR FU .

TOR FU , NAM MOR OR MI — TOR FU .

mf NAM MOR , OR MI — TOR — FU — , NAM — MOR —

TOR — FU . *mf* NAM MOR , OR — MI — TOR — FU — , NAM —

120

mf NAM MOR — , OR MI TOR — FU . *mp* NAM MOR OR MI TOR —

mf NAM MOR , OR MI TOR — FU

OR — MI — TOR — FU . *mp* NAM MOR OR MI TOR — FU ,

— MOR , OR MI — TOR FU . *mf* NAM —

125

mf FU , NAM MOR , OR MI TOR FU .

mf NAM MOR , OR MI TOR FU , OR MI — TOR — FU .

mf NAM MOR OR — MI — TOR — FU .

MOR — OR MI TOR FU . *f* OR

Song of Buddha p.3

30

mp NAM MOR OR MI

NAM - MOR - OR - MI

MI - TOR - FU, NAM - MOR - OR - MI - TOR FU

35

TOR FU, NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU, NAM MOR OR - MI - TOR FU, NAM MOR OR MI

NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU, NAM MOR OR MI

TOR - FU, NAM MOR, OR - MI - TOR FU, NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU, NAM MOR OR MI

40

OR MI - TOR FU, NAM MOR, NAM - MOR, NAM - MOR OR MI TOR

TOR FU, NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU

MOR, NAM MOR, OR MI

NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU, NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU, OR MI TOR FU

Song of Buddha p.4

45

Handwritten musical score for measures 45-48. The score is written on four staves. The lyrics are: FU. NAM MOR OR MI - TOR FU, NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU. NAM MOR OR MI - TOR FU, NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU. TOR - FU, NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU, NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU. NAM - MOR OR MI - TOR FU, NAM - MOR OR MI - TOR FU.

moderato ($\text{♩} = 60$)

50

Handwritten musical score for measures 50-54. The score is written on four staves. The lyrics are: AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH.

55

Handwritten musical score for measures 55-58. The score is written on four staves. The lyrics are: AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH.

Song of Buddha p.5

molto *Meno Mosso*

60

P *f poco accel allargando ff*
OR MI TOR - FU , OR - MI - TOR - FU .

P *f poco accel allargando ff*
OR MI TOR - FU , OR MI TOR FU .

P *f poco accel allargando ff*
OR MI TOR - FU , OR - MI - TOR - FU .

P *f poco accel allargando ff*
OR MI TOR - FU , OR - MI - TOR FU .

5.7 Act: *SINGLE OR RETURN?*

DESCRIPTION:

When faced with the gradual decline of Cantonese opera, the performers of my childhood opted to appear in Cantonese films (pp. 86-9). Many Cantonese films retained features/characteristics of Cantonese opera, and the transition was successful and popular, especially with the lower class audiences (middle and upper classes watched Mandarin or Hollywood movies). Hong Kong was swamped with low-budget rapidly churned out Cantonese films. This act is more film-orientated.

Mentioned in Act 7 – useful for reference, image and ideas:

Apollo Dancing, Beachy Head, Cantonese films, childhood flashbacks, Death, fairground organ, film/video, funeral directors, holiday, Anthony Hopkins, juxtaposition, *Madame Butterfly*, musical beds, multi-layer, opera, recycling, roulette wheel, roundabouts, split screen, swings, The Cobb (Lyme Regis), varied speed, *The Waves*.

Contents:

5.7.1 The Quben p.301

5.7.2 Production ideas p.305

5.7.3 Complementary materials p.305

(i) Original music

Apollo Dancing piano solo pp. 307-308

The Waves piano solo pp. 309-313

(ii) Recordings of the above (piano: Albert Sui-Kai Tang 鄧兆楷)

AV8: *Apollo Dancing* (notes p.431)

AV9: *The Waves* (notes p.431)

(iii) **AV18** (notes p.433): *Zhaojun Beyond the Great Walls* 红线女昭君出塞

Cantonese opera recording

5.7.1 The Quben

Act 7

SINGLE OR RETURN?

Narration or SCREEN:

On the ward the heroine faces the stark realities of illness and death. She is distressed by a nurse who fails to respond to her needs and by certain other patients who manage to be annoyingly cheerful in the aftermath of major surgery. With all the traumas of treatment confronting her, death itself seems to be the last and least worry. And so she is tempted by thoughts of suicide. But how? And who might help? She decides to allow her artist self to take over.

Heroine's opening speech:

I think the trauma of cancer comes not so much from fear of death as fear of major, mutilating operations, stressful treatments and very unpleasant side effects, and the prolonged suffering before death. I've heard fellow cancer patients saying they'd rather die than go through all that, especially if they feel they might not have long to live anyway. The thought of finishing it all had also crossed my mind – but like everything in life, nothing is that simple...

Heroine:

There's commotion in the ward –
the woman in that bed over there,
nurses took her body away;
and are cleaning, making up the bed
for a new patient.

Chorus:

Roulette wheel,
Musical beds!

Heroine:

Now that I am diagnosed with cancer
Some of the things I see in this ward that have frightened me so
might happen to me.
I can't bear it!

Chorus/male lead:

Death and suffering have become a reality.

Heroine:

How could that woman look so happy
when she was wheeled out of the ward
with her new limbs on her lap?

Chorus/male lead:

What's the point of living like that?

Heroine:

Another woman who has annoyed me so
calling me 'Madame Butterfly' for days
because I am Oriental,
is now in constant pain,
and someone says she won't make it.

Chorus/male lead:

What's the point of prolonging suffering?

Heroine:

The bell for calling the nurse is not working.
I was so thirsty after the operation but could not leave the bed.
When a visitor alerted a nurse to come to me,
I asked for water.

I waited and waited...

but she forgot all about it until the next morning.

If I were dying and had to rely on another's mercy...

Chorus/male lead:

How dreadful to be helpless,

relying on another's mercy.

Heroine:

I shudder when I walk past Funeral Directors;

I have never felt like this before.

I read articles about death that make me feel sick,

I have never, never wanted to before.

Chorus/male lead:

She needs a holiday –

But, single or return?

Heroine:

Beachy Head, or abroad –

where someone holds your hand and makes the going easy?

But hell! I have no money.

I can't afford someone to hold my hand,

and one needs courage, whether to die or to live!

Chorus:

She hears fairground organ sounds.

She sees her childhood in flashbacks.

She sees swings and roundabouts.

Heroine:

Yet another woman in the ward

who can't stop talking about her life,

but she has no life to talk about –
she just talks repeatedly about places she has lived
“from a two-up two-down, to this lodging and that”,
not like how I have lived.
Why does that woman want to live?

Chorus/male lead:

Is she approaching,
even running towards, Death?
To embrace him,
to get it all over with?
All because of her bad experience in that ward!

Heroine's final speech (smile):

That was then,
I don't feel any of this anymore.
No time for such thoughts –
I am writing an opera!

(N.B. This was written when I was still thinking the project was to be realized as an opera.)

SCREEN

The heroine decides to read up on cancer so as to be able to make informed choices.
She finds many cancer cells visually beautiful.
See next Act 8:

GETTING TO KNOW YOU!**STRIP**

Cancer cells, beautiful !?
She must really be an artist!

Quben for Act 7 ends

5.7.2 Production ideas for Act 7 *SINGLE OR RETURN?*

This act is suitable to be presented as a short film/video:

When I was writing Act 7, I kept seeing myself walking with Death as a man; to be precise, hand in hand like intimate friends with the actor Anthony Hopkins in black trousers and a tight-fitting black roll-neck sweater, as an attractive but slightly menacing Death, and not strolling along the beach, but strolling along a desolate, long narrow strip by the sea, like walking along the Cobb of Dorset's Lyme Regis. It should not be too difficult to film a man and a woman strolling along a similar location, especially for the opening scene and/or the end of Act 7.

In addition to filming the location of the drama, the reactions and changes in the man and the woman can also be filmed, according to the happenings in Act 7, with voiceover or with captions added: close-ups of the Heroine's face when she encounters a death in the ward or the Heroine becomes ill; images of Death as a man in black appearing remote, grim and threatening (using split screen or juxtaposition); interpolated images of a roulette wheel, Beachy Head, a fairground and so on hinting at thoughts of suicide. Death can be filmed as a man in black getting closer and closer when the Heroine contemplates suicide; but when the Heroine comes to terms with cancer, and facing death has become an incentive to make the most of her life, then Death becomes a friendly and attractive man, and walks hand in hand with her... she sees Death as a friend.

5.7.3 Complementary materials for Act 7 *SINGLE OR RETURN?*

(i) ORIGINAL MUSIC

For Act 7 *Single or Return?* I submit two early piano pieces by myself, ***Apollo Dancing*** and ***The Waves*** since they are suitable for adapting as film music, either as they are, or after recycling in experiments with electro-acoustics. These two pieces are related to the theme of survival. I wrote them around the time when years' of hard work and training towards the goal to become a concert pianist were wasted due to an injury, and I felt it seemed to be the end. However I went back to the Royal

Academy of Music to retrain as a composer. Within the first year of retraining, I received my first commission, followed by public performances – like a new life arising from despair. The music of Cantonese opera is mostly recycled from the past. Recycling is also an acceptable practice in Western music. Handel is an example⁵⁷.

Apollo Dancing

This is a short, slow and dignified chordal piece that can be played as is, or slowed down further, applying electro-acoustics to transpose it to a lower pitch and/or using distortion for a 'scary' effect. Chordal passages can be played in the style of a funeral march to accompany images of Death, and in other solemn moments.

The Waves

The theme is catchy, and the music haunting and suitable to be used for film/TV. By slowing down the tempo, it becomes melancholic, but when speeded up or after applying electro-acoustic effects, such as changing the timbre to that of an organ, the piece can become lively. It would be suitable as playground carousel organ music, roulette, for musical chairs – musical beds... as depicted in the Quben of Act 7.

I have noticed that some film/TV music uses rich sustained sounds. Atmospheric music can be created for the film or video by slowing down the opening chordal passage of *The Waves*, or by multi-layering and using varied speed.

(ii) RECORDINGS

AV7 and **AV8** (notes p.431) are the recordings of *Apollo Dancing* and *The Waves* played by Albert Sui-Kai Tang 鄧兆階.

(iii) AV18: Hung Sin-Nui, Zhaojun Beyond the Great Walls 红线女昭君出塞

Zhaojun, on her way to an uncertain future sings on horseback accompanied by pipa (see 6.1.2(ii), p.401 for further info). Act 7 is also about an uncertain future. This recording can be used as an inspiration for writing alternative music (notes: p.433).

The scores of *Apollo Dancing* (2 pages) and *The Waves* (5 pages) follow:

⁵⁷ See Chapter 4 *My Cross-Cultural Combined Arts Prototype* 4.1.7 *Cantonese opera* 5th para. (p.175) re Handel recycling his music.

Apollo Dancing

No Wai On

Lento grazioso

The score is written for piano and consists of five systems of music. It begins with a tempo marking 'Lento grazioso'. The first system features a grand staff with a bass clef on the left and a treble clef on the right. Dynamics include 'pp' (pianissimo) and 'p' (piano). Fingerings are indicated with numbers 1-5. A note is marked 'una corda'. The second system continues with 'mf' (mezzo-forte) and 'f' (forte) dynamics. It includes a 'tremolo' marking over a sixteenth-note figure and a 'l.h.' (left hand) instruction. The third system starts with 'P subito' (piano subito) and 'senza ped' (without pedal). It includes a 'mf' dynamic and a 'una corda con ped' (una corda with pedal) instruction. The fourth system is marked 'mp' (mezzo-piano) and features a 'Poco cresc.' (poco crescendo) marking. The fifth system ends with a 'P' dynamic and a 'tre corde' (three chords) instruction.

pp
una corda
6
1 2 5
3
tre corde
6
3
mf
f
tremolo
l.h.
R.H.
P subito
senza ped
mf
una corda con ped
mp
Poco cresc.
P
tre corde

KBS PANOPUS SCORE-SYSTEM ©

Apollo Dancing page 2

Handwritten musical score for "Apollo Dancing" page 2. The score is written on four systems of grand staves (treble and bass clef). It includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is 3/4. The score includes performance instructions like "una corda", "tre corde", "cresc", "Poco marcato", "ad lib", "f", "pp", "mf", "p", "p subito", "senza ped", and "mf". There are also markings for "L.H." and "R.H.".

KBS PANOPUS SCORE SYSTEM

© Ho Wai On 1975

THE WAVES

Ho Wai On

$\text{♩} = 69$

Handwritten musical score for "THE WAVES" by Ho Wai On. The score is written on five systems of grand staves (treble and bass clef). It includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and fingerings. Dynamics like *p*, *mf*, and *f* are indicated. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 69. The score is a piano piece.

The Waves p.2

A musical score for piano, titled "The Waves p.2". The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The tempo is marked "A Tempo". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, slurs, and fingerings. Dynamics include *p* (piano), *mf* (mezzo-forte), *Poco f* (poco forte), and *mp* (mezzo-piano). The score is published by KB5 PANOPUS SCORE-SYSTEM.

A Tempo

p *mf* *Poco f* *mp* *Poco f*

KB5 PANOPUS SCORE-SYSTEM

The Waves p.3

3

The image displays a handwritten musical score for a piano piece titled 'The Waves p.3'. The score is written on five systems of grand staves (treble and bass clef). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, slurs, and fingerings. The score is marked with dynamics including *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *p* (piano). A tempo change is indicated by 'A TEMPO' in the third system. A 'rit e dim' (ritardando and diminuendo) marking is present in the fourth system. The score is numbered '3' in the top right corner. The bottom left corner features the logo 'KB5 PANOPUS SCORE SYSTEM'.

KB5 PANOPUS SCORE SYSTEM

The Waves p.4

Handwritten musical score for "The Waves" p.4. The score is written on five systems of two staves each (treble and bass clef). The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The score is marked with "cresc" (crescendo) and "f" (forte) in the first system, "dim e rit" (diminuendo e ritardando) in the fourth system, and "A TEMPO" in the fifth system. The score concludes with a "mf" (mezzo-forte) marking. The bottom of the page features the logo "KB5 PANOPUS SCORESYSTEM®".

The Waves p.5

Handwritten musical score for "The Waves" on page 5. The score is written on three systems of grand staves (treble and bass clef). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, slurs, and dynamic markings like "mf" and "p". Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. The score is signed "© Ho Wai On 1974" at the bottom right.

5.8 Act 8: *GETTING TO KNOW YOU*

DESCRIPTION:

I originally called this act *Getting To Know You, Cancer*, but have omitted the last word so that the title would not sound so scary.

In Cantonese opera, speech delivery is enriched by: adopting a rhythmic style, altering the vocal timbre and adding percussion so that it is no longer like natural speech. For this act I thought of using Buddhist chanting of Buddha 'or-mi-tor-fu 阿弥陀佛 ' (see 5.6.3(ii) *Song of Buddha*, p.292) to the percussive sound of wood blocks, and recalled a recording that I heard long ago at SOAS of scary low-pitched Tibetan Buddhist chant accompanied by the sound of a low-pitched wind instrument that I was told was made with a human bone – all seem very suitable for the atmosphere of this act. In my mind I also heard Carl Orff's much-used chant-like chorus *O Fortuna* in *Carmina Burana*, and the slow half-speech-half-singing style of Japanese Noh with simple percussive accompaniment.

I suggest creating dance or animation using some beautiful images of cancer cells, combining this with rhythmic speech/chanting with percussion obbligato.

Mentioned in Act 8 – useful for reference, image and ideas:

Animation, Cantonese opera speech delivery with percussion, diagrams/graphics, dance, 'or-mi-tor-fu' 阿弥陀佛 (chanting of Buddha), magnification, Noh, *O Fortuna* – *Carmina Burana* (Carl Orff), percussion, pincer movement, stylized gesticulations, Tibetan Buddhist chant, woodblock.

Contents:

5.8.1 The Quben p.315

5.8.2 Production ideas p.317

5.8.3 Complementary materials p.318

(i) *Getting to Know You* (pp. 320-334):

Original music for soprano solo, SATB choir, flute, strings (vln1, vln2, vla, vc), steel pan and congas.

(ii) **AV10** (notes p.431): Midi playback of the above.

5.8.1 The Quben

Act 8

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

SCREEN or narration:

The Heroine's experiences so far have left her with less than full confidence in the medical team. She decides to read up on cancer to help her make informed choices. In some photographs and diagrams, the malignant cells (e.g., cancer protein) are strangely beautiful. But how closely does one dare to know this new enemy?

Heroine's opening speech:

Knowing I cannot leave everything to the hospital and medical team, I decide to read up on cancer so as to be able to make informed choices. I find many cancer cells visually beautiful.

Chorus:

Cancer cells, beautiful!? She must really be an artist!

Male lead:

Thus aesthetics triumph over grim medical reality!

RHYTHMICAL CHANT/SPEECH with percussion:

Chorus:

Biopsy - - - Pathology - - - Malignancy - - - O — Sympathy;
Oncology - - - Radiotherapy - - - Chemotherapy - - - O — Fragility;
Tenacity - - - Bravery - - - Recovery - - - O — Normality!

Heroine:

Lumps and bumps,
Down in the dumps,

What's wrong — with me?

How long — do I have?

How strong — must I be?

What song — will help me through?

(with determination) Better the devil you know...

Chorus:

True.

And anyway you have

God The Surgeon on your side,

with all his attendant Nursing Angels.

Heroine:

Knowledge is power,

one hopes!

It's only natural to seek information and understanding.

Male lead:

Do you dare?

Do you really dare?

Dare to stare

into the face of the enemy?

Chorus:

Dare to look into,

look into...

massive magnification of your enemy?

Heroine:

I find them strangely beautiful.

Strangely, strangely...

Beautiful!

SCREEN

Not content with its own awesome powers

the enemy now seems to be in league with NHS bureaucracy.

Can any mortal withstand the onslaught of such a pincer movement?

See next Act 9:

NO MONEY, NO CHOICES

STRIP

NHS? Private?

What best treatment?!

Uncertainties... of the disease!

Act Eight Quben ends**5.8.2 Production ideas for Act 8 GETTING TO KNOW YOU**

As mentioned under DESCRIPTION at the beginning of this act, it would be best to use the Quben as inspiration to create your own rhythmic speech and chant, and using the music provided, to stage a dance, a dance with animation, or an animation. The following are some ideas:

(i) A dance with dancers as cancer cells.

(ii) Animation of images of beautiful looking cancer cells – possibly combined with dancers as cancer cells.

(iii) Images of cancer cells blown up to fill the entire screen/backdrop and also projected onto reflective surfaces. Heroine gets in and out of cancer cells.

Cantonese opera can be about action and movement if it is a martial/ghost/comic drama. Performers are trained from an early age to perform beautiful movements, stylized gesticulations and to dance. New Cantonese opera has long cooperated with modern dance.

5.8.3 Complementary materials for Act 8 GETTING TO KNOW YOU

I mentioned Japanese Noh under DESCRIPTION. Japan has kept some imported Chinese culture/customs from long ago (Han and Tang dynasties), which in present day China might not have been preserved – Japanese Gagaku is an example. I find that many present day instruments used in Cantonese opera are losing their unique beauty after 'improvement' and after their adaptation to the well-tempered tuning of Western Classical music – such changes inevitably affect many of Cantonese opera's practices. I like listening to Japanese music and singing to catch a glimpse of what was Chinese in the distant past. I have written music for contemporary Japanese Noh. I recycled some of my unused material for a Noh project to write the music for this act, as it suits the atmosphere well.

(i) ORIGINAL MUSIC:

Getting to Know You for soprano solo, SATB choir, flute, strings (vln1, vln2, vla, vc), steel pan and congas for the following text from Act 8 (pp. 315-316):

N.B.

- a) Steel pan is written for the use of electric keyboard. Please transpose if using acoustic instruments.
- b) Congas are notated as using one higher pitched and one lower pitched drum – please transpose for available instruments.

*Lumps and bumps,
Down in the dumps,
What's wrong — with me?
How long — do I have?
How strong — must I be?
What song — will help me through?
I find them strangely beautiful.
Do you dare?
Dare to stare
into the face of the enemy?
Dare to look into,
look into...
Massive magnification of your enemy?
Biopsy - - - - - Malignancy - - - O — Sympathy;
Bravery - - - Recovery - - - O — Normality!*

(ii) AV10 (notes p.431): Midi playback of *Getting to Know You*

Synthesized version of the staff notated music *Getting to Know You* can be used in the following ways: as raw material to create music for dance/stage performance or video; to add live improvisation or percussion obbligato, perhaps inviting the choreographer to improvise on a drum during performance according to the choreography; or as a basis for modification with electro-acoustics.

Alternative music:

The music for Act 6 *Best Cancer to Have* – ***Song of Buddha*** (pp. 295-299) – the chanting of Buddha 'nam-mor-or-mi-tor-fu' 南無阿彌陀佛 and the suggested alternative music *O Fortuna* from *Carmina Burana* (Carl Orff) are both suitable for Act 8.

The soprano solo part (1 page) and full score (14 pages) of *Getting to Know You* follow:

Words: pp. 315-316

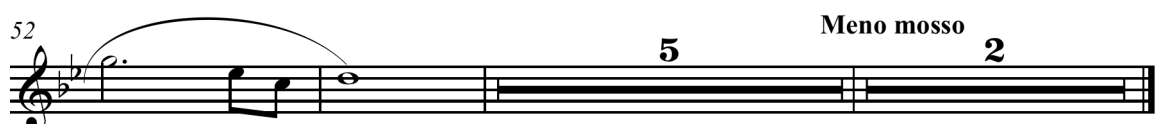
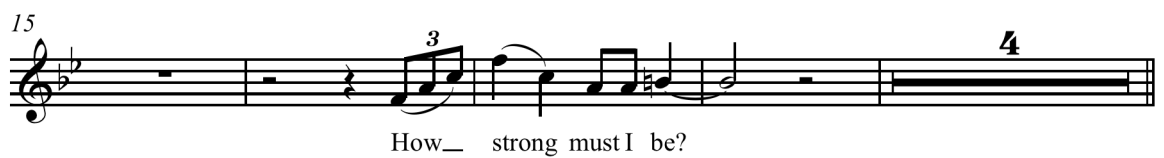
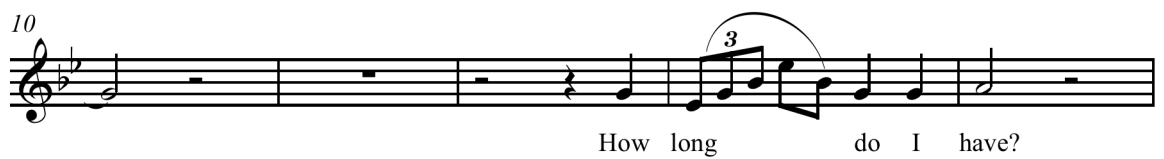
Soprano Solo

Act 8 Getting to know you

Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor

Ho Wai-On

words: Ho Wai-On & Mike Greenhough

Quasi heart beats. Other sections (seperated by double bars can be of a different tempo)

See 5.8.3(i) **N.B.** a & b (p.318) re steel pan and Congas.

Getting to know you

Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor Act 8

Ho Wai-On

words: Ho Wai-On & Mike Greenhough

Quasi heart beats. Other sections (seperated by double bars can be of a different tempo)

The musical score is for a piece titled 'Getting to know you' from 'Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor Act 8' by Ho Wai-On. The lyrics are by Ho Wai-On & Mike Greenhough. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The instruments and voices included are Flute, Soprano Solo, Steel pan, Congas, SOPRANO ALTO, TENOR BASS, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes the Flute, Soprano Solo, Steel pan, Congas, SOPRANO ALTO, and TENOR BASS. The second system includes Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello. The Congas part has a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Violoncello parts have a melodic line with a 'con sord. p' marking. The TENOR BASS part has a single note at the end of the first system, labeled 'Bi -'. The score is marked with a tempo change: 'Quasi heart beats. Other sections (seperated by double bars can be of a different tempo)'.

Flute

Soprano Solo

Steel pan

Congas

SOPRANO
ALTO

TENOR
BASS

Bi -

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Violoncello

con sord. *p*

con sord. *p*

con sord. *p*

con sord. *p*

2

Ho Wai-On Getting to know you Act 8

6

Fl.

S. Solo

Lumps and bumps, Down in the dump, What is wrong with me?

Steel pan

Congas

S. A.

T. B.

op - sy ee - ee -

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Ho Wai-On Getting to know you Act 8

3

10

Fl.

f 6

S. Solo

How long do I

Steel pan

Congas

S. A.

Ma - lig - nan - cy ee -

T. B.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

3

4

Ho Wai-On Getting to know you Act 8

The musical score is for Act 8, titled "Ho Wai-On Getting to know you Act 8". It features a variety of instruments and vocal soloists. The score is written in 4/4 time and includes a key signature of one flat (Bb).

The instruments and vocal soloists are:

- Fl. (Flute): Measures 14-17. Measure 14 has a 6-measure rest.
- S. Solo (Soprano Soloist): Measures 14-17. Lyrics: "have? How_ strong_ must I be?".
- Steel pan: Measures 14-17. Measure 14 has a 6-measure rest.
- Congas: Measures 14-17. Measure 14 has a 6-measure rest.
- S. A. (Soprano Alto): Measures 14-17. Lyrics: "O_ O_ Sym-pa- thy_".
- T. B. (Tenor Bass): Measures 14-17. Lyrics: "O_ Sym - pa - thy".
- Vln. 1 (Violin 1): Measures 14-17. Measure 14 has a 6-measure rest.
- Vln. 2 (Violin 2): Measures 14-17. Measure 14 has a 6-measure rest.
- Vla. (Viola): Measures 14-17. Measure 14 has a 6-measure rest.
- Vc. (Violoncello): Measures 14-17. Measure 14 has a 6-measure rest.

The score includes various musical notations such as rests, triplets, and lyrics. The lyrics are: "have? How_ strong_ must I be?", "O_ O_ Sym-pa- thy_", and "O_ Sym - pa - thy".

Ho Wai-On Getting to know you Act 8

5

18

Fl.

6

S. Solo

Steel pan

Congas

S.
A.

O _____ Bra - ve - ry!

T.
B.

O _____ O _____ Bra-ve-ry!

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

6

Ho Wai-On Getting to know you Act 8

22

Fl.

S. Solo

What song what song will

Steel pan

Congas

S.
A.

T.
B.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Ho Wai-On Getting to know you Act 8

7

27

Fl.

S. Solo

help me through?

Steel pan

Congas

S.
A.

Do you dare? Do you dare? Dare to

T.
B.

Do you_ dare?_

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

8

Ho Wai-On Getting to know you Act 8

31

Fl.

S. Solo

Steel pan

Congas

S.
A.

stare in-to the face__ of the en-e my?__ Dare to look in-to

T.
B.

Dare_____ to stare_____ Dare to look in-to

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Ho Wai-On Getting to know you Act 8

9

35

Strangely beautiful

Fl.

S. Solo

Steel pan

Congas

S.
A.

mas sive mag-ni-fi-ca-tion of your en-e- my?—

T.
B.

mas sive mag-ni-fi-ca-tion of your en-e- my?—

Strangely beautiful

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

The musical score is written for a full orchestra and a vocal soloist. The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The vocal soloist (S. Solo) has a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes. The string section (Vln. 1, Vln. 2, Vla., Vc.) provides harmonic support with a triplet of eighth notes. The percussion section (Steel pan, Congas) has a rhythmic pattern. The lyrics are 'mas sive mag-ni-fi-ca-tion of your en-e- my?—' and 'Strangely beautiful'.

10

Ho Wai-On Getting to know you Act 8

39

Fl.

S. Solo

find them, I find them strange - ly, strange - ly beau__ ti- ful!

Steel pan

Congas

S.
A.

T.
B.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Ho Wai-On Getting to know you Act 8

11

43

Fl.

S. Solo

Ah— I find—

Steel pan

Congas

S.
A.

T.
B.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

Ho Wai-On Getting to know you Act 8

47

Fl.

S. Solo

Steel pan

Congas

S. A.

T. B.

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

them strange - ly beau - ti - ful!

Ho Wai-On Getting to know you Act 8

13

51

Fl.

S. Solo

Ah

Steel pan

Congas

S. A.

T. B.

Re - co - ve - ry!

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

14

Ho Wai-On Getting to know you Act 8

56 **Meno mosso**

Fl.

S. Solo

Steel pan

Congas

S.
A.

Re - co - ve - ry! O _____ Nor - ma - li - ty!

T.
B.

Re - co - ve - ry! O _____ Nor - ma - li - ty!

Meno mosso

Vln. 1

Vln. 2

Vla.

Vc.

5.9 Act Nine: **NO MONEY, NO CHOICES**

DESCRIPTION:

This act is a quasi 'folk' and 'protest' song, originally entitled *Who's Afraid of Virginia Bottomley?* – NHS reforms instigated by the then Secretary of State for Health, though no doubt well-intentioned and revolutionary, in reality brought about changes that caused me unnecessary frustration and suffering, at a time when I could have done without them. I saw fellow patients and medical professionals unhappy about the changes and closures. But without money, what was the alternative? Even if one could afford private treatment, was it really better than the NHS? And what a miserable world it would be for many without the protection of the NHS. Now that Virginia Bottomley is forgotten, the justification for the joke is perhaps gone, but causes for concern in the NHS worthy of protest remain.

From my observations, new Cantonese opera is striving towards Western opera in the superficial sense, i.e. of an opera house look-alike production, and yet there is audience hostility towards this superficial resemblance, as I have read comments to this effect on the Red-Boat Cantonese Opera Website. Whether the future of Cantonese opera in China is to be controlled by the state or by the people, it has never prized the originality of an individual creator. Cantonese opera has never borne the signature of a composer, which is the essence of Western opera. But the Cantonese opera I saw in Hong Kong does bear the signature of a particular lead performer. In the West or the US, folk singers are prized for their originality and their distinctive vocal style as well as for their individual creativity, since they are often also songwriters – e.g., Joan Baez. Many folk singers write protest songs. When I first started working on my PhD, my supervisor Dr Paul Rhys introduced me to the university's music librarian Sue Gilmurray who sings and writes anti-war protest songs in folk style, and our meeting has had an influence on this Act.

Mentioned in Act 9 – useful for reference, image and ideas:

Virginia Bottomley, Joan Baez, folk and protest songs, Sue Gilmurray (protest song singer/writer), *Les Misérables* (the musical), *Lulu* (Berg), *Military March* (Schubert), *NHS*, pincer movement, *Sassy princess blunt husband* 刁蛮公主戇驸马, tessitura.

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Original music **No Money, No Choices**: quasi folk/protest song (pp.341-346)

5.9.1 The Quben

Act 9

NO MONEY, NO CHOICES

Narration/SCREEN:

Not content with its own awesome powers,
the enemy now seems to be in league with NHS bureaucracy.
Can any mortal withstand the onslaught of such a pincer movement?

SCREEN

NHS? Private?
What best treatment ?!
Uncertainties... of the disease!

Heroine's opening speech:

Some of the things I saw and experienced made me lose confidence in the hospital,
and it seemed wise to be under the care of a centre of excellence for cancer instead,
and to get to know more about cancer and cancer treatments, but...

THE FOLK/PROTEST SONGS

*The male-singing voice in Cantonese opera is more like the natural speaking voice,
and quite different from female singing, especially the voice of the female lead, which*

is always high-pitched, nowhere near her natural speaking voice and probably sounds squeaky to those who are not fans of Cantonese opera. Thus a male singer is perhaps better at delivering clear diction. The words are very important in Cantonese opera – an unsophisticated Cantonese opera audience is unlikely to sit patiently to listen to what they can't understand. In England, an audience would sit politely at a performance of Berg's 'Lulu' sung in German, whilst an unsophisticated Cantonese opera audience would leave in no time. The music of Act 9 is somewhat akin to the vocal style in popular or folk protest songs, in a low tessitura and with melodies that are easy to the ear, so that the words can be easily understood. This is in direct contrast to Western opera and Classical singing, where the voice does not always deliver clear diction, and without subtitles, much of the libretto may be lost to the audience, even when it is sung in their native language.

Heroine: *(exasperated)*

What's the point?

of knowing more?!

of the enemy Cancer?!

of treatment options?!

Chorus/male lead: *(with sympathy)*

Only to be thwarted

of making an informed choice

by old rules and new rules.

Heroine: *(exasperated)*

Battling cancer;

Battling the NHS

to go to a Centre of my choice.

Chorus/male lead: *(with sympathy)*

Fighting on two fronts!

Heroine: *(exasperated)*

I fought and fought so hard,

only to find a patient is treated

strictly by the standard procedures.

There are no choices!

Chorus/male lead: (*with sympathy*)

Knowledge only resulted in more frustration.

It's better not to know.

Heroine/female members of the chorus:

Not having money,

what's the alternative?!

No money, no choices!

But without the NHS

what a miserable world for many!

Chorus/male lead:

Without the NHS,

instead of being well again

to create this opera (*or whatever format to be realized*),

you might be writing

a new version of "*Les Miserables*".

Heroine:

Yet in my long battle with cancer,

I saw many things that should not be so...

All:

It's the luck of the draw.

Fill in the forms and comply with the norms.

Risking some crazy bureaucratic rules.

Risking the terrors of clerical errors.

Knowing no one dares to blow the whistle –

No choice but to risk the safety in numbers.

Most importantly,

You survived!

Heroine final speech:

But who can afford cancer treatment without the NHS? In this country, private treatment is not necessarily better than the NHS, and I can't afford that anyway.

A cancer patient cannot buy private medical insurance.

I have no choice.

This country should be proud of the NHS.

NHS is good. Bureaucracy is not.

Manned by humans, the NHS has human failings.

This I understand – I am human too.

I don't know the solution – better not to think too much!

Most importantly, I survived!

SCREEN

People who had had radiotherapy often said they found the process was not too much bother, but experienced fatigue and the need to sleep a lot; while chemotherapy has a bad press – but...

See next Act 10:

RADIO FUN AND CHEMO COMEDY**STRIP**

You must be joking!

How can such experiences be fun or funny ?!

Quben for Act 9 ends

5.9.3 Production ideas for Act 9 *NO MONEY, NO CHOICES*

(i) Act 9 may be performed in a concert hall or suitable venue. Alternatively the song ***No Money, No Choices*** may be performed on the street together with more protest songs created using the Quben of Act 9.

(ii) Act 9 can be expanded to include more up-to-date protests. The Quben may also be used to create musical speech (pitched and rhythmic speech), or speech may be treated electronically to transform it into a musical argument, interpolated with performances of songs that are easy on the ear.

(iii) Make a short video filming singers/folk instrumentalists performing protest songs, interpolated with chatting with cancer patients. This could also be in many other scenarios not confined to cancer patients – such as music therapy clients.

5.9.3 Complementary materials for Act 9 *NO MONEY, NO CHOICES*

ORIGINAL MUSIC: *No Money, No Choices*

This is a quasi folk and protest song (lyrics: using nearly the entire Quben of Act 9). As mentioned in the last paragraph of DESCRIPTION, my meeting with Anglia Ruskin University's music librarian Sue Gilmurray who sings and writes anti-war protest songs in folk style has influenced how I wrote the music. I enjoy listening to folk singing but do not write for this genre. After looking at Sue's songs, I wrote in a style that would be comfortable for her to sing – i.e. a simple melody with chord indications and with a percussion obbligato – much more skeletal than how I would usually write music.

Whilst watching Act 4 of the 1984 Cantonese opera *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* 刁蛮公主戇驸马 on the Internet, I jotted down the pitches of a short song by ear as raw material, and then modified the melodic shape according to the sound and rhythm of words chosen from the Quben of Act 9. When writing this protest song, I heard the popular Schubert *Military March* in my head, and this piece served as harmonic and rhythmic inspiration.

The music should be transposed and modified for whatever voices and instruments are available, and it can also be used as a basis for improvisation. There are some intentional dissonances between voice and instruments – use broken chord accompaniment if the clash sounds too harsh to your liking.

The score of *No Money, No Choices* (6 pages) follows:

Ho Wai-On

N.B. This is to be transposed to the higher key of A for the sop, and with a musical link to join smoothly to the following lower key simplified version

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Ho Wai-On No Money, No Choices

2

alla marcia
or at a speed quasi speech

a break in the recording

add metal perc. to the last note.

snare drum or the like

11 C Dm G C C G C G

Instrument(s)

Percussion

17 C C G C

Voice(s)

Bat-ting can- cer, bat-ting the N - H - S to go to a cen - tre.

Instrument(s)

Percussion

22 G A Dm A Dm

Voice(s)

— of my choice. A Fight-ing on two— fronts! I fought and fought so

Instrument(s)

Percussion

27 C Dm C G 3

Voice(s)

hard, on - ly to find a pat-ient is treat ed strict-ly by the stan - dard pro

Instrument(s)

Percussion

31 A A Dm A A Dm C

Voice(s)

ce- dure, there are no choi- ces.

Instrument(s)

Percussion

3

Ho Wai-On No Money, No Choices

36

Voice(s) C G G A A Dm

Instrument(s) G know-ledge on-ly re-sult-ed in more frus-trat-ion, it's bet-ter not_ to

Percussion



41

Voice(s) A a break in the recording **Tempo primo**
(Tempo comodo)

Instrument(s) know. A Dm Dm F

Percussion add metal perc. to the last note. Chopsticks or wood/bamboo perc



46

Voice(s) C Dm F Dm

Instrument(s) F Gm Not hav-ing mon-ey,

Percussion



48

Voice(s) F Bb C Dm

Instrument(s) C Dm Bb A m7

Percussion

what is the al-tern-a-tive? No mon-ey,

Ho Wai-On No Money, No Choices

4

50

Am Gm Bb C F Dm C Am

Voice(s) no—choi - ces. But with-out the N - H - S, What a

Instrument(s) Dm C Am

Percussion



53

F C Am Am Bb Dm C F Dm

Voice(s) mis-er-a-ble world for man- y! With-out the N - H - S, in-stead of be-ing

Instrument(s) C Am

Percussion

more & more chordal and opera-like
poco allargando



56

C A⁷ Dm 3 A 3 A⁷ Dm A 3 Dm A Dm A

Voice(s) well a - gain to cre-ate this o-per-a, you might be writ-ing a new ver-sion of "Le

Instrument(s)

Percussion



59

Dm A⁷ Dm A 3 Dm A Dm Bb C

Voice(s) Mi-ser-a- bles"! Yet in my long bat-tle with can-cer, I saw man-y things that should

Instrument(s)

Percussion

Recitative-like

5

Ho Wai-On No Money, No Choices

62 Dm A a break in the recording

Voice(s) not be so.

Instrument(s) Dm C Dm C

Percussion add metal perc. to the last note.



65 **alla marcia**
or at a speed quasi speech

Voice(s)

Instrument(s) C G C It's the luck of the draw. G

Percussion **2/4** snare drum or the like



70 C G

Voice(s) Fill in the form and comply with the norms.

Instrument(s) A Dm

Percussion



73 A Dm A Dm

Voice(s) Risk-ing some cra-zy bu-reau - cra-tic rules. Risk-ing the terrors of

Instrument(s) Dm A

Percussion

Ho Wai-On No Money, No Choices

6

77

Voice(s) C G Dm C C
cler-i-cal-er-rors. Know-ing no-one dares to blow the whis-tle. No

Instrument(s) Dm

Percussion

82

Voice(s) Dm A Dm A a break in the recording
choice but to risk the safe-ty in num-bers.

Instrument(s) A Dm

Percussion add metal perc. to the last note.

88 **Tempo primo**
(Tempo comodo)

Voice(s) F Gm 3 C Dm F
But most im-por-tant-ly, you sur- vived, you sur

Instrument(s) Dm F

Percussion Chopsticks or wood/bamboo perc

91

Voice(s) Bb C F Dm Bb C Bb F
vived, you sur- vived.

Instrument(s) F C

Percussion add metal perc. to the last note.

5.10 Act 10: RADIO FUN & CHEMO COMEDY

DESCRIPTION:

This is meant to be a humorous computer graphics and animation number with more emphasis on electro-acoustic music and quasi-jazz music. I have also written ensemble music in staff notation for Act 10.

One of the most influential Cantonese male leads Ma *Sze-Tsang* 馬師曾 (1900-1964) was active before, during and after WW II, and created many Cantonese operas that are still performed today. He was not physically attractive (that's why he was better known for his comic rather than romantic roles – hence the comic nature of Act 10), but his performances were mesmerizing. He did not possess a particularly beautiful voice, but sang in his own special 'beggar-style' 乞兒腔 ' that he claimed was inspired by people of the lowest class. When I was a child in Hong Kong, people either admired his style of singing and performance, or found him irritating. He was daring in many ways: for example, after a tour in the US, he included jazz instruments and style in his opera, and abandoned some traditional practices. The audience was not amused, many returned their tickets, and he had to go back to traditional ways. I am sure that had Ma *Sze-Tsang* lived to see the easy availability of electro-acoustics, he would have introduced electro-acoustics into Cantonese opera. I have heard saxophone and violin (both of which can easily bend their pitch to adapt to Cantonese style), and other Western instruments used in Cantonese operas and blending well with traditional instruments and voices. But it is very rare to hear the use of electro-acoustics, except for electric keyboard used to mimic acoustic instruments, which in my opinion is not imaginative. Prior to being diagnosed with cancer, I spent about ten years working on analogue electronic music and some time on digital electro-acoustics. I am not a jazz musician, but this funny section with quasi-jazz and electro-acoustic music is my tribute to Ma *Sze-Tsang* – hopefully, the audience will be amused.

Mentioned in Act 10 – useful for reference, image and ideas:

Animation, big machine, computer music generated visual images, electro-acoustics, golden mean, *Goldfinger*, jazz, kinetic art, Ma *Sze-Tsang* 馬師曾, magic bullet, magic potion, radiotherapy treatment graphic plans, ray gun, saxophone, tattoo, violin.

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(i) Marcus West computer graphics pp. 357-358

(ii) Original music p.358

Radio Fun (AV11, notes p.431) electro-acoustic music

Radio Fun for flute and jazz guitar improvisation p.361

Chemo Comedy (AV13, notes p.432) electro-acoustic theme

Chemo Comedy for flute and jazz guitar improvisation p.362

Magic Potion: (pp. 363-367) for soprano, flute, B flat clarinet/trumpet,
clarinet in A, violin, santouri and percussion.

(iii) Recordings:

AV12 (notes p.432): **Radio Fun** for improvisation (flute: Rowland Sutherland)

AV14 (notes p.432): **Chemo Comedy** theme, and improvisation by Rowland
Sutherland

AV20 (notes p.434): Sun-Ma Sze-Tsang, **Wayfarer's Autumn Lament**

新马师曾客途秋恨

5.10.1 The Quben

Act 10

RADIO FUN & CHEMO COMEDY

Narration/SCREEN:

The heroine now finally faces the facts of therapy – a disturbing mixture of the frightening and the farcical. Is the big machine less scary for breaking down; a nurse more human for her lack of skill? The peculiarities of other patients also provide some irritation and some distraction. Alone in the treatment room she focuses on the extraordinary battle taking place within her body, willing the treatment to work.

Heroine's opening speech:

People who had had radiotherapy often said they found the process was not too much bother, but experienced fatigue and the need to sleep a lot – in my case, I just kept sleeping during that period; while chemotherapy has a bad press – but... let me tell you some funny things about radiotherapy and chemo.

Male lead/chorus:

You must be joking! How can radiotherapy and, especially, chemotherapy be funny?!

(Act 10 Quben can be used in two halves)

10A RADIO FUN (1st half)

Chorus/SCREEN: *(quasi-jazz music)*

Radio fun! Radio fun!

Radiotherapist/male lead:

You will be tattooed.

Heroine:

Cool!

Hope it's a nice pattern?

Oh, and that's it –

hardly noticeable.

Someone told me in the US,

gold is used as a marker,

surely that's more accurate than tattoo?

Chorus/male lead:

This is the NHS,

and she wants gold!

(Music: Goldfinger-ish)

Bronze is the best you can hope for –

third-class citizen!?

Radiotherapist/male lead:

You need to come for 58 sessions

– daily, except Saturdays and Sundays.

Heroine:

I free-lance most of my life.

Ha, this is like full-time office work.

Chorus/male lead:

Patients are not allowed

to wash the part

that's receiving treatment –

Heroine:

Quite a long time not to have a wash...

Radiotherapist:

The more sessions,
the smaller the dosage each time –
better for your muscle tone afterwards.

Chorus/male lead:

You won't end up as tough meat!

Heroine: (*ironically*)

My first session was cancelled because of a bomb scare!!

Chorus/male lead:

Why would anyone want to kill cancer patients?!

Heroine: (*ironically*)

I could not have my second session
'cos the machine caught fire!

Chorus/male lead:

Such excitement,
on top of cancer treatment!
Will she still have confidence?

Heroine:

It's chaotic in this place, waiting for treatment –
this elderly patient seems to need his whole tribe here to keep him company –
even toddlers and babies from his extended family –
crawling everywhere, and with their toys...
and I am all alone!

Chorus/male lead:

Well, perhaps the novelty will wear off soon,
and we'll have some peace and quiet.

Heroine: *(annoyed)*

Ouch! Someone hit me with some mags from behind!

(Then with a sympathetic smile)

Oh, it's that man who's having radiotherapy for his throat -
he's losing his voice after many sessions.

Chorus/male lead:

That's his way of saying hello to you,
and with a big smile on his face.

Radiotherapy nurse:

I prefer working in this clinic,
it's not restricted to one part of the body only –
I don't get so bored,
'cos I have to change the setting for different patients,
(with a you-know-what smile)
and some have to have radiotherapy in awkward places.
It's better than doing production-line type treatment –
just putting a different person at exactly the same spot.

Chorus/male lead:

So it might not be so great to go to a specialized centre –
how dreadful if the people who treat you got bored.

Heroine:

In this cool and big room...
Alone with this big machine...
A voice from the speaker tells me to keep still...
I wait for the ray gun to deliver the magic bullets...
Praying they will hit the target...

10B CHEMO COMEDY (2nd half)

Chorus/male lead:

Now, chemo comedy!

Chemo comedy!

Heroine:

This bag of clear poison
is the magic potion,
travelling through my veins
to every part of my body.

Chorus/male lead:

However weak you may feel,
Be assertive –
tell that nice nurse that you want someone else.
She's nice in every way but she can't get the needle in...
and then she loses confidence – it hurts!

Heroine: *(to the oncologist, annoyed)*

Why don't you inject something directly into where the cancer is and kill it,
instead of chemo to the whole body?!

Oncologist: *(amused)*

Because there is not yet such a thing.

(aside to audience)

This patient is not in a good mood.

Heroine:

Once the needle is in,
I feel the sensation of something cool traveling through me,
the poison mops up those immortal cancer cells.

Chorus/male lead:

A scientist once said that under the microscope,
harmful molecules look beautiful,
and they struggle when being destroyed...
He took pity on them!

Heroine:

While I feel this cool sensation,
the unwanted are being destroyed,
along with the good cells.
From all this killing in my body,
I will be saved.

Oncologist:

You are to have one bag,
instead of two, different, bags of poison
because you are a pianist.
We decided that –
the other bag of poison would affect the feeling in your fingertips.

Heroine:

It also allows me to keep a full head of my hair –
as the other bag of poison affects hair loss.

Chorus/male lead:

See what practising the piano can do for you!

Heroine:

I also don't need to be put next to the loo
as it's the other bag of poison that would make me sick.

Chorus/male lead:

See what practising the piano can do for you!

Heroine:

Funny thing,
some patients look better in their wigs
than with their original hair.

Chorus/male lead:

Funny thing,
some people who accompany their loved ones,
complain about suffering known side-effects of treatments,
while the patient is not affected.

Heroine's final speech:

The good thing is, nowadays,
radiotherapy and chemo have made big advances,
so things are easier and better for the patients.
(*Smile*) The later you get this, the better -
'radio- and chemo-therapy' seems neater.

SCREEN 3

Feeling deserted by friends in her hour of need the Heroine is forced to find new
strength to fight alone.

But wait ...

STRIP

See *Who* she's going to meet?

See next Act 11:

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

(*Si-fi music from end of Act 11*)

Quben for Act 10 ends

5.10.2 Production ideas for Act 10 *RADIO FUN & CHEMO COMEDY*

(i) Jazz and computer graphics video:

Act 10 can be a music video with emphasis on jazz and visual variations of computer graphics such as using images related to the golden mean – I do not comprehend the science but appreciate the beauty of images generated. In Quben 10A *Radio Fun*, there is a mention of the golden bullet. The imaginative use or animation of images of radiotherapy treatment graphic plans, dramatization of big scary machines that hum and crackle (perhaps like a kinetic art object), animation of humorous text, superimposition of cancer patients chatting and jazz musicians performing onto computer graphics, using computer music to generate visual images, are all good for making this video. Fig.5.1 is an example of an image generated by using the recording of a whale song:

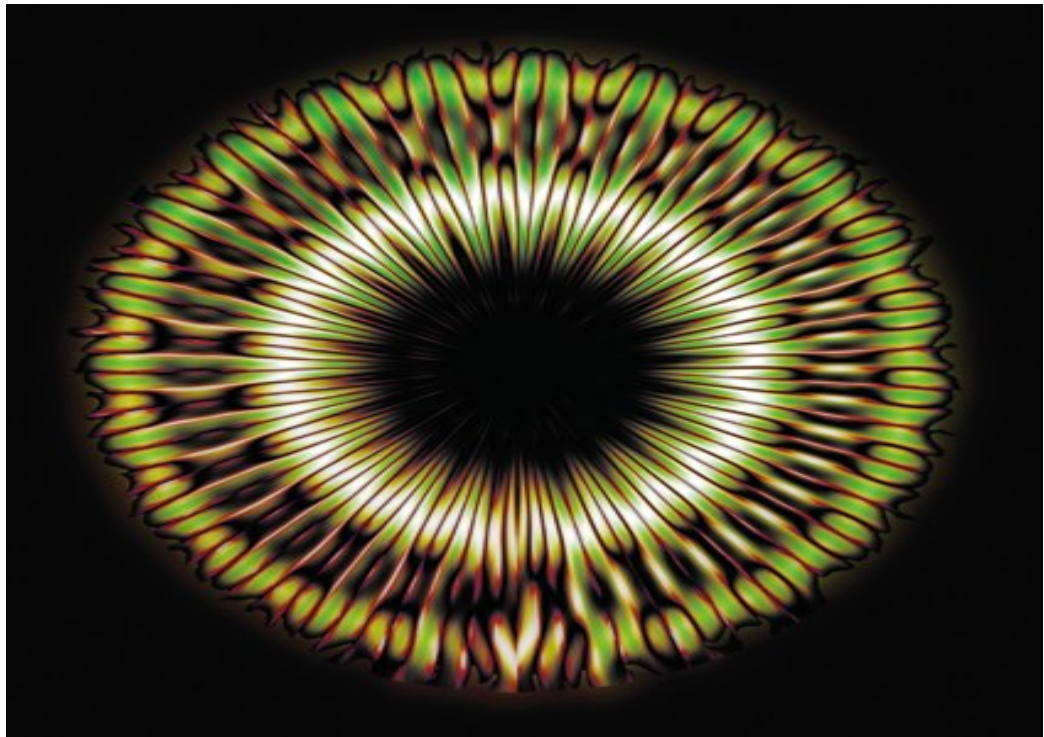


Fig.5.1: An image generated by recording of whale songs (NewScientist, 2010)

(ii) Live jazz improvisation with narration.

(iii) Dance:

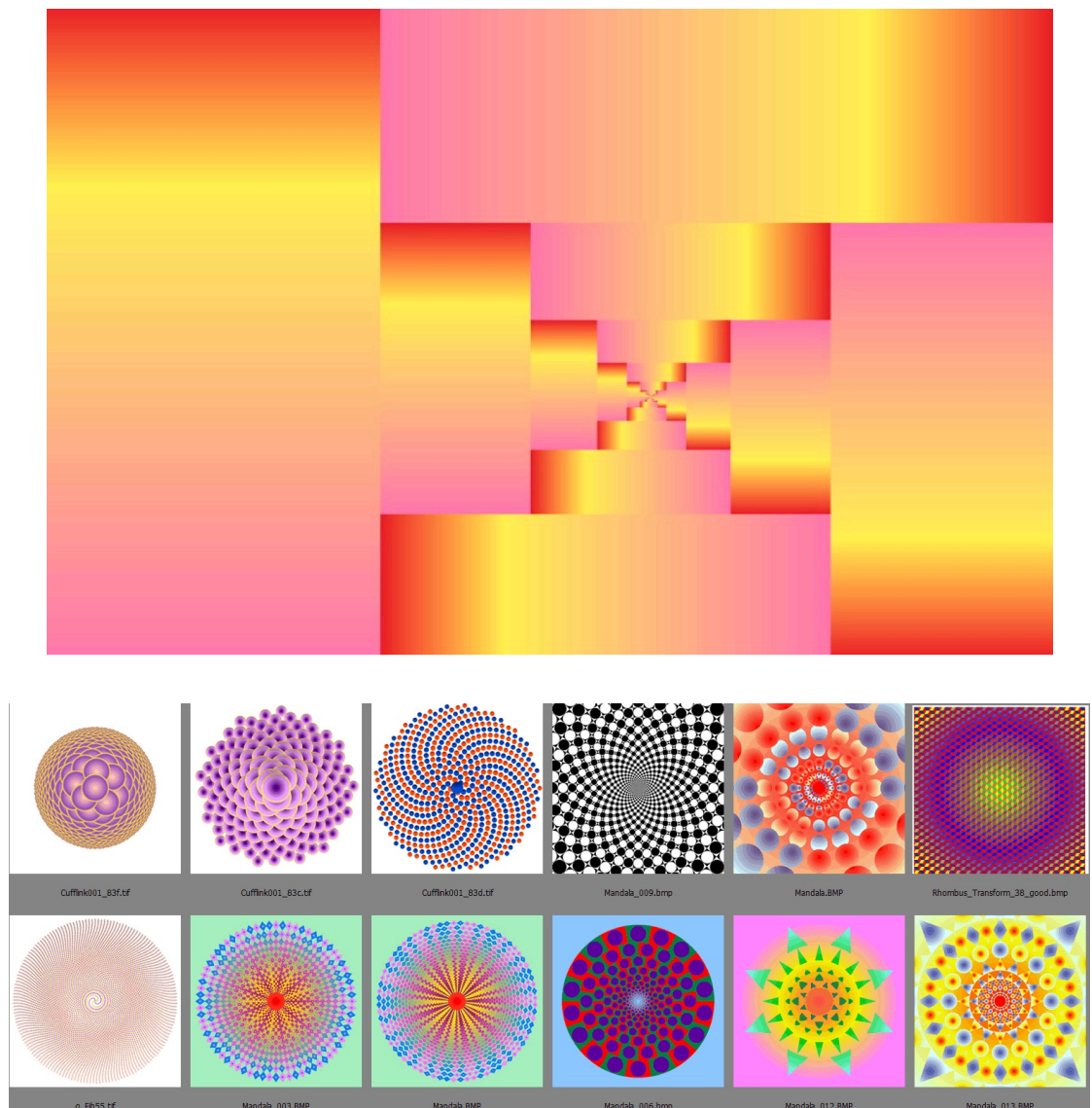
Use Act 10 Quben and music as the basis to create a comical dance with narration.

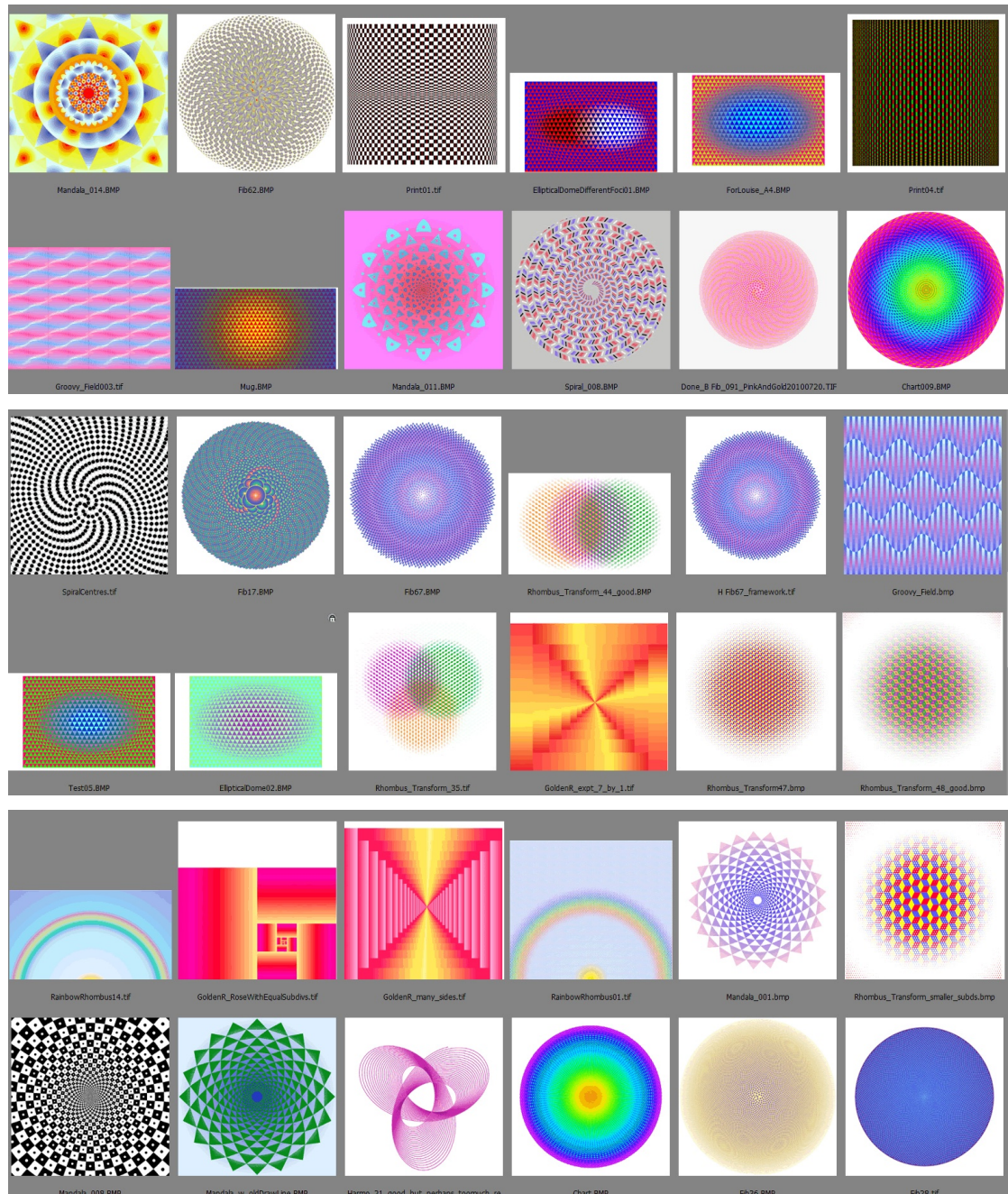
5.10.3 Complementary materials for Act 10 RADIO FUN & CHEMO COMEDY

(i) Golden means and other computer graphics by Dr Marcus West

Marcus was working on a PhD when I was an MA student at Cardiff University, and he helped me whenever I had computing problems. He has done much work on computer graphics and kindly permitted the inclusion of his work. The following (Fig.5.2) are some of his computer graphics. For more graphic materials visit his website: <http://marcuswest.artistwebsites.com/>. For using his computer graphics to realize Act 10, please follow his specific request: "include the original works somewhere, and my contact details along with them (i.e., his website link)."

Fig.5.2: Marcus West computer graphics



**(ii) ORIGINAL MUSIC:**

I spent about ten years working on electro-acoustics, mostly on analogue electronic music. After a long period of illness, the electronic music I had spent so much time creating can no longer be played due to obsolete equipment or master copies being damaged. However, I have started to work with this medium again using recycling as a means to inject new life and ensure preservation. The music for Act 10 can serve as an example.

(a) Radio Fun electro-acoustic music (AV11 & notes p.431). The electro-acoustic raw material is a jazzy theme mimicking Cantonese speech like a musical chat. This can be developed into a music video using computer graphics by Marcus West listed above.

(b) Chemo Comedy electro-acoustic theme (AV13 & notes p.432) is another example. The theme was created using retrograde fragments of the well-known traditional instrumental music *Spring-River-Flower-Moon-Night* 春江花月夜, a melody that is used in Cantonese opera. Retrograde is a common technique in Western composition, but I am not aware of it being used in Cantonese opera – perhaps due to the fact that it changes the melody completely and this would offend some audiences. Raw materials were generated in 1978 using now obsolete software at CCRMA (Stanford University). I include the theme portion here for users' imaginative development.

I have also started to recycle electro-acoustic ideas into staff notated music – i.e. instead of mimicking acoustic instruments, the other way round. The following are some examples:

(c) Radio Fun for flute and guitar improvisation:

In the staff notated quasi-jazz music, the theme and thick chords mimic the electro-acoustic version of (a) i.e., **AV11**. I am no jazz musician. I have simply supplied a theme, a chord structure and the suggestion of a musical structure for improvisation by flute and jazz guitar.

(d) Chemo Comedy: I used the electro-acoustic thematic material of (b), i.e. **AV13** to write a theme and a chord structure for flute and jazz guitar improvisation.

(e) Magic Potion: I further used the electro-acoustic thematic material of (b), i.e. **AV13** for writing staff notated music scored for soprano, flute, B flat clarinet/trumpet, clarinet in A, strings, santouri and percussion. There is the option to introduce other ethnic instruments – the notation aims to accommodate whatever instrument is available, i.e., providing a framework for arrangement and transposition. The lyrics are taken from the Quben of Act 10 (pp. 353-354):

*This bag of clear poison
is the magic potion.
I feel something cool travelling through me.
While I feel this cool
the unwanted are being destroyed
along with the good.
From all these killing in my body
I will be saved.*

(iii) RECORDINGS:

(a) AV12 (notes p.432): **Radio Fun** (flute: Rowland Sutherland, guitar: Scott Brophy)

(b) AV14 (notes p.432): **Chemo Comedy** theme and improvisation
(flute: Rowland Sutherland)

(c) AV20: Sun-Ma Sze-Tsang, **Wayfarer's Autumn Lament** 新馬師曾客途秋恨

Act 10 is my tribute to Ma Sze-tsang 馬師曾 (1990-1964) who attempted to introduce jazz into Cantoese opera. Sun-Ma Sze-Tsang 新馬師曾 (1916-1997) was a later performer whose name literally means 'new Ma Sze-tsang'. In this recording he incorporated African American singing style into his rendition (see 6.1.2(iv), pp.402-403). This may be used as alternative music for Act 10.

The scores of **Radio Fun** improvisatory version for flute and guitar (1 page),

Chemo Comedy improvisatory version for flute and guitar (1 page),

Magic Potion Soprano part (1page),

Magic Potion full score for soprano solo, flute, B \flat clarinet/trumpet, clarinet in A, violin, santouri and percussion follow (4 pages):

Listen to **AV12** & see notes p.432

Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor Act 10 A

Radio Fun

The following serves as a sketch for quasi-jazz improvisation.
Play as it is to start with.

Ho Wai-On

Giocoso

Flute

Jazz Guitar

This indicates harmonic/rhythmical patterns only. Guitarist can freely change the order of notes/octave and to play as chords and/or arpeggios/broken chords etc.

Fl.

J. Gtr.

Fl.

J. Gtr.

Harmonic pattern for further improvisation
with melodic/rhythmical materials in the sketch.
Each chord can be of any number of bars.

Fl.

J. Gtr.

Melodic pattern for contrapuntal improvisation between the players

Listen to **AV14** & see notes p.432

Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor Act 10 B

Chemo Comedy

Ho Wai-On

This serves as a sketch for improvisation. Play as it is to start with.

Cantabile delicato

Flute

Jazz Guitar

Gtr: Play as it is and explore playing the two notes as very low and very high (incl.harmonics), and/or add notes to form chords using the flute notes in that bar.

Fl.

J. Gtr.

Fl.

J. Gtr.

Fl.

J. Gtr.

Contrapuntal improvisation or like a round, with gtr also playing flute melodic material.

Sort of da capo

Fl.

J. Gtr.

Words: pp. 353-354

Soprano Solo

Magic Potion: Sop Aria

Ho Wai-On

Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor Act 10

words: Ho Wai-On & Michael Greenhough

♩. = 52

4 5

This bag of clear poison is the magic po tion,

10 15

ma gic po tion. I feel some thing cool tra vel ling

20

through me. While I feel this cool

25

the un want ed are be ing des troyed a long with the

30

good From all this kill ing

2

in my bo dy I will be saved.

N.B. Santouri was written for the electric keyboard – see (d) Magic Potion p.359

Magic Potion: Sop Aria

Ho Wai-On

Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor Act 10

words: Ho Wai-On & Michael Greenhough

words: Ho Wai-On & Michael Greenhough

$\text{♩} = 52$ 5

Soprano Solo

Clarinet in B \flat Any woodwind or string This

Clarinet in A Any woodwind or string

Violin preferably vla sempre pizz

Santouri

Gourd $\text{♩} = 52$ bamboo or wood

S. Solo 10

bag of clear poi son is the ma-gic po-tion, ma-gic

Cl.

Cl.

Vln.

San.

Grd.

2

Magic Potion : Sop Aria © Ho Wai-On

S. Solo

po_____tion. I feel_____ some thing cool_____ tra-vel-ling

15

Cl.

Cl.

tr

Vln.

San.

Grd.

S. Solo

through me. While_____ I feel_____ this cool_____

tr

Cl.

Cl.

Vln.

San.

Grd.

Magic Potion : Sop Aria © Ho Wai-On

3

20

S. Solo

the un-want-ed are be-ing des - troyed

Cl.

tr

Cl.

Vln.

San.

Grd.

25

S. Solo

a - long with the good

Cl.

tr

Cl.

Vln.

San.

Grd.

bamboo or wood

4

Magic Potion : Sop Aria © Ho Wai-On

30

S. Solo

From all this kill - ing in my_ bo - dy

Cl.

Cl.

Vln.

San.

Grd.

bamboo or wood

35

S. Solo

I will be saved.

Cl.

Cl.

Vln.

San.

Grd.

5.11: Act 11 YOU ARE NOT ALONE

DESCRIPTION:

This, the penultimate act of *Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor*, is also the longest and the most important. In the Cantonese opera of Hong Kong, it is usually after the mid point that one sees the most important act of the whole drama, and this is usually when the lead sings the title song (equivalent to the most popular aria in a Western opera). Before it became clear to me that the term 'opera' was a hindrance to this project, I had intended to work on an opera libretto. I started with this act and would like it to be like the male and female leads of Cantonese opera, and this act to be the point when both the male and female leads sing their most important numbers. I originally called this act *Alone, All Alone*, but changed it to *You Are Not Alone*, as the work is about seeing the funny side of things and understanding something good in any situation. The title for this act has a sense of the ridiculous and ambivalence, and will remind people of at least one scary sci-fi alien movie, hence my suggested use of electro-acoustics when relevant to the drama.

Mentioned in Act 11 – useful for reference, image and ideas:

Aliens, B Movies, Samuel Barber's *Agnus Dei (Adagio)*, the bell, Dvorak's *Song to the Moon* from *Rusalka*, *The land of the excluded middle*, Martians, opera libretto, Photoshop, *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* 刁蛮公主戀驕馬.

Contents:

5.11.1 The Quben p.369

5.11.2 Production ideas p.375

5.11.3 Complementary materials p.377

(i) Original music p.377

Heroine's Song (pp. 380-384) for soprano, B \flat clarinet/trumpet, piano and cello

You Are Not Alone (pp. 385-386) for SATB choir

You Are Not Alone (p.387) for flute solo

(ii) Electro-acoustics: **AV15** *Heroine's Song* verses 1-7 (pp. 369-371) narration

AV16 Andy Farnell's Pd cross-synth examples (notes p.432)

(iii) Music video **You Are Not Alone: AV4**, notes p.430

5.11.1 The Quben

Act 11

YOU ARE NOT ALONE

Narration or SCREEN:

Feeling deserted by friends in her hour of need the Heroine is forced to find a new strength to fight alone. The illness at last overcome, she begins to appreciate that her friends have their own difficulties too, and she starts to re-evaluate the meaning of love and friendship.

Heroine's opening speech:

Many friends, including old friends and those I thought were good friends, did not visit me during my battle with cancer...

Perhaps people were afraid?

Perhaps it's human nature, not wanting to be in places where there can't be much fun?

Perhaps the demands of life make us not want to get involved...?

Perhaps this was a good thing after all –

it forced me to be strong...

seeing weakness in others.

Ha! The cancer patient is the one to sympathise and understand...friends, old friends and good friends...

Heroine's song

(Verse 1)

No infection –

you need no protection.

Yet where are you, my friend?

Have you flown?

And am I left to moan,

alone, all alone?

(Verse 2)

My demeanour is courageous,
my condition, not contagious,
yet where are you, old friend?
Have you flown?
And am I left to groan,
alone, all alone?

(Verse 3)

It's quite outrageous –
I'm not contagious.
Yet where are you, my good friend?
Have you flown?
And am I left to moan,
alone, all alone?

(Verse 4)

I sustain a smile in company;
my demeanour is courageous;
my condition, not contagious,
yet you who spoke of love have flown.
I am left to groan and moan,
alone, all alone.

(Verse 5)

Who rings the bell?
It's me, it's me.
But no-one comes –
They flee, they flee,
and flee, from me.
Am I left to moan and groan,
alone, all alone?

(Verse 6)

If I show too much need,
no one comes –
they flee
from my need, my need,
leaving me to groan and moan,
alone, all alone.

(Verse 7)

Though I can't infect you,
no mask will protect you
from the gloom
that stalks my room.
You, my friend, my old friend, my good friend,
and you who spoke of love,
did I not see your need, your need?

Chorus:

You are not alone.
Survive, and be well.
In the journey through cancer,
you meet new people,
who are kind and helpful.

In the journey through cancer,
you meet new friends,
who are there for you,
on whom you can depend.

In the journey through cancer,
you find new strength,
you learn to accept
and empathize with friends, old friends, good friends...

Survive, and be well.

When you are well again,
you will see friends, old friends and good friends again,
and those who spoke of love.
Survive, and be well.

Male lead:

Someone dear to me got cancer – I'm uncomfortable to talk about it for many reasons... but I will reflect on this, and it's about self-deception and its consequences... I felt great strain... and I also felt guilty... I was exhausted...

Male lead's song: (*see 5.11.2(iv), pp. 376-7*)

How could she come so far
and get so near
and not know the secret cause of pain?

How could we know and they know
and not tell,
and not be asked?

If she feared
she would fear to ask,
but ask she would.

If she did not ask
then she surely knew.
But how could she, knowing,
not show the knowledge?

And now no longer
but all knowing,
visited only in dreams

across the decades
 she still preserves
 this precarious equilibrium,
 the inscrutable face of one lingering
 in the land of the excluded middle.

All I know
 is one day we will meet once more
 in the land of the excluded middle.
 where time has dissolved all secrets.
 Time has a way with secrets
 Our judgement forever suspended

Heroine:

Fond memory of any person is a real treasure no matter what.
 (*With irony*) Funny thing, sometimes being alone is not necessarily a bad thing –
 even during the battle with cancer –
 as there are people one would rather not see...

A QUIRKY TWIST (*optional*)

Spooky electro-acoustic music gradually creeps in, and if possible introduce the use of the theremin (associated with B movies of Martians and aliens), and what starts as a repeat of the previous Chorus, fusing with electro-acoustics, gradually turns into a distorted version with cosmic overtones. If resources allow, this could be a projection of images of graphic artwork on cosmic themes, 3-D animation of aliens, and/or silly photos of the Heroine with aliens (dressed-up humans, of course), or even a short alien dance number.

N.B. The theremin is an electro-acoustic instrument invented by Leon Theremin – see 5.6.2, under Electro-acoustic Ideass (pp. 290-291).

Performers can use “A QUIRKY TWIST” to explore creativity/flexible rendition/ad lib etc. An example:

Before “A QUIRKY TWIST” perform the music I wrote for chorus ‘You Are Not Alone’ as written, then perform it again in a different way for A QUIRKY TWIST, singing part of it as written, part as a mixture of some melodic variation and/or with electro-acoustics:

Chorus:

(Music as written) You are not alone.

(Varied music) Survive, and be well.

In the journey through cancer,

(Music as written) You meet new people,

(Varied music) who are kind and helpful.

In the journey through cancer,

(Music as written) You meet new friends,

(Varied music and with more distortion)

who are there for you,

on whom you can depend.

In the journey through cancer,

you find new strength,

you learn to accept and empathize with friends, old friends, good friends...

(Music as written)

Survive, and be well.

When you are well again,

you will see friends, old friends and good friends again,

and those who spoke of love.

Chorus speak/yell:

AND EVEN ALIENS!

You are not alone!!! *(Electronic laughter)*

Survive, and be well!

STRIP

Not alone!

Survive!

Be well!

See next, Act 12:

POSTLUDE BOUQUETS

Ideally, at this point, or at the beginning of the next and last act POSTLUDE BOUQUETS, there should be video animation of little balloons each with the name/image of a flower in alphabetical order: acacia amaryllis anemone aster azalea begonia bluebell broom buttercup cactus (flowers) calendula camellia chamomile candytuft carnation clematis columbine cornflower cowslip crocus cyclamen daffodil dahlia delphinium edelweiss fuchsia gardenia gentian geranium gladiolus groundsel hawthorn heather hibiscus hollyhock honeysuckle hyacinth hydrangea iris japonica jasmine kiwi (flowers) larkspur lavender lilac lobelia lotus magnolia marguerite marigold marshmallow mayflower mimosa myrtle narcissus nasturtium oleander orchid pansy peony periwinkle petunia phlox pink poppy primrose quince (flower) rhododendron rose snapdragon snowball snowdrop stock sunflower tulip ursinia verbena viola violet wallflower wisteria xanthosoma yarrow zinnia...

Quben of Act 11 ends

5.11.2 Production ideas for Act 11 YOU ARE NOT ALONE

i) Concert/combined arts performance

An actress narrates the part of the Heroine and a male actor narrates the part of the male lead (optional: both also ad lib in *A QUIRKY TWIST*), soprano sings the music for Act 11 *Heroine's Song* with available instrumentation, and SATB chorus sings *You Are Not Alone* a cappella or with available instrumentation doubling the parts or in your own harmonization. Then at *A QUIRKY TWIST* introduce electro-acoustics, the theremin, projection and dancers in costume according to available resources.

ii) Internet video

Make an Internet video using the recorded narration of *Heroine Song* (**AV15**, notes p.432) with relevant images. The video can be as simple as shooting close-ups of a woman as the Heroine, or a man and a woman as the male and female leads, or filming the heroine in one straight take as the basis for adding still images of her and other film clips, such as busy street scenes of people carrying on their everyday life etc., with captions here and there.

iii) Alien visual images workshop

A creative workshop could be arranged, as inspired by *A QUIRKY TWIST* of Act 11, to create images of aliens – such as by modifying images of insects with Photoshop. The following image of a caterpillar is an example that can be coloured green and with some modification turned into the image of a Martian:



Fig.5.3: Caterpillar as the image of a Martian

iv) Song writing workshop:

In Chapter 4 *My Cross-Cultural Combined Arts Prototype*, under 4.2.3 (p.181), I mentioned that Dr Michael Greenhough let me include in my Quben a poem he wrote that he had kept private until then, in keeping with the principle of recycling central to Cantonese opera. This is the *Male Lead's Song* after the *Heroine's Song* in Act 11

Quben, and starts with "*How could she come so far and get so near and not know the secret cause of pain?*" (p.372). A song writing workshop could be arranged for the purpose of setting this poem to music as a reply to the music of my soprano aria *The Heroine's Song* (p.380), and both songs could then be performed as a pair; or by interpolating the texts of this poem with any or all of the seven verses of the *Heroine's Song* of Act 11 (pp. 369-371), using music thematic materials from the music of Act 11 to write a duet for the Heroine and the male lead.

5.11.3 Complementary materials for Act 11 **YOU ARE NOT ALONE**

The melodies of Cantonese opera are familiar to even the lowest strata of the society and most people can attempt to sing them. Based on my experience as a composer of Western contemporary Classical music for more than thirty years, it seems to me that a reason for the general public not warming to contemporary music is that most of the music is un-singable, and that the audience feel uncomfortable with non-diatonic harmony or unusual tonality. In popular Western Classical music, the melody and diatonic harmony are inseparable, unlike Cantonese opera where the melody is an entity on its own. In some new Cantonese operas an attempt has been made to add Western harmony to traditional melodies, but this has not always resulted in an improvement to the music, probably due to the fact that it is the product of someone who is more knowledgeable in Cantonese opera than in Western harmony trying to harmonize a straight quote of a melody that is not the product of Western harmony. The music I have written is my humble attempt to marry these two traditions, with melodies influenced by characteristics of Cantonese opera rather than a straight quote, and with slightly more sophisticated diatonic harmony. Hopefully the music will be both sufficiently enjoyable and singable for the general public.

(i) ORIGINAL MUSIC

The Heroine's Song and ***You Are Not Alone*** – both of these can be presented in variant versions as an example of the way that Cantonese opera performs selected tunes in variant forms – basically a varied doubling. Act 11 is concert hall oriented; the music is more detailed and is notated with expression markings.

(a) Heroine's Song

Soprano aria with B \flat clarinet/trumpet, piano and cello

Lyrics: *Heroine's Song* (Verse 4, p.370)

*I sustain a smile in company,
my demeanour is courageous,
my condition, not contagious,
yet you who spoke of love have flown.
I am left to groan and moan,
alone, all alone.*

The melodic inspiration came from my watching the 2nd Act of the 1984 Sassy *Princess Blunt Husband* 刁蛮公主戇驸马 on the Internet. Though I was initially more interested in the percussion of this clip (**AV25**, notes p.436), I jotted down the melody as pitches only, noting the big leaps and runs, and how the instruments played varied repeats and answered the voice etc. with the intention of applying these characteristics to my composition. As I would like *The Heroine's Song* to be a short and appealing aria, I listened to the popular Dvorak *Song to the Moon* from *Rusalka* for inspiration and noted the harmonic structure, which is what Cantonese opera lacks. I then read Verse 4 of *The Heroine's Song* of Act 11 many times to get some sense of shape and rhythm.

(b) You Are Not Alone for SATB choir

Thinking about Cantonese opera reaching the masses, I listened to the popular Samuel Barber *Agnus Dei (Adagio)*, was inspired by it and composed *You Are Not Alone* for a cappella SATB choir. Although my work does not sound like the *Agnus Dei*, I was inspired by its atmosphere and harmonic ambience.

(c) You Are Not Alone for flute solo

For the flautist Rowland Sutherland, I have made a solo flute version. This can be useful for any stage performance or other forms of realization such as music video (see p.379 re **AV4**).

Alternative music for Act 11:

Dvorak's *Song to the Moon* from *Rusalka*

Samuel Barber's *Agnus Dei (Adagio)*

(ii) ELECTRO-ACOUSTICS:

(a) I include **AV15** (notes p.432) which is a recording of Deborah Foote's narration of the *Heroine's Song* verses 1-7 (pp. 369-371) for experiments with electro-acoustics.

(b) For inspiration, I also include **AV16** (notes p.432) which is a folder of Andy Farnell's cross-synth examples of processing a short clip of Deborah's narration with instrumental sound using the software Pd (Pure Data).

(iii) MUSIC VIDEO: *You Are Not Alone* (AV4, notes p.430)

This combines word choreography (i.e. animation, also see **AV1** & notes p.429) with video footages of fountains and waves. Music performed by cellists Katerina Majcen, flautist Rowland Sutherland, the Anglia Chamber Choir and conducted by Dr Paul Rhys. The recordings were then assembled electro-acoustically by myself. This music video is also available on Internet websites such as YouTube.

The scores of ***Heroine's Song*** soprano part (1 page) and **full scores** for soprano, B \flat clarinet/trumpet, piano and cello (4 pages); ***You Are Not Alone*** for SATB choir (2 pages); and ***You Are Not Alone*** for flute solo follow:

Words: p.370

Soprano Solo

Heroine's Song (verse 4)

Ho Wai-On

Transposing Score

Song and Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor Act 11

Words: Ho Wai-On & Michael Greenhough

Sop: with feelings & rubato, like a diva singing an eagerly awaited aria on stage

♩ = 56 approx.

4
I sus - tain a smile in com pan y,

8
my de - mean - our is cou - ra - geous, my con

13
di - tion not con - ta - gious, yet you who spoke of

17
love have flown, flown, have flown have flown, yet

21
you who spoke of love yet you who spoke of love, of love

24
love, I am left to groan

30
and moan. A - lone, all a - lone.

Heroine's Song (verse 4)

Ho Wai-On

Song and Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor Act 11

Transposing Score

Words: Ho Wai-On & Michael Greenhough

Trumpet in B \flat $\text{♩} = 56$ approx.

Tpt: use suitable mute to produce a mellow and muffled tone, or use a clarinetist instead

Violoncello $\text{♩} = 56$ approx.

Vc: indicating phrasing only - bowing at your discretion; please try ad lib gliss, molto vib & ornaments

5 Sop: with feelings & rubato, like a diva singing an eagerly awaited aria on stage

S. Solo

I sus - tain a smile in com pan - y,

Tpt.

Pno: slow arpeggios + pedal to produce ambiance rather than chordal texture;
or use keyboard and experiment: e.g. try organ and aim at making it sounding not like the organ.

Pno.

Vc. Sul C or gliss on 2 strings

8

S. Solo

my de - mean - our is cou - ra - geous,

Tpt.

Pno.

Vc.

2

17

S. Solo

love have flown, flown, have flown have flown,

Tpt.

Pno.

Vc.

Ho Wai-On Act 11 Heroine's Song Verse 4 TS 3

20

S. Solo

yet you_ who_ spoke_ of love_ yet you who spoke of

Tpt.

Pno.

Vc.

23

S. Solo

love, of love, love,

Tpt.

Pno.

Vc.

26

S. Solo

I am left to groan

Tpt.

Pno.

Vc.

Sul C or gliss on 2 strings

4

Ho Wai-On Act 11 Heroine's Song Verse 4 TS

30

S. Solo

and_ moan. A - lone, all_ a -

Tpt.

Vc.



33

S. Solo

lone._

Vc.

Words: pp. 371-372

You Are Not Alone Chorus SATB

Ho Wai-On
aka Ann-Kay Lin

words: Ho Wai-On & Mike Greenhough

SOPRANO

ALTO

TENOR

BASS

You are not a - lone. Sur-vive and be well. In the joun-ney through can- cer, you meet new

You are not a - lone. Sur-vive and be well. In the joun-ney through can- cer, you meet new

You are not a - lone. Sur-vive and be well. In the joun-ney through can- cer, you meet new

You are not a - lone. Sur- vive and be well. In the joun-ney through can- cer, you meet new

6

S.

A.

T.

B.

peo- ple, who are kind and help- ful. In the joun-ney through can- cer, you meet new friends who are

peo - ple, who are kind and help- ful. In the joun-ney through can- cer, you meet new friends who are

peo - ple, who are kind and help- ful. In the joun-ney through can- cer, you meet new friends who are

peo- ple, who are kind and help- ful. In the joun-ney through can- cer, you meet new friends who are

11

S.

A.

T.

B.

there for you on whom you can de- pend. In the joun-ney through can- cer, you find new strength, you

there for you on whom you can de- pend. In the joun-ney through can- cer, you find new strength, you

there for you on whom you can de- pend. In the joun-ney through can- cer, you find new strength, you

there for you on whom you can de- pend. In the joun-ney through can- cer, you find new strength, you

2 Ho Wai-On You Are Not Alone Chorus

16 *poco* 3

S. learn to ac- cept and em-pa-thise with friends, old friends, good friends. Sur - vive and be well.

A. learn to ac- cept and em-pa-thise with friends, old friends, good friends. Sur - vive and be well.

T. learn to ac- cept and em-pa-thise with friends, old friends, good friends. Sur - vive and be well.

B. learn to ac- cept and em-pa-thise with friends, old friends, good friends. Sur - vive and be well.

21

S. — When you are well a - gain, you will see friends, old friends,

A. — When you are well a - gain, you will see friends, old friends,

T. — When you are well a - gain, you will see friends, old friends,

B. — When you are well a - gain, you will see friends, old friends,

26

S. good friends, and those who spoke of love — You are not a - lone.

A. good friends, and those who spoke of love — You are not a - lone.

T. good friends, and those who spoke of love — You are not a - lone.

B. good friends, and those who spoke of love — You are not a - lone.

Flute Solo on You Are Not Alone

Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor Act 11

Ho Wai-On

Tempo comodo

*expressivo e poco rubato*

join smoothly



5.12 Act 12: **POSTLUDE BOUQUEUT**

DESCRIPTION

A recapitulation of music and images/ideas from previous sections, and with a surprise coda...

The Cantonese opera I saw in Hong Kong always finishes on a happy note so that the audience feels happy after watching a performance – lovers who had committed suicide would turn into beautiful butterflies in the final act (male and female leads dressed in beautiful butterfly-like costumes singing and dancing) or they would be happily reunited now as deities in a celestial palace, whilst the bad people would receive punishment... All the troupe would appear on stage and sing happy words together – such a chorus would signify the ending, and the audience would get up to leave while the troupe was still singing. I remember a Cantonese film that was adapted from *Madame Butterfly* but was too young to remember the plot – so I am not sure whether Pinkerton returned to have a happy ending with Cio-Cio San.

Mentioned in Act 12 – useful for reference, image and ideas:

A-Z flowers, Beachy Head, Bouquets, birthday present, *The Butterfly Lovers*, Chelsea Flower Show, Gloria Gaynor, *Madame Butterfly*, Marion Montgomery, Postlude, Frank Sinatra, Switzerland, *That's Life!* (Dean Kay and Kelly Gordon).

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Original music: *Many Happy Returns* for piano pp. 395-396

5.12.1 The Quben

Act 12

POSTLUDE BOUQUETS

SCREEN

At the end of performances bouquets are usual...

Music and projection/animation of little balloons each with the name/image of a flower in alphabetical order:

*Acacia amaryllis anemone aster azalea begonia bluebell buttercup cactus (flowers)
calendula camellia chamomile candytuft carnation clematis columbine cornflower
cowslip crocus cyclamen daffodil dahlia delphinium edelweiss fuchsia gardenia
gentian geranium gladiolus groundsel hawthorn heather hibiscus hollyhock
honeysuckle hyacinth hydrangea iris japonica jasmine kiwi (flowers) larkspur
lavender lilac lobelia lotus magnolia marguerite marigold marshmallow mayflower
mimosa myrtle narcissus nasturtium oleander orchid pansy peony periwinkle petunia
phlox pink poppy primrose quince (flower) rhododendron rose snapdragon snowball
snowdrop stock sunflower tulip ursinia verbena viola violet wallflower wisteria
xanthosoma yarrow zinnia...*

Heroine's opening speech:

Many cancer survivors look just like ordinary people. When I opened the door to those who came to see me after my long battle, I often saw a mixture of fear and surprise on their faces – perhaps they were expecting to see a bald, pale, thin and weak creature, crawling instead of walking, and were surprised to see me upright, with rosy cheeks and hair on my head. And hell! I had put on weight as well – Ah! Can't even lose weight as some reward after all this! Being a survivor, I now appreciate many things that I used to take for granted.

As a birthday present from my goddaughter Sue, I went to the Chelsea Flower Show for the very first time – had I not survived cancer, I would not have been able to see all those beautiful flowers. I saw how people of all ages enjoyed the beauty of such an abundance of colours and perfumes, and I feel the images of flowers may be apt as a visual grand finale. Had I not survived, I would not have been able to enjoy the companionship of Sue who was kind to me during my long battle with cancer, and is like the daughter I never had...

Heroine's Song:

After my battles, when I opened my door
what my visitors expected was skin and bones
but what they got was:
rosy cheeks,
a full head of hair,
and hell, not skin and bone
but an even fuller figure –
groan!

Chorus:

How women hate putting on weight!

(Ha ha ha ha ha! Electro-acoustic and/or sung laughter)

Heroine:

How can people say they have no regrets in their life?
I have loads.
Often I wish I could push time back,
and with hindsight,
relive critical moments in my life.

I have many regrets,
and especially about men:
The man that's my father that I will never know...

Chorus/male lead: *(with ambivalent smile)*

Maybe just as well –
eh... eh think about Oedipus...

Heroine:

The man I want so much to love and be with but will never have...

Chorus/male lead:

Maybe just as well – eh,
eh think about it –
reality can be disappointing.

Heroine:

The son I can never have –
childbearing is denied to me.

Chorus/male lead:

Well, you have the gift to create.

Heroine:

I have known men as very close friends,
but once they are married, that's the end.
All because I am a woman...
It can be hard to be a woman on her own.

(Music from Act 11 You Are Not Alone)

Chorus/male lead:

Maybe just as well, – eh,
eh think about it –
solitude is good for a creative artist.

Heroine's final speech:

Looking back,
I was so very unhappy for much of the my life,
yet after surviving cancer,
I have become a happier person...
even though from what I have told you about my life,
I really should not feel happy.

I now look at life differently...

lots of things don't seem to matter anymore.

I remember those cancer survivors I came across

when I was first in hospital;

I couldn't understand why they should want to live at all.

I cry for others easily but I seldom cry for myself.

Yet now tears well up in my eyes –

not because of sadness,

but I feel moved by sharing all this with all of you,

and thank you,

for watching my humble show.

And thank you,

to all those who took part.

SCREEN

Thank you,

and we hope you have enjoyed it!

STRIP:

Carpe Diem! (*Latin for 'seize the day!'*)

My ticket turned out to be the 'round trip'!

Bye bye Beachy Head!

Switzerland can wait!

I HAVE Survived – Gloria Gaynor, eat your heart out!

Tablets tabs, the tabs, the jabs, the tests, the jests, are all behind me now!

I treat myself to a new sign above my bed back home –

“LOTS BY MOUTH”!

No more tattoos!

My piano awaits, has been waiting silently...patiently for me –

Never lost faith!

An unexpected CODA:

While I was working on this PhD project, my goddaughter Sue was diagnosed with cancer. She refused treatment and opted for praying for God's miracle. I tried to reason with her when her cancer consultant said she should be admitted for an operation ASAP, and for that, she has refused to see me ever since. I feel alone without her. Perhaps there's no happy ever after in life? ...That's Life!!

I include a photo taken by my goddaughter Sue at the Chelsea Flower Show (her birthday present to me) and the music *Many Happy Returns* (my birthday present to Sue) for the use of Act 12.



Fig.5.4: Sue's photograph of Chelsea Flower Show

Quben for Act 12 ends

5.12.2 Production ideas for Act 12 Quben *POSTLUDE BOUQUETS*

Act 1 *A Kaleidoscopic Prelude* (Here comes the trailer! p.219) is like the exposition of all 12 acts. Visually Act 12 would be a profusion of images of flowers with images and music from previous sections – like a recapitulation.

I had wanted to find a tall, dark and handsome actor who could appear in all 12 Acts, gradually changing from the taciturn surgeon to Dracula to A-Man-With-No-Name to the grim image of Death as a man in black, to a comical singing and dancing doctor... to a friendly man in a black turtle-neck jumper, now the Heroine's friend, but this might be an impossible task for a no-budget production.

5.12.3 Complementary materials for Act 12 *POSTLUDE BOUQUETS*

Suggested alternative music for Act 12 is the famous popular song *That's Life* by Dean Kay and Kelly Gordon (sung by Marion Montgomery in 1964). Frank Sinatra's 1966 rendition is perhaps the best-known version. There is speech quality in Frank Sinatra's singing that reminds me of male singing in Cantonese opera. Lyrics and performances of '*That's Life*' are widely available on the Net.

ORIGINAL MUSIC:

Many Happy Returns – a piano piece I wrote for my goddaughter Sue for her birthday, and for her to play at the piano. Sue asked for a piece in the style of Classical music, and the result was to her liking. Though the music is simple and conventional, this could be used as material and developed into something more interesting.

The score of *Many Happy Returns* for piano follows (2 pages):

Sort of "Ritornello"... for Act 12 Postlude Bouquets

Many Happy Returns

Ho Wai-On
(aka Ann-Kay Lin)

to my goddaughter Sue Chiu who asked me to write a short peice that sounds like Classical music

Moderate
poco f
con ped.

8 *mf* *Red.* *see boxed footnote

14 *mp* *mf*

19 *mf*

24 *mf*

28 *f* *Red.*

33 con ped.

* Rehearsal marks suggest practising in sections

© Ho Wai-On (aka Ann-Kay Lin)

The musical score is written for piano and features a variety of musical notations including treble and bass staves, key signatures, time signatures, and dynamic markings. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 40, 46, 51, 55, 61, 66, and 71 clearly marked. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. Pedal points are marked with 'Ped.' and 'con ped.'. The score includes several chord symbols in boxes: [D], [E], and [F]. The tempo and mood markings include 'Poco meno', 'molto Allargando', and 'rit e cresc...'. The score concludes with a double bar line.

40

46

51

55

61

66

71

rit e cresc...

Poco meno

molto Allargando

f con ped.

[D]

[E]

[F]

mf

con ped.

Ped.

"Many Happy Returns" to my goddaughter Sue Chiu © Ho Wai-On (aka Ann-Kay Lin) Duration 3 to 5 mins

Chapter 6

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6.1 REFLECTION

6.1.1 ON INVOLVING AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL MATERIALS

I am a private person and initially had no intention to include autobiographical materials in my PhD. However, even at an early stage, Professor Kerstin Bueschges, an active performer and academic involved in 'practice-as research' who attended my first year presentation (2010), suggested that I should consider producing an autobiographical PhD thesis. Later, others who had read my work in progress also suggested I should develop the autobiographical dimension of my work. Gradually I realized that it was necessary to involve the autobiographical for aspects related to my cross-cultural practice and the society and Cantonese opera of my childhood, which have served as the inspiration for the creation of my prototype. Due to its flexible, improvisatory nature and its low social status, few official contemporary records of Cantonese opera have survived. Involving the autobiographical in this PhD thesis provides a glimpse of the happenings and live performances of the period that reflect a culture of transient nature.

My recent experience suggests that some of the rich performance traditions I experienced in Hong Kong as a child are being overlooked or forgotten. Hong Kong Cantonese opera adapted Shakespeare in the early 1950s, possibly earlier: e.g. *The Merchant of Venice* as *One Pound Meat* in 1952 (Chen F., 2012). Hung Sin-Nui 红线女, and later her disciple Ni Hui-Ying 倪惠英, both revived this adaptation in Canton (p.30) as *Heaven's Proud Daughter* 天之骄女 (1983) and *Wealthy Daughter* 豪門千金 (2009). In 2015, a Hong Kong Cantonese opera adaptation of *Hamlet* called *Prince's Revenge* by performer/director Lai Yiu-Wai 黎耀威 was performed from 13 to 15 February at Hong Kong Kwai Tsing Theatre 葵青劇院 (paper.wenwepo.com) and the cast included veteran performer Franco Yuen 阮兆輝 (1945-). From 17 to 23 August 2015 a stage play *Macbeth in Cantonese* was performed at the Globe Theatre, London and was billed as representative of Hong Kong hybrid culture. From the costumes of the publicity photos for this London production (Fig 6.1) I expected some Cantonese opera characteristics in the performance, at least in the music and movement, since I was aware of the existing Shakespeare-Cantonese opera tradition. What I saw and heard was an attempt at minimalist style, perhaps drawing inspiration from Japanese theatre: a simple backdrop in the style of Japanese painting, a concert flute playing a melody akin to high pitched shakuhachi, sparse drum beats

like a single Japanese taiko drum in minimal and slow motion, and simple electro-acoustics. There was no choreographed kung fu typical of Hong Kong culture, but instead minimal ninja, actors dressed in black on stage like kabuki stagehands, and simplified rapid disappearing tricks of Kabuki such as the killings happening behind the backdrop, and the use of masks like Noh (e.g., Fig.6.1, the two performer in black on the right). On several occasions I had to read the English subtitles to understand what was going on, even though I speak fluent Cantonese and have seen many English productions of Macbeth. Perhaps this was a production by those who had attended English schools and received little exposure to Cantonese opera, let alone valuing it as Hong Kong culture.



Fig.6.1: *Macbeth in Cantonese* (source: CNN Aug 18, 2015)

This recent experience has persuaded me of the importance of preserving a record by those who have experienced and understand the value of what might be overlooked by later generations. Had the London production of 2015 drawn at least some inspiration from Hong Kong's not so distant past, it might have made a deeper impact and been more meaningful to the audience who attended from London's China Town. Instead I merely heard them saying that they felt elevated because it was the first time they had been in such a prestigious venue.

6.1.2 ON INCLUSION OF CLASSIC RECORDINGS AS A BEFITTING CONCLUSION

I have refrained from including transcriptions of Cantonese opera music, whether in staff notation or in numeral notation 简谱, as they cannot present the true nature of

Cantonese opera. The only exception is one example in Chapter 4 *Explaining My Prototype*, which serves to explain the present day practice of a ‘song-style designer 唱腔设计’, and to provide an example of numeral notation (pp.185-186). The Cantonese opera of my childhood was affected by the sound of the words in Cantonese, including words added intuitively by a singer. The singing and instrumental music included pitches outside the equal-tempered 12 tones. Percussion followed the performers’ singing and movements with rhythmic flexibility, and in a manner that the practitioners were accustomed to. Chapter 3 *Cantonese Opera* draws together many musical and cultural strands using numerous outside sources and images as well as my own experience. But for those who have not heard or seen the Cantonese opera that I remember, words and photos are insufficient. As the focus of this PhD is on creation and performance, I have included four Classic sound recordings and two video recordings by top lead performers featured in Chapter 3 as well as in other chapters, which represent the crowning glory of the Hong Kong Cantonese opera of my childhood as a fitting conclusion. I have drawn on all of these as inspiration in composing original music for my prototype, e.g. the music for Act 1 and Act 11. I hope that these recordings will also be of interest to others, serving to guide and inspire creators, directors and performers; perhaps they will have a similar impact as Japanese Noh did on J.D. Morley (see 2.3.2, p.50), or Haiku on Professor Roderick Watkins (see 2.4.2(iii), p.62). These recordings are in the enclosed ‘Audio/Video Folder’ of this PhD thesis. The following is a simple introduction to each of them:

(i) Fong Yim-Fun, GLAMOROUS SUN RED PHOENIX 芳艳芬艳阳丹凤 1958



Audio (AV17) duration 13:09

Fig.6.2: A page of the lyrics with a photo of Fong

Source: CosmosEarthManLake, 2015, Youtube.

Fong Yim-Fun (see 3.2.2(i), p.89), has a distinct nasal singing style that is still modelled by others such as the Plum-Flower-Prize winner Ceng Hui 曾慧 who spent some time in Hong Kong. Fong sings naturally and with ease – listen to the long run

(on one word) near the end. The words are by Hong Kong's top lyricist Tang *Ti-Seng* 唐滌生. The compilation consists of frequently used traditional tunes and an existing song 小曲 that is dance-like in this rendition. Active xylophone part might indicate a regular performer at the time, since it is not the norm for Cantonese opera.

The drama: Emperor Wu of Han 漢武帝 (156-87 BC) in his sixties takes a beautiful young girl of sixteen as royal consort. She bears him his youngest son. By 88 BC, Emperor Wu becomes seriously ill and orders execution of the mother, as the youngest son is to be his heir, and she must be prevented for acquiring political power after his death. After her death the royal consort often appears as a mythical bird and tells the story in song.

(ii) Hung Sin-Nui, ZHAOJUN BEYOND THE GREAT WALLS 红线女昭君出塞 1959



Audio (AV18) duration 13:07

Fig.6.3: Hung *Sin-Nui* as the great beauty Wong *Zhaojun* (Source: Anita aypc 2013, Youtube).

Hung *Sin-Nui* made this recording not long after returning to Canton. This is her best-known song.

Hung *Sin-Nui* (see 3.2.2(ii), p.91), her voice is influenced by many factors (e.g., Peking opera and Western vocal training) and at this stage is probably still under the influence of her then husband Ma *Sze-Tsang* 馬師曾 (see Chapter 5 Act 10 Description, p.347) who wrote the lyrics. Note her controlled perfection such as the wide glissandi and the long melisma near the end.

The drama: *Zhaojun* 昭君 (c.50 BC-) is regarded as one of the four great beauties of ancient China. Emperor Yuan 漢元帝 (75–33 BC) of the Han dynasty presents her as one of his daughters to marry the leader of Xiongnu 匈奴 who occupies the land beyond the Great Walls in order to establish friendly relations – realizing her beauty too late to keep her as a concubine for himself. On her way to an uncertain future *Zhaojun* sings on horseback accompanied by pipa.

(iii) Yam Kim-Fai Bak Sheut-Sin, *EMPEROR-DAUGHTER-FLOWER* 任白帝女花香天

Fig.6.4: (source: AUVPlayer)

Record sleeve design of *EMPEROR-DAUGHTER-FLOWER*

Sung by the famous Yam-Bak duo (see 3.2.2(ii), p.90) with lyrics by Tang *Ti-Seng* 唐滌生.

Audio (AV19) 1960 duration 06:10

This comprises mostly of an existing melody called *Autumn Yearning at the Dresser* 妝台秋思. The song is immensely popular and has been sung by Westerners. The accompaniment makes the simple pentatonic melody interesting.

Video (AV24) 1959 duration: 07:28

Though this is a Cantonese opera film, it retains many of the characteristics of stage performance. I include this example because of the English subtitles and to emphasize that seeing the costumes is part of the fun of Cantonese opera.

The drama: After the Manchu Qing dynasty replaces the Ming dynasty of Hans, the Manchu Emperor arranges for Princess Changping (c.1629-1646 長平公主) of the Ming dynasty to marry her betrothed according to her late father's wish. Princess Changping and her betrothed agree to a suicide pact on the wedding night, so that the Manchu cannot use their marriage to pacify the Hans who are against Manchu rule. This scene shows their wedding night and joint suicide.

(iv) Sun-Ma Sze-Tsang, *WAYFARER'S AUTUMN LAMENT* 新馬師曾客途秋恨 1982

Audio (AV20) duration 19:03

Fig.6.5: A record sleeve design of this famous rendition.

Source: 客途秋恨 (豆瓣音乐)

Audio (AV20) duration 19:03

The title *WAYFARER'S AUTUMN LAMENT* is from a song by a scholar of the Qing Jiaqing period 嘉庆 (1796-1820) about the unhappy life of prostitutes. This later became a song of Nanyin 南音 (south-tone) often sung by blind singers and the melody was used in Cantonese opera. In the 1920s, the song about prostitutes developed into a Cantonese opera about a poor scholar loved by a beautiful and talented courtesan, with Bak *Sheut-Sin's* father Bak *Keoi-Wing* 白驹荣 as the male lead. His rendition of this song was popular and many other male leads have sung it since.

In this rendition by Sun-Ma *Sze-Tsang* (see 3.2.1(iv) *Live Performance*, pp.84-85), he adds colloquial words to the refined lyrics as if telling you his own story in conversation. The unique quality of his voice is described as high – principally due to the vocal timbre, which is unlike other male leads. The accompaniment, simple percussion, and natural style of singing with changes of tempo, all contribute to a feeling of bereft desolation, characteristic of nan-yin. Sun-Ma's eldest son Albert *Sui-Kai Tang* 鄧兆楷 told me that while preparing for this recording his father became interested in the African American vocal timbre/style and listened repeatedly to more than thirty recordings of African American singers including Nat King Cole, so as to incorporate the quality into his rendition. His cross-cultural approach was quite different from the concept of bong-wong mentioned in 6.1.3 (pp. 404-405).

The drama: according to the lyrics of this version, the poor scholar loved by the beautiful and talented courtesan has to part with her for various reasons. While on his way, he reminisces about their time together. In the place where she remains there is unrest. He worries about her safety, and wishes that provided she is safe and well, he would resign himself to her being with another man.

(v) WANG *Fan-Shi*, SASSY PRINCESS BLUNT HUSBAND 王凡石刁蛮公主戀驸马 1984

Fig.6.6:

Wang *Fan-Shi* from the video below

Source: c7cc7, 2011, YouTube.

Video (AV25) duration 01:00

Though Wang was a Canton performer, the performance is of Hong Kong tradition. I include this clip for the percussion, which is more active when martial roles are on stage. Here, Wang *Fan-Shi* (see 3.3.2(i) *Discovering Wang Fan-Shi*, p.98) is dressed in martial costume, interrogating the princess for laughing at disabled envoys. He sings in a more macho style to an accompaniment with active percussion. In the musical notation of Cantonese opera, the percussion is often omitted altogether, or may be included only in outline, thus looking deceptively simple; an element of improvisation is quite usual. The percussion of this video is the inspiration of electronically treated percussive sound in the music video *THREE TIMES NO LESS* (AV3); and the melody provides thematic raw material for Act 11's soprano aria *The Heroine's Song* (pp. 377-378 & p.380).

6.1.3 RECONNECTING WITH HUMBLE ORIGINS

Until the Communists took over, there has been a long history of Chinese society looking down on drama, especially on the performers. Though Cantonese opera was popular during my childhood, performers were called *xizi* 戏子 which is not a respectful term. Yet during the late Qing dynasty Peking opera was performed in the royal court and it has now become a cherished symbol of Chinese culture. It is understandable that Cantonese opera performers have been striving for high art status like Western opera. The training of Cantonese opera practitioners in Canton has been systematic and similar to Western performing arts conservatories, and no doubt the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts follows suit. In Hong Kong and North America, there are academic researchers in Cantonese opera. All of these factors are helping to raise the respectability of Cantonese opera.

My primary interest is in creation, and in performance connected with the masses. During my research on social networks, I have noticed fans arguing about whether to use *gong-che* 工尺 (Chinese characters and symbols Fig.4.14, p.209) or the numeral system 简谱 (Fig.4.15, pp. 210-212) to indicate pitch and rhythm. The latter is precise as it is based on tonic sol fa and is similar to rhythmic staff notation. On Red-Boat, I have also come across audiences criticising new works as not being genuine Cantonese opera since the music and singing lack *bong-wong* 梆簧 – see below. Yet

audiences' perception of bong-wong appears to be confused, and certainly lacks consensus. A definition of the term in words is invariably deficient. Rather it is direct experience of the music – as demonstrated for example by the recordings in 6.1.2 (pp. 398-404) – that serves to make the concept clear. Dr *Sau-Yan* Chan 陈守仁 is an ethnomusicologist who specializes in Cantonese opera. I met him long ago at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. In the following email, sent to me by Dr Chan on 25 Jan 2016, he outlines his understanding of bong-wong:

Bong-wong is translated as melo-rhythmic vocal music, because it doesn't have a fixed or even relatively stable melody. The melody changes when a new text is set to the same type of melo-rhythmic form. There are about thirty different forms of it. Some examples are fan sin yi wong man ban, bong zi zong ban, yi fan yi wong man ban, etc. You can see each form is also associated with a type of mode. Bong-zi, yi-wong, yi-fan and fan-sin are the four modes, which are responsible for shaping the melody of a certain melo-rhythmic form. "Rhythm" also refers to the metrical patterns, where there are man ban, zong ban, fai zong ban, lau shui ban and san ban. Since Cantonese is a tonal language, the lexical tone of each of the syllables in the text, combining with the melodic structure of the mode chosen, set in the appropriate metrical pattern selected, will be the primary concern when a singer sings – in fact improvises – a vocal passage, in order to project correctly each of the lexical tones and with the commonly aesthetically accepted melodic interest. The primary concern is to make the syllables intelligible to the audience, while following all the structural rules of a given form of melo-rhythmic music. The librettist's responsible for selecting the form and writing the text, and the singer will do the rest.

Despite fans' arguments about score notation and the subtleties of bong-wong, the Cantonese opera that I remember was for the masses. They sang and played what they remembered and what they were accustomed to, and did not use a score. They did not know about or understand bong-wong, or the terms that are used. It was natural talent, aural memory, and having a feeling for the singing and playing that mattered. Sometimes the lyrics might indicate the title of the tune to be used and that was all, yet even this was not necessary. That was why as a child, lacking any knowledge of bong-wong or how to read a score yet capable of reading words, I could sing a song that I had not sung before – I instinctively knew how to fit words to a familiar melody once I had heard the instrumental introduction, and the instrumentalists instinctively followed my singing. Many others could also do the same.

Even those in the profession did not always work with a score. Some performers were not well educated and could not read well. It was not uncommon for singers to

pronounce words incorrectly, or resort to using or adding in their own words.

However, though there was a tradition of being flexible and improvisatory, there was a limit – the tune had to be recognizable. One could not get carried away to the extent that the melody would sound like ‘original music’. Even a beggar boy and his relatives (see 3.2.1(iii) *Playmates, and a beggar boy*, pp. 79-80), after hearing, seeing and enjoying Cantonese opera performances in the markets, or at shen-gong 神功戏 performances were able to sing and play what they remembered. Performers started their training on the stage and learned from performances and from interaction with audiences. The excellent productions of new Cantonese opera today – in contrast to the operas included in 6.1.2 – have not produced songs that the masses enjoy and sing by heart. Perhaps the hostility towards these new works that I have observed online is an outcry from audiences who want Cantonese opera to reconnect with its humble origins.

I have lived most of my life in the UK and the majority of my creative practice has been connected with concert halls and music/art festivals. Apart from *Magic Banyan Tree* and *Four Songs in Chinese*, both of which were written for Chinese who do not listen to Western music, my creative practice since 1974 belongs to contemporary music that does not make easy listening. Yet when working on the Quben of my prototype, I reconnected with my Masters supervisor Dr Mike Greenhough for help with writing colloquial English. Both the creative writing and the original music of my prototype are people friendly and, like the Cantonese opera of my childhood, are intended for the masses.

6.1.4 IMPORTANCE OF THE CROSS-CULTURAL

Having grown up in Hong Kong, a British colony of mixed Chinese and Western culture, and living the rest of my life in the UK as a racial minority, it is understandable that my work has a tendency towards the cross-cultural. Since 1974 when my work first started to receive public performances, I noticed that cross-cultural work in the UK, especially by those of racial minority, is often misunderstood as being ethnic and intended just for the racial minority, and as if all minorities are the same. Though I am professionally trained in Western Classical music and much of my creative practice has been according to Western principles, the Arts Council of the UK asked me to be an external assessor of Indian music and dance

performances. I have neither training nor knowledge of Indian culture; my only credential appears to have been that I am of ethnic minority. Likewise, I have come across persons of a non-Chinese racial minority being appointed to advise on Chinese cultural policies in the UK just because they are of racial minority. I have seldom received royalties for my performances. When I made enquiries about this, PRS staff told me it was due to my music being considered 'ethnic'. I have never worked in the field of ethnic music.

Long ago I suggested to the then BBC Controller the idea of presenting a one-off programme on cross-cultural music. I was told never, rather than no. Unless there is a wider perception of cross-cultural arts, life will be difficult for those with talents and expertise in this field, wasting their time and talents. It is understandably difficult to recognise or define work as being cross-cultural, since the possible cultural combinations are endless. But I believe it will do the world good to have more cross-cultural work and to look at things from the middle ground. Perhaps in the future there will be fewer unwise policies that bring about much misery. At least the world will be a richer place due to so many new cultural combinations.

6.1.5 THE INTERNET: AS RESEARCH TOOL AND PERFORMANCE CHANNEL

(i) AS RESEARCH TOOL

The Internet has served as a powerful research tool with abundant multi-lingual information and easy access to people worldwide. It is quick and more or less free of charge. Yet one has to use it with care. Unlike published materials, online information can be misleading, incorrect and irresponsible, and can also disappear suddenly without trace. Hence I have compared sources and chosen carefully.

For the purposes of this PhD thesis, I have listed many online articles in English, though I have often read other online sources in Chinese on the same topic. I have made use of Wikis that have been created by trusted academic sources; by way of example, the following is an email dated 27-11-2013 from Professor Eleanor Selfridge-Field of Stanford University Music Department:

Our wikis are CLOSED, meaning that only our employees contribute anything

to them. Wikipedia (the big open source) is very unpopular with professors. We have our own wiki software and find that wikis are very easy for our students here to access, but they are open and anyone can use them.

In the URL of the one you cite, if you click on the other link in the first line, you will find the course syllabus. The course is taken mainly by graduate students.

The Internet has a wealth of performances of all sorts, talks, lectures and interviews, and has proved very useful for fieldwork due to my restrictions of health and finance. The playback quality of video and audio recordings can depend on many factors; delayed streaming and unwanted advertisements can be time wasting.

(ii) AS PERFORMANCE CHANNEL

Using Logic Pro and Final Cut software, I have made three music videos for this PhD thesis (in enclosed 'Audio/Video Folder', see 4.3.3(ii), p.197) which have already been posted online: *Magic Banyan Tree*, *Three Times No Less* and *You Are Not Alone* (AV2, AV3 & AV4, notes pp. 429-430). Using the Internet, it is possible to create and disseminate such performance videos with minimal budget, but a huge amount of time is required and there will be unexpected expenses. But once the video is made, it can be uploaded to websites worldwide anytime. Unlike a live performance in a concert hall or theatre, one has no control over how such a video will be viewed, or how others will use it. The playback quality is inevitably affected by website format and by audiences' equipment. An already small screen is getting smaller – laptop, ipad, iphone, iwatch – and lacking direct contact with the audience, it is not easy to keep their attention for more than a few minutes. One is aware of the overwhelming quantity of videos on the Net, and with ratings and detailed analytical information available, one can be discouraged that one's efforts cannot compete with the popularity of, say, a charming cat. But one does gain insight into what the general public is watching.

Through my use of Red Boat and other sites, the Internet has served as a platform for publishing my own writings and creative work; yet online popularity of such items seems less to do with their quality than with a willingness to interact with others on social networking sites, which can be time consuming.

6.2 CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

6.2.1 INNOVATIVE CROSS-CULTURAL COMBINED ARTS

My prototype has amalgamated childhood impressions of Cantonese opera with my professional training and creative practice in Western Classical music, electro-acoustics, drama and research. It is an original combination of text, music, visuals and production ideas that can be developed into performances ranging from live opera to interactive webcast. I have not come across any Western trained colleague whose career parallels my own with regard to Cantonese opera. The explanatory part of the thesis explains how the deceptively simple music and creative writing of my prototype are a compromise of different concepts from the West and from Cantonese opera. Many cities in the UK are multiracial and multicultural. A cross-cultural project should at least promote greater understanding and remove some unnecessary barriers between people.

6.2.2 RAISING AWARENESS OF CANCER SURVIVORS

Many have been diagnosed with cancer and survived. Yet the aftermath of cancer can be long lasting, both physically and psychologically. The NHS and British society at large seem to have overlooked this fact. Cancer can still be taboo as many dwell on the gruesome and traumatic. My prototype serves to look back with humour and to boost the morale of fellow survivors. There is life after cancer and one can carry on achieving. The prototype is not necessarily limited to cancer survivors, but could be used in many other scenarios such as for music therapy clients.

6.2.3 FOR CANTONESE OPERA AND HONG KONG CANTONESE CULTURE

My thesis and prototype explain Cantonese opera in a way that Westerners can understand; they also provide a record of what was passing and might not be known in the future. Cantonese opera is facing possible demise; at least those characteristics that were held dear by me and by the masses of Hong Kong in the 1950s and 60s seem unlikely to be practiced in the future. My PhD is an attempt to retain these characteristics in a new format that can be understood by Westerners and enjoyed by the general public, in the same way that Cantonese opera was enjoyed by even the lowest strata of society during my childhood. Western Classical

music has a well-preserved history of different periods. Even music of the distant past, such as Gregorian chant, is still studied and performed by specialists. But the recent past of Cantonese opera, with its emphasis on the individuality of performers and their creativity, has been forgotten by younger generations. What I remember might add a piece to the incomplete picture. With the Chinese government enforcing Putonghua, even the Cantonese language in Canton province may be endangered, let alone the transient Hong Kong Cantonese culture of which Cantonese opera was once an important part.

6.3 A BEGINNING, NOT AN END

The purpose of this PhD has been to create a prototype – both for my use and the use of others – which supports multi-venue performances and the creation of new versions: this is not an end but a beginning. The Quben, music, production ideas and complementary materials are like a reservoir of materials that can be used as the basis for many new versions of creation and performance: to be used as they are, or to be developed by anyone into a full-length opera or musical, a concert piece or a dance performance, a film, TV series, a play, a folk or jazz piece, a multi-media work, an Internet performance, an educational workshop... in sections or in their entirety. With imagination, elements provided in the prototype are like pieces in a kaleidoscope, the possibilities are endless.

My immediate intention is to complete more short music videos like the three included in the 'Audio/Video Folder', in preparation for a realisation of my prototype in the format of an Internet opera. I am also investigating various websites to which I might upload my thesis, and considering publication of at least part of the thesis. Having used the Internet for nearly seven years to undertake research for this PhD, I am also planning to create a website relevant to my work.

It is also time for me to return to my practice of creation and performance. After watching many new Cantonese operas, and with my ability to write melodies from the sound of language, I am confident that, with resources, support and connections with Cantonese opera performers, I can create an altogether new Cantonese opera.

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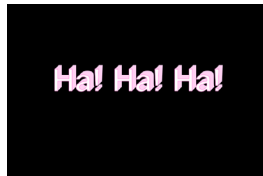
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Contents and Notes of enclosed Audio-Video Folder

MY VIDEO FILES:

AV1: *Ha Ha Ha* (00:05) – Act 1



An example of animation for the laughter in Act 1 (see p.217 footnote 46) that later developed into animated text for the music video *You Are Not Alone* (AV4) for Act 11 (p.379).

AV2: *Magic Banyan Tree* (09:15) – see pp. 18, 19 and 76



This is the first music video I created for my PhD project. It reminisces the village in Hong Kong where I first saw a shen-gong 神功戲 performance of Cantonese opera (Chapter 3, 3.4.6, p.112). It is music to be enjoyed – not least the villagers

who originally inspired it. Though sung in English, the xylophone part is inspired by the sound of the Cantonese language. As an example of recycling it has its origin as my 1990 music theatre piece in English performed at the South Bank Centre, then modified to be sung in Cantonese for Hong Kong people, then modified into various instrumental pieces for concert performances... this is the latest.

AV3: *Three Times No Less* (04:38) – Act 1, also see pp. 216, 404



This music video is a short example of using the Quben for Internet performance, using recordings of staff notated music, electro-acoustics and materials from Cantonese opera. Short percussive sounds were sampled from an online performance

of the 1984 *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* then modified (see AV25), and a song from the same opera was the inspiration for my music. The soprano sings the words of the *Heroine's Song* from Act 1 of the Quben (p.224). The recording was sung by soprano Julietta Demetriades, instruments played by students and staff of Anglia Ruskin University including my supervisor Professor Amelia Oldfield (clarinet), and conducted by Dr Paul Rhys my lead supervisor. Images of lotuses are from Canton and taken by Jinming 今明 – a photographer specializing in Cantonese opera performance. The chosen photo at the end of *Three Times No Less* shows a type of martial art performance that is a specialty of Cantonese opera (see AV22).

AV4: You Are Not Alone (06:45) – Act 11, 5.11.3(iii) p.379

This is a development of the animation idea of AV1 *Ha Ha Ha*.

The music video combines word choreography (animation) with video footages of fountains and waves. The music was

performed by the cellist Katarina Majcen, flautist Rowland Sutherland, the Anglia Chamber Choir and conducted by Dr Paul Rhys. The various recordings were then assembled and modified electro-acoustically by myself.

MY AUDIO FILES:

AV5a: Three Times No Less sop version (03:25) – Act 1

AV5b: Three Times No Less V1 (03:25) – Act 1

AV5c: Three Times No Less V2 (03:26) – Act 1

Three tracks of electro-acoustically treated rehearsal

recordings of the above mentioned soprano aria *Three Times No Less*, with added treated percussion sounds taken from the 1984 version Cantonese opera *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* 刁蛮公主戇驸马. This material can be used to experiment with surround sound, and as a basis for further treatments. Selected sections can be used as background music when performing any part of the text. A suggestion for using this material in live electro-acoustic performance is to play back one track from a speaker on centre stage and to boost the soprano, while the other tracks are played back from speakers at L and R for stereo sound. For a performance of live soprano with real time control of surround sound, see 5.1.3(ii), p.222.

AV6: Mr Dracula electro-acoustic music (8:18) – Act 2

This can be used in sections and modified, and may be controlled with a mixer during performance. It consists of modified repetitions of materials similar to those of the notated

score (see Chapter 5, Act 2, 5.2.3 *Original Music*, pp. 238-240). The music of Mr Dracula is like bats – high frequency sound waves that bounce back, but of course not ultrasonic like real bats. In reality the repeated high frequency is more like birdsong – the sound of Cantonese language is often described as being like birds, and Cantonese opera female singing sounds a bit like that too. The music is punctuated by sounds like sonar/submarine – sounds that, like bats, also bounce back. The electro-acoustic music is preferably to be used with the notated score of Act 2 for acoustic instruments.

AV7: *Revolving Clockwork Figures* midi playback (03.48) – Act 3

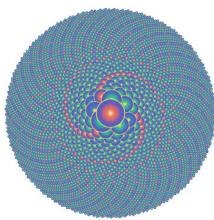
This is for experiments with electro-acoustics, or as music material for stage/video productions (see 5.3.3(ii), p.249).

AV8: *Apollo Dancing* (01:59): piano Albert Sui-Kai Tang 鄧兆楷 – Act 7

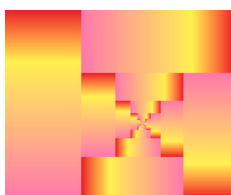
This is a short, slow and dignified chordal piece that can be played as is, or slowed down further, applying electro-acoustics to transpose it to a lower pitch and/or using distortion for a 'scary' effect. Chordal passages can be played in the style of a funeral march to accompany images of Death, and in other solemn moments (see 5.7.3(ii), p.306).

AV9: *The Waves* (03:40): piano Albert Sui-Kai Tang 鄧兆楷 – Act 7 (5.7.3(ii), p.306)

The theme is catchy, and the music haunting and suitable to be used for film/TV. By slowing down the tempo, it becomes melancholic, but when speeded up or after applying electro-acoustic effects, such as changing the timbre to that of an organ, the piece can become lively. It would be suitable as playground carousel organ music, roulette, for musical chairs – musical beds... as depicted in the Quben of Act 7.

AV10: *Getting to Know You*: midi playback (02:30) – Act 8 (5.8.3(ii), p.319)

This synthesized version of the staff notated music *Getting to Know You* can be used in the following ways: as raw material to create music for dance/stage performance or video; to add live improvisation or percussion obbligato, perhaps inviting the choreographer to improvise on a drum during performance according to the choreography; or as a basis for modification with electro-acoustics.

AV11: *Radio Fun* electro-acoustic music (02.12) – Act 10 (5.10.3(ii)a, p.359)

The electro-acoustic raw material for this piece is a jazzy theme mimicking Cantonese speech like a musical chat. This can be developed into a music video using computer graphics by Marcus West listed in Act 10 (pp.357-358).

AV12: Radio Fun for improvisation (00:19) – Act 10 (5.10.3(iii)a, p.360)

Flute: Rowland Sutherland

This can be used as the opening of a piece.

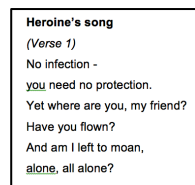
AV13: Chemo Comedy electro-acoustic theme (00:32) – Act 10 (5.10.3(ii)b, p.359)

The theme was created using retrograde fragments of the well-known traditional instrumental music *Spring-River-Flower-Moon-Night* 春江花月夜, a melody that is used in Cantonese opera.

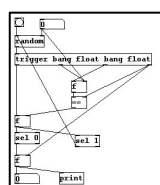
Retrograde is a common technique in Western composition, but I am not aware of it being used in Cantonese opera – perhaps due to the fact that it changes the melody completely and this would offend some audiences. Raw materials were generated in 1978 using now obsolete software at CCRMA (Stanford University). I include the theme portion here for users' imaginative development.

AV14: Chemo Comedy theme and improvisation (01:08) – Act 10

Flautist Rowland Sutherland's rendition of my simple and sketchy music can be used as the solo part in an electro-acoustic piece, or as the music for a music video (5.10.3(iii)b, p.360).

AV15: Deborah Foote narrates *Heroine's Song* (03:21) – Act 11 (pp. 369-371)

Useful as voice over for making an Internet video (see 5.11.2 Internet video, p.375) or for electro-acoustic experiments (see examples below)

AV16: Andy Farnell's Pure Data cross-synth examples – Act 11

This is a folder of Andy Farnell's cross-synth examples of processing a short clip of Deborah's narration (AV15) with instrumental sounds, using the software Pd (Pure Data, p.188). Click on each sound file to listen to a horn sound file, Deborah narrates, cross-synth of the two...

CANTONESE OPERA AUDIOS:

AV17: Fong Yim-Fun, *Glamorous Sun Red Phoenix* 芳艳芬艳阳丹凤 1958 (13:09)



Fong Yim-Fun (6.1.2(i), pp.400-401) has a distinct nasal singing style that is still modelled by others (3.2.2(i), p.89).

Fong sings naturally and with ease – listen to the long run (on one word) near the end. The words are by Hong Kong's top

lyricist Tang *Ti-Seng* 唐滌生. The compilation consists of frequently used traditional tunes and an existing song 小曲 that is dance-like in this rendition (see *Sing and Dance*, music for Act 6, pp. 293-294). Active xylophone part might indicate a regular performer at the time, since it is not the norm for Cantonese opera.

The drama: Emperor Wu of Han 汉武帝 (156-87 BC) in his sixties takes a beautiful young girl of sixteen as royal consort. She bears him his youngest son. By 88 BC, Emperor Wu becomes seriously ill and orders execution of the mother, as the youngest son is to be his heir, and she must be prevented for acquiring political power after his death. After her death the royal consort often appears as a mythical bird and tells the story in song.

AV18: Hung Sin-Nui, *Zhaojun Beyond the Great Walls* 红线女昭君出塞 (13:05)



Hung Sin-Nui (6.1.2(ii), p.401) made this 1959 recording not long after returning to Canton. This is her best-known song. Hung Sin-Nui, her voice is influenced by many factors – e.g., Peking opera and Western vocal training (3.2.2(iii), pp. 91-92), and at this stage is probably still under the influence of her then husband Ma Sze-Tsang 馬師曾 (see

Chapter 5 Act 10 Description, p.347) who wrote the lyrics. Note her controlled perfection such as the wide glissandi and the long melisma near the end.

The drama: *Zhaojun* 昭君 (c.50 BC-) is regarded as one of the four great beauties of ancient China. Emperor Yuan 漢元帝 (75–33 BC) of the Han dynasty presents her as one of his daughters to marry the leader of Xiongnu 匈奴 who occupies the land beyond the Great Walls in order to establish friendly relations – realizing her beauty too late to keep her as a concubine for himself. On her way to an uncertain future *Zhaojun* sings on horseback accompanied by pipa.

AV19: Yam Kim-Fai Bak Sheut-Sin, Emperor-Daughter-Flower 任白帝女花 (06:10)

Sung by the famous Yam-Bak duo (6.1.2(iii), p.402) in 1960, with lyrics by Tang *Ti-Seng* 唐滌生. This comprises mostly of an existing melody called *Autumn Yearning at the Dresser* 妝台秋思. The song is immensely popular and has been sung by Westerners. The accompaniment makes the simple pentatonic melody interesting.

AV20: Sun-Ma Sze-Tsang, Wayfarer's Autumn Lament 新馬師曾客途秋恨 (19:03)

The title *WAYFARER'S AUTUMN LAMENT* is from a song by a scholar of the Qing Jiaqing period 嘉庆 (1796-1820) about the unhappy life of prostitutes. This later became a song of nan-yin 南音 (south-tone) often sung by blind singers and the melody was used in Cantonese opera. In the 1920s, the song about prostitutes developed into a Cantonese opera about a poor scholar loved by a beautiful and talented courtesan, with Bak *Sheut-Sin's* father Bak *Keoi-Wing* 白駒榮 as the male lead. His rendition of this song was popular and many other male leads have sung it since.

This 1982 rendition by Sun-Ma *Sze-Tsang* (6.1.2(iv) pp 402-403; & 3.2.1(iv) pp.84-85), he adds colloquial words to the refined lyrics as if telling you his own story in conversation. The unique quality of his voice is described as high – principally due to the vocal timbre, which is unlike other male leads. The accompaniment, simple percussion, and natural style of singing with changes of tempo, all contribute to a feeling of berevment and desolation, characteristic of nan-yin. Sun-Ma's eldest son Albert *Sui-Kai* Tang 鄧兆楷 told me while preparing for the recording his father became interested in the African American vocal timbre/style and listened repeatedly to more than thirty recordings of African American singers including Nat King Cole, so as to incorporate the quality into his rendition. His cross-cultural approach was quite different from the concept of bong-wong mentioned in 6.1.3 (pp. 404-405).

The drama: according to the lyrics of this version, the poor scholar loved by the beautiful and talented courtesan has to part with her for various reasons. While on his way, he reminisces about their time together. In the place where she remains there is unrest. He worries about her safety, and wishes that provided she is safe and well, he would resign himself to her being with another man.

AV21: A new Cantonese opera song by Zou Yu-Wei 邹裕伟 (8:03)

The concept of a new Cantonese opera song is different from the Western concept of original music. Listen to the recording with the score in numbered musical notation 简谱 (jianpu) – Fig.4.15 (pp. 210-212), and see 4.2.4(d) *Music Notation* (pp. 185-186).

CANTONESE OPERA VIDEOS:**AV22: Lion Pavilion southern style kung-fu 狮子楼南派功夫 (1:05)**

The use of table and chairs in action drama is unique in Cantonese opera – this also shows its humble origin (5.1.3(iii)b, p.223; & 6.1.3, p.404). The story here is the man in black to kill the baddy in pink (eventually).

AV23: Sassy Princess Blunt Husband instrumental interlude 刁蛮公主戇驸马 (06:01)

This is an example of instrumental music of varied repetition in the 1984 Cantonese opera *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* 刁蛮公主戇驸马: On their wedding night, the princess, furious with her bridegroom locks him outside the bridal chamber (miming there is a wall and door) and he is obliged to sit on the floor and wait. The instrumental music accompanies the performers' actions and thoughts (as dialogue). The princess opens the door to have a peep. Worrying that her bridegroom might catch a cold she silently unlocks the door, but the groom thinks the princess should invite him in and wonders about outside. When the princess takes another peep, not seeing her bridegroom she goes outside to look for him and the groom sneaks in. The princess goes back into the bridal chamber and is delighted to see him sitting there but is also annoyed with him... so the discord continues. These varied repetitions remind me of the charm of *La Folia*, which can be used as an inspiration to marry up melodic fragments from this Cantonese opera example (see 5.2.3, pp. 238-239).

AV24: Emperor-Daughter-Flower 任白帝女花 1959 (7:28)

Though this is a Cantonese opera film, it retains many of the characteristics of stage performance. I include this example because of the English subtitles and to emphasize that seeing the costumes is part of the fun of Cantonese opera (p.402).

The drama: After the Manchu Qing dynasty replaces the Ming dynasty of Hans, the Manchu Emperor arranges for Princess Changping (c.1629-1646 長平公主) of the Ming dynasty to marry her betrothed according to her late father's wish. Princess Changping and her betrothed agree to a suicide pact on the wedding night, so that the Manchu cannot use their marriage to pacify the Hans who are against Manchu rule. This scene shows their wedding night and joint suicide.

AV25: Sassy Princess Blunt Husband percussion 刁蠻公主戇驸馬 1984 (01:00)



Though Wang was a Canton performer, the performance is of Hong Kong tradition. I include this clip for the percussion, which is more active when martial roles are on stage (p.404). Here, Wang *Fan-Shi* (see 3.3.2(ii) *Discovering Wang Fan-Shi*, p.98) is dressed in martial costume, interrogating the princess for laughing at disabled envoys. He sings in a more macho style to an accompaniment with active percussion. In the musical notation of Cantonese opera, the percussion is often omitted altogether, or may be included only in outline, thus looking deceptively simple; an element of improvisation is quite usual. This inspired the electronically treated percussive sound in the music video *Three Times No Less* (AV3); and the melody provides thematic material for Act 11's *The Heroine's Song* (pp. 377-378 & p.380).

AV26 a & b: Oh! Susanna Cantonized⁵⁸ (p.247)

Cantonese opera has attempted to cantonize 粵化 Western tunes by substituting Western harmony and well-tempered pitch with the unique sound of Cantonese language and singing style. In this 1990 version of *Sassy Princess Blunt Husband* 刁蠻公主戇驸馬:



AV26a (00:45): The tune *Oh! Susanna* with new lyrics in Cantonese is first sung by the eunuch out of tune in an effeminate way to show the princess what to say in order to win back her husband.



AV26b (00:36): The princess then sings the same tune (what the eunuch taught her) in a style that is very Cantonese. Wang *Fan Shi* is the husband but does not sing in both excerpts.

⁵⁸ Cantonized is my invention as an equivalence to 'anglicized' for 粵化.

AUTHOR'S THOUGHTS

I have lived most of my life in the UK. Providence decreed that I am married to Western Classical music, but as a small child in Hong Kong, my first love was Cantonese opera that reached the lower classes, including those shunned by society – the poor, the illiterate, beggars, prostitutes, gangsters... bringing them enjoyment and culture, and I lived among these people as a child. Dante used his memory of his first love Beatrice as creative inspiration. I also use my memory of this first love as creative and staging inspiration while the art form is facing possible demise.

I wanted to write a PhD in storytelling style that can be enjoyed by the general public. University regulations demand inclusion of research and academic writing. However, the creative core ***Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor***, a humorous story in 12 acts is not in academic English (e.g. its title), and I kept to storytelling throughout my thesis as much as possible.

The Cantonese opera that I remember was at its most cross-cultural and multimedia – anything goes for survival. The basis of 'big drama' (i.e., Cantonese opera) was a Quben 曲本 (pronounced chuben: u as German ü; en as in happen) – quasi libretto cum script that was also the basis for new versions. The music was a selection of existing tunes that performers had freedom to modify. A lead performer had a say in all performance aspects of his/her troupe. Performance could be unrehearsed, with ad-lib and changes on the spur of the moment. Many performers had a talent to interact with the audience, stepping in and out of the drama in live performance.

I therefore supplied a Quben in 12 acts with original music that can be played as written but with room for expansion, and production ideas based on my expertise... a reservoir of materials allowing free use and modification by others. I especially hope that creative performers and people who do not have the opportunity to receive professional training would make use of my PhD. The humorous ***Song & Dance of a 3-Time Cancer Survivor*** is a good read on its own. My thesis is also a narrative of things disappearing that are not well documented, and my encounter with well-known people and those who were less respected in society.

This project helped me understand why I instinctively write music in a certain way, my venturing into electro-acoustic music, my proclivity for cross-cultural combined arts, and directing and designing my projects. My ultimate aim is to realize the Quben as an Internet opera.

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