

INTRODUCTION

“Musicking” as defined by Christopher Small in his book *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening*, is “a verb that encompasses all musical activity from composing to performing to listening”. The art of musicking can help us to understand the relationships with people in our lives. Our “soul” may be described as our “sense of identity” that may be “revealed in a work of art or an artistic performance”. Editors Kimasi Browne and Zhang Boyu have asked the contributing authors of *Musicking the Soul* to consider the good human contacts that each has made through music and, in particular, through the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing (CCOM), a focal point of international exchange in music between the world and China. I interpret the title *Musicking the Soul* to reference the musical activity that helps us to engage with others, and, in turn, musical activity that helps us to define ourselves.

The path that I’ve taken since my first encounter with Beijing’s Central Conservatory of Music in 1999, and the many directions that it has taken me since, have resulted in a deeper sense of self-identity and awareness. What follows is a narrative on the intellectual energy born from my relationship with CCOM that has led directly to personal expression and meaning within my life in and beyond music, and revealed through original music composition and performance, relationships with people and institutions, and (perhaps) in the even greater mission of cultural diplomacy. *Musicking the Soul* in the context of my life and its intersection with CCOM is a case study of the importance and far-reaching potential offered by international exchange through music.

PLUM BLOSSOMS AT ICMC'99 IN BEIJING

As a first year assistant professor and composer at Northeastern University in Boston (1998) I was fresh out of the doctoral program in music composition at the University of California, Berkeley. My primary goal — as it is for all assistant professors — was to begin my path towards earning tenure at the University.

In my work as a composer, a significant portion of my creative output falls into the world of “computer music” or “electroacoustic music”. That is, music whose performance is presented, at least in part, through amplification and speakers; and whose sound sources are usually derived and/or manipulated (edited) via some kind of digital and/or electronic means, such as cutting and splicing, transposing, playing backwards, or changing speeds.

In 1999, the International Computer Music Conference (ICMC) was being held at Tsinghua University in Beijing. Part of my strategy towards earning tenure was to be invited to participate in several international scholarly conferences, so this was a perfect opportunity. I thought that the best way to get invited to this conference was to create an electroacoustic piece of music based on recorded samples of a pipa, a Chinese traditional instrument.

A few years earlier, in 1996, I was fortunate to have met pipa virtuoso Min Xiaofen while I was still a graduate student at U.C. Berkeley. Min was living in San Francisco at the time. I invited Min to Berkeley’s Center for New Music and Audio Technologies (CNMAT) where David Wessel (computer music legend and founding director of both

CNMAT and the ICMC) offered to help me record samples of Min's playing. Upon recording these digital audio files and entering them into my computer, I used these samples as the compositional material for my new composition. I manipulated and edited these sounds to generate a six-minute electroacoustic work I titled *Plum Blossoms*, and submitted it to the Festival organizers. It worked! And I was invited to the ICMC'99 conference at Tsinghua University in Beijing from October 22-28, 1999, in order to attend the performance.

FIRST MEETING WITH PROFESSOR ZHANG BOYU

After the ICMC'99 performance of *Plum Blossoms*, Professor Zhang Boyu, ethnomusicologist (and pipa soloist in his own right) introduced himself to me, and stated that he would like to present *Plum Blossoms* to his class at CCOM. This sounded great to me — an invitation to give a guest lecture at China's premiere conservatory of music is a great line in the CV of a young tenure-track professor!



Upon presenting *Plum Blossoms* to Professor Zhang's class, it was clear that for many conservatory students, this was the first electroacoustic music they had ever heard. In addition, there was great curiosity in the room as to why an Italian American would work with the pipa at all — what was this Westerner's interest in using a Chinese traditional instrument? Although I'm

sure that a few students wondered why I would brutalize the beautiful sounds of their musical heritage, most were intrigued with the use of this traditional instrument within a new, technology-based context. At the very least, the musings of an American composer essentially ignorant of the pipa's several thousand-year history was entertaining.

Upon reflection, looking back at that class, I realize that the important thing was the opportunity for discussion, for dialogue between a Western composer and some of the brightest young Chinese musicians of that time. Music was the means by which learning about one another was taking place, and it was the first time I witnessed Professor Zhang Boyu's curiosity, perception, and willingness to engage in dialogue so that we could learn from one another. And certainly for me, the seeds of self-discovery and eventually cultural diplomacy were sown, as was the beginning of my twenty-year engagement with China.

ELECTROACOUSTIC TO LIVE PERFORMANCE

After sharing with Min Xiaofen the success of *Plum Blossoms* at the ICMC, she explained to me that, although this was very nice, it did not give her an opportunity to perform live. Min wanted a composition where she could be featured. With good fortune, this opportunity was presented to us by maestro Jung-Ho Pak, then music director of the San Diego Symphony (January 2000). For this "live" performance, I transcribed the entire electroacoustic version of *Plum Blossoms* into several staves of Western music notation, careful to capture as much of the nuance of pitch and rhythm as I could, with special attention to the electronic manipulations. From this "sketch" I reconstructed and

orchestrated a “new” work for pipa solo, string orchestra, and glockenspiel, an instrumentation that suggested itself upon listening to the timbres of the original *Plum Blossoms* recording. For those sounds that were either too difficult to approximate, or transcribe, acoustically (such as a pipa “Bartok” pizzicato sound played backwards) I added an electronic keyboardist to the ensemble. For the performance we developed a simple sample playback program in Max/MSP (a music programming language), which enabled a keyboardist to trigger some of the more complex pre-recorded electronic sounds stored on an Apple laptop computer in real-time.

At that time the San Diego Symphony devoted a portion of its season to alternative kinds of programming where it could explore different types of orchestral music, they called this the Light Bulb Discovery Series. I owe a great deal to Maestro Jung-Ho Pak for his willingness to explore how one culture can influence or “mash-up” with another during this series. This concept, in effect, is a key tenet of cultural diplomacy, where one takes the time to listen to alternative perspectives and points of view that may challenge traditional ways of thinking, in order to try to understand concepts that our culture may not be predisposed to think of as “normal” or “correct”.

The San Diego Symphony performance of *Plum Blossoms* with Min Xiaofen performing live was my first attempt at composing for a non-Western traditional instrument. I am fortunate that Min Xiaofen was familiar with Western music notation, and willing to experiment with performing with her pipa in a mixed-media environment; i.e., with both acoustic and electronic sounds sources. In order to successfully perform this version, the

pipa was amplified, and the orchestra was miked. This was required in order to balance the volume level of the electronic sounds presented to the audience via stereo amplifier and speakers. In order to achieve an appropriate balance in live performance, a sound engineer was required to balance the volume levels of the pipa solo, the electronic sound sounds, and the sound of the orchestra as a whole. I am also thankful for the time and energy that Min Xiaofen made available to me during my time composing for the pipa. I was by no means an expert on the workings of this instrument.

PING-PONG AND THE TAIPEI CHINESE ORCHESTRA

Min Xiaofen was so pleased with the acoustically transcribed version of *Plum Blossoms* for orchestra that when the opportunity arose, she commissioned me to compose a new Concerto for Pipa; however, this time to be accompanied by an orchestra made up entirely of Chinese traditional instruments.

In 2004 I completed a three-movement concerto titled *Ping-Pong*. It was premiered by the Taipei Chinese Traditional Orchestra with Min Xiaofen as soloist. The performance was held at Zhong Cheng Auditorium, Zhong Shan Hall, Taipei, Taiwan, in an event honoring Min's family. Min Xiaofen comes from an elite musical family. Her father, Min Jiqian, was a student of the erhu master Liu Tianhua; her brother, Min Lekang, is a national renown conductor who directed the premiere performance of *Ping-Pong*; her elder sister, Min Huifen, a celebrated erhu master virtuoso; and her nephew, Liu Ju, also

a well-known conductor.

臺北市立國樂團第一五九次定期音樂會

閩氏家族音樂會

閩氏家族

2004年12月11日星期六

晚上7:30 ● 臺北市中山堂中正廳
Zhong Cheng Auditorium, Taipei Zhong Shan Hall
臺北市民權西路104號 / No.104, Taiping 2 Rd., Zhongzheng Dist.

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南

京鍾山堂瓦，培育出閩氏一家傑出的音樂人才，閩惠芬二胡卓越的成就，更使得閩氏家族名滿天下。閩氏一門三傑：閩惠芬、閩小芬、閩樂康在父親閩李菁的引導下，走進了音樂藝術殿堂。閩李菁精通二胡、琵琶，為南京師範大學音樂系資深教授；閩小芬旅居美國，被譽為“世界琵琶演奏家之一”；閩樂康現任江蘇省歌劇院交響樂團團長；閩惠芬的兒子劉炬，是閩氏家族第三代，為指揮界的後起之秀，目前擔任中央芭蕾舞團交響樂團常任指揮；閩惠芬在臺灣是家喻戶曉，但看到全家同台演出，在臺灣還是頭一回，特別是高齡八十出頭的閩李菁將演奏琵琶名曲“春江花月夜”，更屬不易，12月11日讓我們一起到中山堂看閩氏家族精彩的音樂會。

演出曲目

慶典序曲.....指揮 / 劉 炬.....趙季平作曲

春江花月夜.....琵琶 / 閩李菁.....古曲

春 詩.....二胡 / 閩惠芬.....韓義良作曲 王竹林配器

陽關三疊.....二胡 / 閩惠芬.....古曲 閩惠芬編曲 阿克傑配器

逍遙津.....二胡 / 閩惠芬.....閩惠芬根據高慶奎京劇唱腔移植

乒 乓.....世界音樂.....指揮 / 閩樂康 琵琶 / 閩小芬... Anthony Paul De Ritis作曲

蘭 花.....指揮 / 閩樂康.....蕭新作曲

北 邊 的 晚 霞.....琵琶 / 閩小芬..... TheLonious Monk作曲 閩小芬改編

天 鳥 島.....琵琶 / 閩小芬..... 臺灣民謠 閩小芬改編

Satin Doll.....琵琶 / 閩小芬..... Duke Ellington作曲 閩小芬改編

長 城 隨 想.....指揮 / 劉 炬 二胡 / 閩惠芬..... 劉天金作曲

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Suddenly, I was thrust into the world of Chinese traditional instruments beyond my wildest expectations. Not only did I need to compose a new work, I needed to learn about a whole new set of instruments that I have never worked with before. For this task I sought the assistance of Chi-Sun Chan, currently the music director of the Greater Boston Chinese Cultural Association, who introduced me to the instruments of the Chinese traditional orchestra. *Ping-Pong* calls for bangdi, qudi, xindi, xiao, soprano and zhong sheng, suona, tenor suona, yangqin, liuqin, pipa, zhongruan, daruan, dingyingu, dagu, glockenspiel, guzheng, gaohu, erhu, zhonghu, gehu, bagehu. (Future performances have substituted gehu and bagehu with cellos and basses.) In order to secure additional

performances outside of China, this orchestral score was later released in a version for pipa and Western orchestra.

It seemed that everyone was confused by my chosen title, *Ping-Pong*, citing that the music I composed did not seem to resemble anything like a ping-pong match. My intent was to reference the bringing together of East and West. The three movement titles: 1. Huangshan Mountains, 2. Invitation (6 April 1971), and 3. Diplomacy, reference “Ping-pong diplomacy”, the historical opening between the United States and People's Republic of China in the early 1970s, and its goodwill exchange of table tennis (ping-pong) players that marked a thaw in Sino-American relations, and paved the way for a visit to Beijing by President Richard Nixon.

In the second movement of *Ping-Pong*, I introduced some electronic music elements similar to the those I used in *Plum Blossoms*; in particular, interactive real-time processing of Min Xiaofen’s pipa playing within her cadenza. I owe special thanks to my friend and former student, Howie Kenty, who helped to create the digital effects processing software in Max/MSP. The combination of Chinese traditional instruments and using real-time digital signal processing to effect their sound in live performance is a creative direction that continues in my creative work today.

Composing *Ping-Pong* not only propelled me to new directions in my original music composition, but also instilled in me a great appreciation for cultural immersion and a deeper interest in cultural diplomacy. I began to seek



opportunities precisely at this intersection. In 2006, two such opportunities presented themselves, an opportunity to collaborate with a new NGO (non-governmental organization) working closely with UNESCO called the “Melody for Dialogues Among Civilizations Association” (MDACA), and a new cultural exchange program offered by the U.S. State Department called “Fusion Arts”.

MELODY FOR DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATIONS ASSOCIATION

It was during my visit to Tsinghua University for the International Computer Music Conference, and the Central Conservatory of Music at the request of Professor Zhang Boyu, that I first witnessed how music can be used to bring different cultures together. It was first upon my work with Mehri Madarshahi, founder and President of the non-governmental organization (NGO) “Melody For Dialogue Among Civilizations Association” (MDACA), that I learned how music could be used to bring attention to world issues.

A principal objective of a dialogue is to bridge the gap in knowledge about other civilizations, cultures, and societies, to lay the foundations for dialogue based on

universally shared values, and to undertake concrete activities. MDACA's vision recognizes that music is a powerful force for nations to initiate dialogue and to inspire peace-building and conflict resolution. MDACA promotes multicultural dialogue and musical interaction to foster tolerance, mutual understanding, and respect for cultural diversity.

I was introduced to Mehri Madarshahi by violinist and conductor, Jacques Dubois, who had worked with Madame Madarshahi at the 60th Anniversary celebrations of UNESCO (2006). Monsieur Dubois and I met each other fifteen years earlier, during the summer of 1991 at the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, France (which was the first time I had ever travelled overseas, either for music study or otherwise).

Madame Madarshahi and I organized, together with UNESCO's Françoise Rivière, Assistant Director-General for Culture, an international symposium and concert titled "Intercultural Dialogue through Music" and held at UNESCO headquarters in Paris (November 26, 2007). This international symposium addressed issues related to the dynamics of musical expression and production in the context of globalization, and brought together ethnomusicologists, ethnologists, historians, musicologists, authors, musicians, composers, lawyers, as well as representatives of academia, governments, non governmental and international organizations, and the private sector from all parts of the world (UNESCO, 2007).

The participants were subdivided into three working groups. The first, “The Dynamics of Music and Cultural Expressions” examined, among other things, the role that traditional communities themselves could play in the safekeeping of their music and the promotion of cultural diversity; the second, “The Impact of Globalization (and Commerce) on Music as an Intangible Heritage”, debated on how, in a globalizing world, musical expressions could be protected but can also be promoted; and the third entitled “How Does Music Further Communication?” raised such questions as whether music, which forms part of cultural identities, can improve their understanding of these very identities? (Vietnam Culture Information Network, 2007).

The symposium was followed by a concert including my original composition titled *Melody for Peace* performed by The Prague Symphony Orchestra and a group of traditional artists from different regions of the world (an ensemble that has since become known as the “Melody World Ensemble”). The same group of traditional artists together with the Orchestra of St Luke’s repeated this multi-cultural performance at Avery Fisher Hall in New York City on December 3, 2007.

FUSION ARTS EXCHANGE

The lessons I learned from working with Mehri Madarshahi and MDACA’s powerful message on music’s potential to initiate dialogue and inspire peace-building were brought to bare on my application to a new grant program offered by the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs.

The Fusion Arts Exchange program in Music at Northeastern University (NU-FAX) was an educational exchange program during the summers of 2007-2009, funded at nearly \$1 million dollars by the U.S. State Department, which supported a multinational group of 20 undergraduates from six nations to spend more than five weeks in an intensive program studying individual and collaborative music composition, individual musical coaching, instrument-specific instruction, group lessons, American music history, and individual and group performance opportunities. Secondary areas of study included topics in music industry, and recording studio techniques. Bureau-designated participating countries for this program included: Brazil, India, Ireland, Mali, and South Africa. In addition there were educational study tours to New York City, the Tanglewood Music Center in Lenox, MA (the summer home of the Boston Symphony Orchestra), and Washington, D.C.

NU-FAX drew upon several of my previous experiences in international music exchange programs; in particular, the aforementioned American Conservatory in Fontainebleau program (where I spent the summers of 1991 and 1992). The American Conservatory in Fontainebleau, located less than an hour southeast of Paris, was founded in 1921 to introduce the best American music students to the French musical tradition of teaching, composing and performing.

NU-FAX, which maintained a partnership with the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Office of Education and Community Programs, covered all participants' travel expenses to and from Boston, lodging and meals in Boston and on the educational study tours, textbooks

and musical scores, private performance or composition lessons, and provided a per diem for other incidental expenses.

Based on the success of the first year of this program, Thomas A. Farrell, then the U.S. Department of State's Deputy Assistant Secretary for Academic Programs in the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, arranged to have the NU-FAX students perform in front of a crowd of 900 on April 8, 2008, during UNESCO's 179th Executive Board. At the invitation of Louise V. Oliver, then Ambassador to the U.S. Mission to UNESCO, the NU-FAX participants performed original music resulting from their educational exchange and collaboration. Onstage, they energetically fused their languages, cultures, traditions, rhythms and knowledge to create completely new rhythms and sounds.

The concert shared how an international educational exchange program could bring together young talent from around the world to learn and inspire one another in an environment of mutual understanding and respect. In addition to study, participants also learned about careers and economic development activities, took part in community service projects, and developed on-going artistic and professional collaborations with their fellow participants.



Thomas A. Farrell and I presented the musicians, who were warmly received by UNESCO officials, Ambassadors, members of permanent delegations and the general public. In addition to the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs with

Northeastern University, and supported by the U.S. Mission to UNESCO, the concert was sponsored by the U.S. Embassy in Paris and the Franco-American Commission for Educational Exchange.

Unlike the American Conservatory in Fontainebleau program, NU-FAX maintained a strong focus on international exchange, highlighting — and celebrating — what was different about the participants, and providing a forum for each culture to present and share what was unique about each participant's heritage.

MUSIC AND CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

The activities with MCADA and NU-FAX at UNESCO led Northeastern University's Music Department to provide a forum for the exploration of music and cultural diplomacy within Boston. On March 27, 2009, MCADA and Northeastern did just that, offering an event titled "Music and Cultural Diplomacy" Symposium and Concerts, with the goal of exploring the role that music can play in fostering mutual understanding, enhanced communication, and improved interaction and cooperation between cultures.



This event featured a panel presentation moderated by Hans d’Orville, who since 2007 has served as the Assistant Director-General for Strategic Planning at UNESCO. Other members of the panel included Anthony Fogg, Artistic Administrator, Boston Symphony Orchestra; Laura Freid, Chief Executive Officer and Executive Director, The Silk Road Project; Michael Greenwald, Director, Musicians without Borders, USA; Mehri Madarshahi, MDACA; Kay Kaufman Shelemay, Professor of African and African American Music, Harvard University; Anthony Trecek-King, Artistic Director, Boston Children’s Chorus; and Tony Woodcock, President, New England Conservatory (2007-2015).

In his opening presentation, Hans D’Orville stated, “who would have thought that there would be a serious academic conference held on this seemingly esoteric subject? Namely to provide evidence for the productive, salutary role of music in international interaction and the process which is usually labeled intercultural dialogue, supported and energized

by cultural diplomacy.” D’Orville continued, stating that cultural diplomacy requires an ability to listen to and appreciate others, and referenced a quote from Joan Channick qualifying how cultural diplomacy is, in fact, fundamentally different than the implementation of “soft power” as



defined by Joseph Nye. “Artists engage in cross-cultural exchange not to proselytize about their own values but rather to understand different cultural traditions, to find new sources of imaginative inspiration, to discover new methods and ways of working and to exchange ideas with people whose worldview differ from their own. They want to be influenced rather than influence.”

CENTRAL CONSERVATORY – FULBRIGHT SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

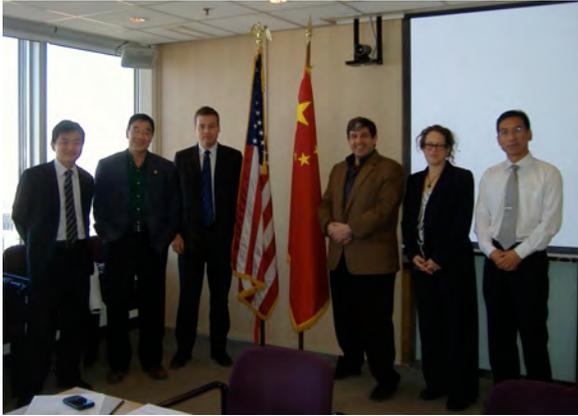
As a result of my international exchange experiences with MDACA, NU-FAX and UNESCO, I began to seek an even deeper cultural immersion. And given my work in music composition with Chinese traditional instruments, and that my interests in China was becoming a significant part of my scholarly interest and output, it was time for me to spend a long continuous period in China. In Fall 2011, I applied for and was awarded a Fulbright Senior Research Fellowship to be in residence at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing.

My research proposal was titled "A Multimedia Guide to the Instrumentation and Orchestration of Chinese Traditional Instruments", which resulted in an interactive web-based prototype that aided in the understanding of the musical instruments of the China orchestra, including their construction, physics and acoustical properties, traditional and non-traditional uses, and their use in combination with other instruments, both Chinese and Western.

The study of instrumentation includes identifying facts that contribute to an instrument's timbre (sound quality), its range of pitches, dynamic range, constraints of playing technique, the relative difficulty of particular music on a given instrument, notation conventions, and the availability of special effects or extended techniques. My approach to developing this website was not unlike field work that one might find in doing ethnomusicological research, and included a three-step method to collect the data for my research:

1. interview performers and collect traditional and contemporary literature
2. gather digital imagery (photographs and video)
3. make audio recordings of instruments, individually and in combination with others

Now, some twelve years after my first interaction with Professor Zhang Boyu at the ICMC, Professor Zhang provided me with the letter of invitation and support enabling me to receive an appointment as a Senior Fulbright Research Scholar. "Professor De Ritis has frequently worked with Chinese traditional instruments in his creative music



composition. The Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing is the most important conservatory for the study and performance of Chinese traditional instruments in the world. It is the perfect location for Professor De Ritis to engage in his research

project, ‘A Multimedia Guide to the Instrumentation and Orchestration of Chinese Traditional Instruments’.”

I was able to successfully complete this prototype. Moreover there were several unanticipated results. During Fall 2011, I was able to engage and develop several relationships with Chinese institutions in addition to CCOM, including the China Conservatory of Music, the Communication University of China, Tsinghua University’s x-Lab within their School of Economics and Management, and with the DeTao Group, a semi-public, semi-commercial institution with hundreds of global leading experts engaged in educational and commercial collaborative projects in the greater China region.

DISCOURSE IN MUSIC: SYMPOSIUM

One of the most significant outcomes of my Fulbright residency in Beijing was the opportunity to plan with Professor Zhang a symposium in Boston titled “Discourse in Music”, hosted by Northeastern University’s Music Department on October 5-6, 2012. Organized in collaboration with the Central Conservatory of Music, we invited scholars,

ethnomusicologists and musicologists from CCOM and around the United States; and with honor I requested that Professor Zhang deliver the Keynote address.

The primary goal of this symposium was a cultural exchange on topics in musicology from both Chinese and Western perspectives. Professor Zhang led a group of faculty from CCOM to Boston, including Yu Renhao, Professor and editor-in-chief, Musicology Department and CCOM Press; Li Xin, Professor and Associate Chair, Musicology Department; and Yu Zhigang, Professor and Head, Western Music History Term, Musicology Department.

From the U.S., faculty from Northeastern University in Boston included: Susan Asai, Leonard Brown, Alessandra Ciucci (now at Columbia University), Hubert Ho, and Murray Forman. And other scholars included Marc Battier, Electroacoustic Music Studies and Director, Electroacoustic Music Studies Asia Network, University of Paris-Sorbonne; Zdravko Blažeković, Research Center for Music Iconography, CUNY Graduate Center, Director; Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale, Executive Editor; Kimasi L. Browne, Director of Ethnomusicology and Music Research, Azusa Pacific University; Eric Charry, Wesleyan University; Cynthia Tse Kimberlin, Music Research Institute; Nancy Yunhwa Rao, Chair, Division of Composition and Music Theory, Rutgers University; Meredith Schweig (now at Emory University).



In his keynote address, Professor Zhang highlighted the spirit of our “Discourse in Music” symposium in a paper titled: “Music Research in China: Conflicts between East and West and Music and Its Social Contexts”. Professor Zhang stated that although music in China can be traced back to three thousand years ago, only after the 1980s was the concept of Western ethnomusicology gradually introduced into China. No longer was music research purely focused on musical structure; the disciplines of musicology and ethnomusicology began to develop as independent disciplines, where the “study of music as culture”, or the anthropology of music on which music culture and its social context was based, began increasing in its importance. Professor Zhang points out that conflicts are not merely limited between music structure and music culture, but also on ideologies and/or methodologies used in the study and cultural exchange of music in context. For

example, Chinese scholars have long been influenced by Marxism, and believed that musical changes were tied specifically to economic development. Whereas now, modern Western philosophical thought has given Chinese scholars a new perspective. These different views, various methodologies, and conflicting thoughts all form a rich environment for discussion, where international cultural exchange — discourses in music — informs cultural diplomacy.

IN CONCLUSION

If musicking the soul is to encompass all music making activity that helps us to know whom “we” are (and in this case I reference the “collective we”; i.e., “we” as a culture and society). And if music making activity is a means to initiate dialogue and to inspire peace-building and conflict resolution; that is, “musicking” helps us to understand and manage our human relationships with others. Then, in turn, perhaps there is no more powerful outcome of “musicking” than cultural diplomacy.

It was my encounter with Zhang Boyu at the International Computer Music Conference in 1999, and his open invitation to share ideas and perspectives through music at CCOM, that set into motion a series of activities and events that have shaped my life toward dialogue among civilizations, cultures and peoples. The musicking that goes on at the Central Conservatory of Music, and in particular the positive environment one finds at CCOM for international and cultural exchange, is exemplified by Professor Zhang Boyu. As a result, Central Conservatory of Music is an open door for the world to engage in dialogue with China, and for China to engage in dialogue with the world.