

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

As a compendium of lore on Suzhou storytelling, the present work surpasses in volume and comprehensiveness anything written on the subject to date. The editor, Wu Zongxi, is a distinguished member of the art and literary circles in Shanghai and vice-chair of the Chinese National Society of Performing Narrative (Zhongguo Quyijia Xiehui 中國曲藝家協會). He has published a number of important theoretical works on Suzhou storytelling, though usually under the *nom de plume* of Zuo Xian. Previous to this publication, the best general introduction was *pingtan zhishi shouce* 評彈知識手冊 [Handbook of *pingtan* knowledge] (Shanghai: Shanghai Wenyi Chubanshe, 1988) edited by Zhou Liang 周良, an author well known for his works on the history of *pingtan* and an assistant editor of the present work.

Bringing together a wealth of material that is scattered, in limited edition, or published as “inner-circulating” information usually inaccessible to foreign researchers, this dictionary includes short essays on a large number of *pingtan* terms and jargon, provides outlines of many of the better-known stories and ballads (*kaipian* 開篇), and introduces the musical styles and originators of various schools of *tanci* music (no musical notation, however, is supplied).

Full chapters are devoted to famous performers (beginning in the eighteenth century), traditional guild organizations, lists and brief descriptions of hundreds of story houses, introductions to the troupes active today, an annotated bibliography of written works on *pingtan* history and criticism, a discography of *pingtan* recordings, and customs associated with the storytelling arts (festivals, etc.). There are also chapters on common sayings and proverbs in Suzhou dialect, and a rhyme table for composing lyrics in both Suzhou dialect and the local form of old Mandarin (*Zhongzhou yun* 中州韻) used in the stories. A number of black-and-white and color photographs dating from as early as the 1950s are included in the prefatory matter.

A valuable chapter for historical research is that on the lineages of a number of *pingtan* performers and students, some of which date back well into the nineteenth century. Examples include the line of Ma Rufeï 馬如飛, a great innovator in the tradition of the *Zhenzu ta* 珍珠塔 [Pearl pagoda] story and that of Yu Xiuxian 俞秀山, performer of *Baishhe chuan* 白蛇傳 [The story of the white snake] and inventor, like Ma Rufeï, of a major style of music. These lineages include a number of middle-aged and older performers still active in recent years. Other lineages are much younger and include performers of stories such as *Yang Naiwu yu Xiao Baicai* 楊乃武與小白菜 [Yang Naiwu and Little Cabbage] and *Ti xiao yinsuan* 啼笑因緣 [Romance in laughter and tears], which were adapted to *tanci* performance in the 1930s and 1940s.

Although the intended audience of the dictionary is the very discerning core of *pingtan* aficionados who continue to show devotion to these narrative arts despite competition from other media and a decline in the quality of performers, the work will be of great use to interested scholars, being a gold mine on the historical and factual aspects of the *pingtan* arts.

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