



(7227)

## CHINA'S TREASURES

Lui Tsun-Yuen plays the PIPA and CHIN

### PIPA

#### 1. The Jade Hall

A special piece based on a folk tune consisting of percussion instruments--drums, cymbals and gong--an inventive musical achievement on the pipa's tonality.

#### 2. A Journey by Szechwan (Sichuan) Canyons

A contemporary pipa composition by Yang Ta Chun. The theme of this piece is based on a Tang (618-906 A.D.) poem, Shu dao nan, by Li Bo. Szechwan (Sichuan) is a province in China. The mountain roads and canyon trails in Szechwan are winding and treacherous, but famous for their breathtaking beauty. This piece contains seven parts; each has a subtitle. They are: (1) The rush flow in Wu Canyon, (2) Floating a boat at sunset, (3) The boat tracks, (4) The fisherman's song, (5) The cool wind in autumn, (6) Mooring in the evening, (7) The coda.

#### 3. Song of Happiness

One of the famous melodies of chamber music in Shanghai style, arranged for pipa work by the late Hsia Pao-Shen (Xia Baoshen), a contemporary expert on Chinese folk music, light and spirited.

#### 4. Zhaojun Going out to the Frontier

This is an anonymous piece dedicated to memorialize Lady Wang Zhaojun's patriotic sacrifice for the Han Kingdom (206 B.C.-220 A.D.). As the story goes, Emperor Yuan, who could not meet and get acquainted with all the ladies of the court, wanted to choose one--the most beautiful one among them--to be his favorite, and so commissioned an artist

to draw their pictures to show him. Most of the ladies tried to bribe the artist to paint them more attractively than they actually were. One girl was so lovely that she scorned such trickery and informed on those who had used it, with the unfortunate consequence that her picture never reached the Emperor. The girl was Lady Wong. Several years later, envoys of the frontier tribe called Xiongnu came to request the gift of a beautiful woman for their Chieftain, and Lady Wang was selected. When she came before the Emperor, he was surprised by her heavenly beauty. He regretted that he had to give her away, but he had to keep his promise of sending her with the Xiongnu. The notation of this piece was handed down from the Taoist Hua Yanjun.

#### 5. The Cowherd's Flute

Composed by Lui Tsun-Yuen. A happy young cowherd plays his favorite tunes on the flute while pasturing. The sound of the flute fills the fields, woods and flowers with joy.

#### 6. Floating Flowers Chasing the Greens

A light and dainty pipa work. The original notation of this piece came from the Yingzhou gudian notation book and was re-arranged for elaborative pipa solo by the late Liu Tien-Hua who contributed many works of great distinction to the repertoire of both pipa and erhu compositions. In order to convey the wind effect, the rhythm is set more freely by the player.

### CHIN (qin)

#### 7. The Fisherman's song

Attributed to Liu Zihou (Liu Zongyuan), a literati (poet and official) of the Tang dynasty (618-906 A.D.). After he was condemned to exile, he led a hermit's life in the wilderness to rid himself of all worldly worries. The music tells us of the carefree life of a scholar. In its clear melody, the piece portrays a fisherman lying in the reeds after selling his day's catch to buy liquor for getting happily drunk. Its slow, gentle, modulating cadence proves enchanting and enlightening.

#### 8. The Elegant Night

The theme of this anonymous piece lies in the description of absolute calmness of an elegant night. It sounds beautifully soft and far-reaching. In short, it gives a feeling of peace and serenity.

#### 9. The Falling Leaf Dancing with the Autumn Wind

Composed by Zhong Tie'an of the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). The theme of this piece conveys the dropping of leaves from the rising and falling cadence as they are dancing with the autumn wind.

#### 10. Mountain High

Attributed to Yu Boya of the Chunqiu period (770-403 B.C.). It has been said that Boya was a great chin (qin) player and his best friend, Zhong Ziqi, a good listener. Whatever Boya played, Ziqi never failed to understand. But, after Ziqi's death, Boya broke his chin, tearing the strings, and for the rest of his life, he never played it again. For he thought that there would be no one else in the whole world worthy to be played to. The theme of this number is on a lofty plane but softened by the musical phrases depicting the wild flowers and moss in the mountains and the sound of streams and birds.

## CHIN

The history of the chin is as old as that of China. Traditionally the chin was considered to have been developed at least by the time of the Shang dynasty (1766-1122 B.C.). Throughout history the chin was the instrument of the literati and was characterized as ya, meaning accomplished or elegant; its serenely compelling tones were considered a gift from far antiquity. The chin is a zither-like, roughly rectangular string and resonator instrument that is made of Chinese tung wood and is placed flat on a table for playing. Its seven strings, spread along the top from left to right, are tuned to the five-tone scale. Chin music is noted not in the form of musical notes but in the tablature system. The system consists of a succession of notation groups of abbreviated Chinese characters written vertically in columns from top to bottom and usually indicates which string is to be sounded; the finger techniques of both; the position from which the stopped sound is produced. There is no time indication, so the player's own impulses produce the rhythm.

## PIPA

The name pipa (a general name for all the stringed instrument in ancient times) actually came from two different techniques of the right hand: pi meant to play forward (to the left) while pa meant to play backward (to the right). The pear-shaped pipa, made of wood, having a decorative crooked neck came into China during the Northern Wei period (386-535 A.D.). This pipa has been evolving until modern times, becoming the pipa as we know it today. The crooked-necked pipa of the Tang dynasty (618-906 A.D.) had only four frets and was played with a plectrum. The number of frets on the pipa have been increasing gradually, thereby expanding the playing range and technical possibilities available to the performer. The pipa has four strings and a range of three octaves. There are nine different tuning systems involving changes in intervallic relationships between the strings; this makes possible the use of twelve different major scales. All the scales consist of seven tones; however, by pulling or pushing the string, a half-tone or a micro-tone can be produced. The pipa had once been the principal instrument of the court orchestra in the Tang dynasty and has since been always loved by the Chinese people. The pipa player has discarded the use of the plectrum after the Tang dynasty and developed a complicated finger technique, to which the pipa owes its great versatility.

Recorded in cooperation with the Institute of Ethnomusicology, UCLA.

Lui Tsun-Yuen was born of a musical family in Soochow (Suzhou), China. At the age of ten, he took up the study of the pipa and the chin with the foremost masters in China. Equipped with a prodigious technique, Lui is a sensitive and scholarly musician who is completely dedicated to his instruments and is regarded one of the few great exponents of music of ancient China. He also is a composer, having written original compositions for the pipa. Lui played in Hong Kong in recitals and broadcasts, before he settled in the United States. In Brazil, he was presented on TV, at a performance by the Brazilian Ministry of Education, and also participated in the 1958 Sao Paulo Music Festival in a recital of Chinese classical music. Lui was asked to make a recording for the B.B.C. permanent record collections. In 1959 he played at the Carnegie recital hall, New York, and in subsequent concert performances was highly acclaimed by many universities throughout America, such as Yale, Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, Chicago, Illinois, Stanford, University of California campuses, among others. Lui has toured Europe and given recitals in London and in Paris, winning unanimous praise. In 1967, Lui performed in Japan, Hawaii, Taiwan and Hong Kong again. Since 1961, Lui has been the head of Chinese music at the Institute of Ethnomusicology, University of California.

TRACKS:

1. The Jade Hall 1:27
2. A Journey by Szechwan (Sichuan) Canyons 5:51
3. Song of Happiness 3:07
4. Zhaojun Going out to the Frontier 5:15
5. Cowherder's Flute 3:54
6. Floating Flowers Chasing the Greens 4:48
7. Fisherman's Song 12:20
8. The Elegant Night 2:26
9. The Falling Leaf Dancing with the Autumn Wind 4:12
10. Mountain High 5:21



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