



# U.S.-China Arts Exchange

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Betsy Glans

*During the course of a busy conference schedule, composers He Xuntian, Qu Xiao-song, Chou Wen-chung, and Franki Raden (left to right) find time for informal discussion.*

## The Pacific Composers Conference

"We are not students here," expressed Chou Wen-chung as he welcomed composers ranging in age from 23 to 74 and representing locations throughout the Pacific region from Australia to Korea and the Philippines to Peru. The occasion was the opening session of the first comprehensive conference for composers of Pacific heritage to be held in Asia. Chou continues, "we are all artists and we're here to exchange viewpoints." The tone was established for what was about to become a ten-day sharing of artistic concerns, ideas, and experiences for forty-six composers.

After a year of planning, the Center for U.S.-China Arts Exchange held the Pacific Composers Conference (PCC) from June 30 to

July 10, 1990, in coordination with the Pacific Music Festival (PMF) in Sapporo, Japan. When Chou Wen-chung began to evaluate which composers would be most appropriate for performance at a Pacific festival, a unique set of criteria evolved and the idea to create a conference exclusively for composers began to materialize. The PCC became an event that would be open to both seasoned and amateur composers committed to writing works that reflect the musical influences of their native heritage. Qualified participants would include those who had lived, taught, or become established in the West as well as those who had never, in their musical career, lived outside of their native country.

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## The Pacific Music Festival

The first annual Pacific Music Festival (PMF) took place in the summer of 1990 in Art Park, in Sapporo, Japan, under the direction of Leonard Bernstein, Michael Tilson Thomas, and the London Symphony Orchestra. The PMF was made possible through the efforts of Harry J. Kraut, Executive Director of Video Music Productions; Japan's New Art Service Agency (NASA); and the Center for U.S.-China Arts Exchange. The Festival brought together young instrumentalists and composers, ages 18-29, from regions bordering the Pacific Ocean including Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Mexico, and the West coast of the United States. Festival activities included a rigorous schedule of

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Keishi Miura

*Members of the PMF Orchestra's wind section—just four of the 123 musicians who played in the festival orchestra—concentrated intently on their music at rehearsal.*



## Working With Tradition



Koichi Murai

*Sharing the opportunity to address composers' questions in depth, Chinary Ung, Isang Yun, Chou Wen-chung, Joji Yuasa, and Peter Sculthorpe (left to right) lead the opening session of the PCC.*

While looking over the score of a young composer from Peru, Jose Maceda, Filipino composer and ethnomusicologist, exclaims: "I'm amazed at what's going on in South America, particularly because this music represents what we're doing here [in Asia]! There's a certain universality...a unidirection in musical composition and I don't know whether it's a good idea or not." In his thought-provoking discussion entitled "Musicology, Research, and Real Tradition," Maceda encouraged composers to look at music from different angles—at fundamentals specific to one's native region—so that composers are not led into unilinear thinking, as they were by Beethoven, or are today by electronics.

Maceda articulated the importance of being aware of tradition and presented detailed comparisons of musical roots and influences

throughout Asia—all evidence of his own extensive musical research. "I don't know that we are conscious of how much of our traditions are part of ourselves or how much tradition we use while composing," he suggests. Maceda simultaneously emphasized the importance of musical information worldwide. For a large number of young, up-and-coming composers at the conference, such discussion proved challenging.

Composers exchanged conflicting opinions as they evaluated what kind of emphasis should be placed on tradition. At the start of the conference, Hiroyuki Itoh, a young composer from Japan, questioned the usefulness of evaluating one's musical traditions so extensively. Yet at the conference, upon comparing his music to new music of the Western United States, Itoh discovered consistent parallels and similarities, and quickly saw the necessity for

such in-depth analysis. Australian composer, Ian Shanahan, observes of Asian composers, "...this tradition, these thousands of years that you have in your past...make you feel as though you have to refer to that somehow in order to express yourself as a composer. But...it's the past and you are now in the 20th century, and you are flooded with every kind of influence. Has this created some sort of identity crisis?"

For many young Asian/Pacific composers, this is a dilemma. During the PCC, the composers' limited understanding of local musical tradition was a crucial point of concern mentioned throughout the discussion sessions. A few senior composers even described this realization as "shocking."

Musical instruments and the question of how they should be properly recognized and incorporated was also considered. Can a composer



experiment with new approaches to the use of traditional instruments or should older instruments be respected “traditionally” by acknowledging only their historical or “built-in” characteristics? Composers understood that this question could not be approached in an overly-simplistic manner, as it involves much more complex ideological questions that remain yet unanswered for many.

Guest Composer, Francisco Feliciano of the Philippines, pointed out the benefits of identifying one’s tradition simply for one’s own personal growth: “The Asian composer has an advantage because we can look into the old tradition in trying to search for what we really are and how we connect to our country....” Composer-in-residence Chou Wen-chung describes his support for Feliciano’s point: because traditional Chinese music is historically related to other areas of the arts and philosophy, Chou draws on the rich resources of fields other than music while composing. Chinese calligraphy and the pronunciation of Chinese words, for example, are vital in his musical composition and have been a source of inspiration for Chou Wen-chung. Chou offered insight to those less convinced of a composer’s responsibility to tradition:

*“We are a living tradition, a part of tradition, but this is not enough. The artist has to be conscious of how tradition can further grow through his or her own efforts. Tradition has meaning only because of the contribution of individual artists! That is why this conference is significant for the tradition of Asian/Pacific music. I trust that our living composers will contribute to the future of music.”*

During the conference, the complexity of diverse traditions—Chinese, Chinese-American, Korean, Japanese, Australian, Southeast Asian, and North and South American—became a catalyst for much intellectual reflection. The outcome of such reflection, however, evident in two of the many letters written to the Center following the conference, was positive: Melissa Hui, a Hong Kong-born Canadian, describes composing after the conference: “Although I had obviously pondered the Asian heritage questions before, I think the exposure to more ‘Asian thinking’ and Japanese music/culture had an effect on me while I was composing my new work.”

American composer Catherine Nez writes, “...indeed the resources of the various old and treasured traditions

remain yet to be realized more consciously.”

Canadian composer James Harley describes his discoveries: “The conference has helped me both to see the connections that exist between my identity and the identities of the other composers from around the Pacific, as well as to be more aware of my own distinctiveness.”

*...How can one pick up and work with tradition?*

This question was debated and explored during the PCC, yet as compositions by Pacific composers gain more exposure in Europe and the United States, and artists become more in touch with the effects of cultural influence, Pacific composers will undoubtedly begin to discover their own solutions. □



Keishi Miura

Young composers Gee-Bum Kim, Franki Raden, and Ye Xiaogang (right to left), eager to learn and attentive to the experiences of Composer-in-Residence Chou Wen-chung (far left).



## The Pacific Composers Conference

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In the process of examining over two hundred applicants from more than twenty-five countries, musical competence did not take exclusive precedence. With the generous assistance of a final selection panel consisting of composers George Crumb, Mario Davidovsky, and Chinary Ung, applicants and those who were recommended by guest and senior composers were judged according to their ability to contribute in Sapporo to what would become a rich, multi-faceted representation of composers. Professor Chou Wen-chung, serving as artistic director, designed the conference to provide an opportunity for composers of Pacific heritage and varying musical styles, philosophies, and careers to interact, explore, and compare views in an atmosphere that would reflect their own cultural background.

Several artistic questions were raised during individual composer presentations and discussion sessions led by Guest Composers and Composers-in-Residence. Preselected topics included musicology and research, music theory, imagery, and the definition of a Pacific composer. One-on-one dialogues between senior and fellow composers were also a popular part of the conference curriculum, as well as music listening sessions, contemporary music concerts, a special session on the future of Chinese music, and two panel discussions—one an historical overview of regional developments in music, and the other a summation of the PCC itself.

One composer participant, Francisco Feliciano of the Philippines, articulates the Center's subtle but significant goals in the planning of an exclusively "Pacific" conference: "I look at the conference as a stage in the development of music composition in the region...a liberating process."

The PCC's Artistic Director Chou Wen-chung and the Center for U.S.-China Arts Exchange extend sincere appreciation to composers George Crumb, Mario Davidovsky, and Chinary Ung for their time and dedication to selecting PCC participants; Composers-in-Residence, Jose Maceda and Isang Yun, who offered countless suggestions and recommendations; Toru Takemitsu, who offered thoughtful and valuable advice (although because of prior commitments, was unable to attend); Guest Composers Eugene Lee, Peter Sculthorpe, Chinary Ung, and Joji Yuasa, whose recommendations and research made it possible for a number of talented Fellow Composers from a wide range of countries to participate; Guest Composers Francisco Feliciano, Toshio Hosokawa, and Qu Xiaosong for their generous contribution of knowledge and experience; Senior Fellows Tetsuo Amemiya, Chen Yi, Shyh-ji Chew, Alexina Louie, Frankie Raden, and David Tsang, whose assistance in Sapporo made each event possible; Betsy Glans, who coordinated activities for the PCC; and finally, all the participating composers themselves, for volunteering their valuable insight and energy during our short time together. □



*Yutaka Sado, assistant conductor for the Pacific Music Festival, enjoys a moment of musical bliss.*

## Participating Composers

### Composers-in-residence

Chou Wen-chung  
*China/USA*  
Jose Maceda  
*The Philippines*  
Isang Yun  
*Korea/Germany*

### Senior Guest Composers

Eugene Lee  
*Korea/USA*  
Peter Sculthorpe  
*Australia*  
Chinary Ung  
*Cambodia/USA*  
Joji Yuasa  
*Japan/USA*

### Guest Composers

Francisco Feliciano  
*The Philippines*  
Toshio Hosokawa  
*Japan*  
Qu Xiaosong  
*China*

### Fellows

Tetsuo Amemiya, Brenton Broadstock, Victor Chan, Chen Xiaoyong, Chen Yi, Chen Yuanlin, Shyh-ji Chew, Bruce Crossman, Brent Davids, Conrado Del Rosario, Suguru Goto, James Harley, He Xuntian, Melissa Hui, Hung Yu-Chien, Hiroyuki Itoh, Gee-Bum Kim, Sung-Ki Kim, Kui-Im Lee, Alexina Louie, Lu Pei,\* Satoshi Minami, Catherine Nez, Kilsung Oak, Robert Priest, Franki Raden, Valerie Ross, Ian Shanahan, Bright Sheng,\* Jose Sosaya, Minako Tokuyama, Josefino Toledo, David Tsang, Tzeng Shing-Kwei, Sinta Wullur, Ye Xiaogang, Zhou Long, Zhu Shirui

*\*unable to attend.*

Keishi Miura



# Pacific Composers Conference Agenda

Participating composers were sent a list of questions to explore prior to their arrival in Sapporo. The questions were designed to enhance the PCC symposiums by stimulating the composers' thoughts in advance, and preparing composers for more provocative questions and a lively exchange of ideas at the conference.

Below are a few of the prepared questions.

*What direction do you feel contemporary music in the Pacific region will take as we move into a new century?*

*Do you feel the development of Western music has been influenced by non-Western ideas?*

*How do you consider your musical language: is it Western or an admixture of influences from different cultures?*

*Is the reflection of cultural values a concern in your music? If not, what is important in your music?*

## Conference Agenda

### PCC Discussion Sessions

Chou Wen-chung	<i>Introduction</i>
Eugene Lee	<i>"What does music theory mean to the composer?"</i>
Jose Maceda	<i>"Research and Rural Tradition"</i>
Peter Sculthorpe	<i>"The Pacific Composer or should there be a Pacific Composer?"</i>
Michael Tilson Thomas	<i>"Personal Notes on Conducting, Composing, and the Future of Contemporary Music"</i>

### PCC Composer Talks

Chou Wen-chung	<i>"Aesthetics and Musical Composition"</i>
Toshio Hosokawa	<i>"Composing for Traditional Instruments—Possibilities and Dangers"</i>
Jose Maceda	<i>"Ambiguity and Precision in Eastern and Western Music"</i>
Peter Sculthorpe	<i>"The Australian Character and Landscape as a Source for Musical Composition"</i>
Chinary Ung	<i>"Imagery in Composition"</i>
Joji Yuasa	<i>"Traditional Thoughts on Advanced Technology: Computer Music"</i>

## Musical Dichotomy

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court music; the contrasts in color, unity, and harmony; and fundamental elements of music, such as pitch and pitch order. Large and small group discussions explored philosophical diversities as well, including examples of Chinese thought and how music can be expressed through Taoist concepts: "There is music you can listen to with your ears, but there is music you can listen to with your mind or your heart. That's what 'Tao' is, the kind of internalization that is needed," explains Chou Wen-chung.

Composers from all locations identified specific musical and cultural influences in their own region. Composer Tzeng Shing-Kwei from Taiwan referred to Taiwan's political and economic history and

how the arts in Taiwan have been shaped by historical evolution. In the Philippines, explained Jose Maceda, ninety percent of the people have led lifestyles similar to the Spanish or South Americans. Their culture is influenced by Christianity, and the products of these influences on present-day Philippines is considered a "dilemma" for Filipino composers.

Other Filipinos felt less burdened by the effects of outside influences on their own composing. In a country continually absorbing American, Chinese, Southeast Asian, as well as Christian influences, the following viewpoint may become commonplace: "...what excites me at the moment is that everything that is happening (in music)—this globalism—is what's happening in the Philippines; there are so many different influences at

the same time, and I use all of it now and will do so in the future."

Composers together defined the strength and presence of the Western voice, and were active in deliberating its impact on their music. Although some composers in the Pacific have made impressive progress in relating their own musical traditions to those of modern Western culture, many have the tendency to compose music that reflects a mere collage of Western and Eastern sound, and a few composers still struggle with the dominance of Western styles.

The dichotomy of Western and Eastern music remained a significant and most thought-provoking theme throughout much of the discussions during the PCC. □

# In Retrospect...

The positive responses we have received at the Center from PCC participants have been a source of encouragement and inspiration for us. Here, in their own words, are some of the participants' reactions.

*"One could have thought at first that a PCC would limit one's thinking into a narrow, regional way. But the PCC has opened our minds to new and limitless possibilities that will now enhance our creative thinking."*

—Conrado del Rosario  
Philippines/West Germany

*"Too few conferences and festivals are held in the Pacific area and we need them, without having to travel to places where minds and ideas have been closed for decades....Such a conference as the PCC can create new ideas, new challenges and possibilities—a new environment free from the ideological fetters of Europe and parts of the USA."*

—Brenton Broadstock  
Australia

*"The PCC was unlike any other music festival or conference in that it was tailored to the needs and aspirations of the region, and specifically for the young composer. It was a conference that looked to the future, and there was a sense that there is a new beginning...."*

—David Tsang  
Hong Kong/United States

*"How talented the young composers are!...How different the Pacific composer is from the European composer!...How powerful the Chinese composers are!...How interesting for me, a woman in the Pacific, to compose!...I met many people I didn't know, but at the same time, I met MYSELF too."*

—Minako Tokuyama  
Japan

*"...The results and effects of such an undertaking simply cannot be quantified except to say that this will have tremendous impact in the years to come."*

—Francisco Feliciano  
The Philippines

*"[The PCC] was indeed a very important experience for all of us, especially as Asian composers. Hopefully we all can learn and develop some important ideas in the future from what we shared and discussed during the conference."*

—Franki Raden  
Indonesia

*"For me, the PCC served as an eye-opener to all the beautiful musical traditions that surround me, my culture, my heritage. I am in every sense a Western educated musician having studied in Britain, and always felt I had no roots in my homeland. Perhaps it's too early to say, but I have found some answers to my musical search."*

—Valerie Seo Bing Ross  
Malaysia

*"This conference reaffirms the necessity of a profound investigation of the diverse types of music in my country...an investigation that lamentably, until now, has been incipient."*

—Jose Sosaya  
Peru

*"Thank you very much, and CONGRATULATIONS!"*

—Tetsuo Amemiya  
Japan/United States



*"I am firmly convinced that PCC has brought a fecund result to all the participants not only to hopeful young composers but also to senior composers like us."*

—Joji Yuasa  
Japan/United States

*"...I started writing a new work for orchestra right after the conference, when all the things we discussed and the music that we listened to were still very fresh in my mind. The work was finished last October and premiered by the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra last November."*

—Josefino Toledo  
The Philippines

*"The composers at the PCC were very refreshing—thank you for inviting me! It was, for me, very important as now I feel the need to move into a new dimension with my music...."*

—Toshio Hosokawa  
Japan

*"[The PCC's] effects on me are still being felt. In thinking about composition I have pondered and meditated on some of the many issues so heatedly debated. I feel very fortunate to have been part of it...."*

—Ketty Nez  
United States

*"I was grateful to be a part of the PCC because Peru doesn't offer possibilities for composers to improve their music. What a beautiful experience it was in Sapporo—I will never forget it."*

—Jose' Sosaya  
Peru

*"I can honestly say that my time in Sapporo was one of the most stimulating and gratifying experiences in my life!"*

—Robert Priest  
United States

*"I can't help feeling the sense of historical significance and the dimension of the importance of this conference...."*

—Kilsung Oak  
Korea/United States

*"After reviewing the concepts discussed at the PCC, I recognized that it is very important for me to make a composition of my own, standing on the ground of the present-day, 1990, in Hokkaido where I am now."*

—Satoshi Minami  
Japan

*"Without thinking deeply while composing, the composer will often imitate others blindly. The most important thing, to me, is to learn the essentials in music of various cultures and then use the most natural language possible to express my own musical imagination."*

—Chen Yi  
China

*"The informal sharing of composers as individuals and human beings was a mutual encouragement to all. That is, knowing that I am not alone in the artistic struggle for expressions means that I feel other people are persisting, thus, so can I."*

—Wallace Bruce Crossman  
New Zealand

*"How do you look for your own musical language? Searching for novelty or seeking out a shortcut is not the answer. The only way to establish yourself is by using a combination of your own cultural traditions and the best of outside cultures."*

—Zhou Long  
China

## Advisory Council Changes

The Center officially welcomes three new Advisory Council Members:

Michael Morris, President, Asia/Pacific, Burson-Marsteller, comes to the Center after three years in Hong Kong and extensive travel and work experience in the Asia/Pacific region. His experience and advice will be invaluable to the Center in this period of sensitive relations between the United States and China. Dr. Douglas P. Murray, President of the Lingnan Foundation, and Dr. David Michael Lampton, President of the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations have also agreed to serve on the Center's Advisory Committee. We are grateful for this opportunity to be represented and supported by such esteemed members of the China field.

The Center would like to express our best wishes and sincere appreciation to Richard Holbrooke, Robert M. Hormats, I. M. Pei, Cynthia Polsky, and Larry Snoddon for their generous contributions and dedicated service during their terms on the Advisory Council. □

## Staff Changes

The Center welcomes two new full-time members of the staff. Molly Kinney joined us as the Program Assistant in November 1990, after spending two years in Tainan, Taiwan, where she studied Chinese at Cheng Kung University, volunteered at the YMCA as an English teacher, and later served as the YMCA's English department coordinator. Molly received her B.A. in English from Santa Clara University in California.

In September of 1991, William Cossolias was hired for the Center's new position of Office Assistant. A native of San Diego, William received his B.A. in Religion from New York University.

Since the summer of 1989, student interns and part-time assistants have included Yu Jian, Sharon Huang, David Tsang, Deborah Isser, and Erhyu Yuan. Cathy Hong, a junior at Columbia College, is the Center's most current student intern. Mitchell Mensch is the Center's financial consultant. □