Chinese Choral Music

Professor Tian XiaoBao

Dr. Tian XiaoBao, a leading figure in the new generation of choral conductors in China, is the director and professor of Choral Studies at the School of Music in Central China Normal University as well as the founder and director of the Tiankong Choir, a well-known female choir in China. He is the Vice-President of the Chinese Chorus Association and the Vice-President of the Chinese Choral Music Federation. As a recipient of numerous awards in choral conducting, he has led his choirs onto the stages of China and the world.

Part I: The history of Chinese Choral Music in the 20th century

(A) About the beginning of Chinese Choral Music

Two paths:

1) According to western standard of choral music ---- about 100 years ---- The First Choral Piece using western choral composing techniques: <Chun You (Travel in the spring)> in 1913 by Mr. Li ShuTong
2) According to the definition of the term “choir” ---- over 2,000 years ---- Dong Zu Da Ge

Chinese scholars define the first path as “modern Chinese Choral Music”

(B) Five stages of modern Chinese Choral Music in the 20th century

1) 1913~early 1930s (The budding period)
   ● <Hai Yun (The ocean’s voice)> by Mr. Zhao YuanRen (Harvard University Graduate, U.S.)
   ● <Chun Jiang Hua Yue Ye (Spring’s flowers and moonlight by the river)> by Mr. Xiao YouMei (Imperial University Graduate, Japan)

2) Early 1930s~1949
   ● The first oratorio: <Chang Hen Ge (Song of everlasting sorrow)> by Mr. Huang Zi
   ● The first symphonic choral work: <Huang He Da He Chang (The Yellow River Cantata)> by Xian Xinghai
Unaccompanied choral pieces:
- <Mu Lian Jiu Mu (Moginlin’s rescue of his mother)> by Mr. Huang Zi
- <Ken Chun Ni (Farming in the spring)> by Mr. He LuTing

3) 1949~1966
- 1949: China National Chorus, was founded;
- 1952: Shanghai Orchestra Chorus;
- 1959: Beethoven Symphony No.9 as the premiere in the history of China (China National Chorus, conductor: Mr. Yan LiangKun)
- 1963: <Choral Music Studies> (written by Professor Ma GeShun)

Famous Choral Pieces
- <Pastoral> (Qu Xixian)
- <Please stay here, friends from afar> (Mai Ding)
- <Yang guan san die> (Wang ZhengYa)

Symphonic choral works
- <The praise of China> (Liu Zhi)
- <Lyrics of Yangtze River> (Xie GongCheng)

4) 1966~1976 (Cultural Revolution)
- <Choral works written for Chairman Mao's five poems> by Tian Feng in 1971

5) 1976~1999
- 1982: “Beijing Chorus Festival” (renamed “China Chorus Festival” in 1996)
- 1986: China Chorus Association was set up (President: Conductor Yan LiangKun)
- 1992: “China International Chorus Festival” (currently the most authoritative chorus festival in China)
- 1993: “China Children Chorus Festival”

Famous Choral Pieces
- <Fluttered flower-petals> (Qu XiXian)
- <Wu Su Li Boat Song> (Qu XiXian)
- <Beautiful scenery of Yunnan> (Tian Feng)
- <Song for Yangtze River> (Wang ShiGuang)
- <On the hopeful farmland> (Shi GuangNan)

Symphonic Choral Works
- <The Shy, the sun, and the pursuit: for female choir and orchestra> (Lu ZaiYi)
- <Rainbow after the rain> (Lu ZaiYi)
- <China, my dear mother> (Lu ZaiYi)
- <Walk with difficulty> (Lu ZaiYi)
- <Huang Shi, the beautiful mountain> (Qu WenZhong)
- <Hu Jia Song> (Li HuanZhi)
- <Five Pieces in the Book of Odes> (Jin Xiang)
Part II The development of modern Chinese Choral Music in the 21st century

(A) Compositions

- <Gan Sheng Ling> (Liu WenJin)
- <The Desert Night> (Shang DeYi)
- <Spring is Coming> (Zhang Chao)
- <The Big Qinghai-Tibet> (Meng WeiDong)
- <Ba Jun Zan> (Se, EnKeBaYaEr)
- <The Heavenly Lake of Namsto> (Cao GuangPing)
- <The Game of Gong Chi Pu> (Huang XunFang)
- <Snow area plateau hope of application> (Gan Lin)
- Dong Zu Da Ge Series
- <The Four Seasons in My Childhood: for childrens and womens chorus > (Wen DeQing)
- <Sunset Flute Drum> (Lu Pei)
- <Chun Xiao> (Xu JianQiang)

(B) Choir Ensembles

Professional Groups

- China National Chorus
- The Central Opera Chorus
- The Shanghai Opera Chorus
- Male Choir of Chinese Police Officers

Children’s Choir

- Children and Young Women's Choir of China National Symphony Orchestra

The middle-school student choir

- Chorus of Guangdong Experimental Middle School
- Shenzhen middle school’s JinZhong Chorus
- Shenzhen senior high school’s BaiHe Choir

The universities' student choir

- Peiyang Chorus of Tianjin University
- Nankai University Chorus
- TianKong Choir

(C) Choral Performance Form

- Choral Performance Form
  - Repertory
  - Ways of singing
  - Ways of performance on the stage
Six Forms of Choral Performance
1. Traditional Western Choral Form
2. Opera Choral Form
3. Russian Choral Form
4. Chinese Folksong Choral Form
5. Chinese Modern Choral Form
6. Popular Choral Form