PERFORMING THE YELLOW RIVER CANTATA

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Since its composition in 1939, Xian Xinghai’s (1905-1945) *Yellow River Cantata* has nearly exclusively remained the province of Chinese choral groups. In large measure, the failure of the work to make significant inroads into the world of Western choral music stems from the daunting challenges posed by the Mandarin text, as well as the ethnic musical elements and folk instruments present in even the most “Western” adaptations of the piece. Given that only one commercially available edition exists in Chinese, the focus of this dissertation has been the removal of all potential obstacles to Western performance.

To that end, the author has produced a phonetic, Romanized version of the original Mandarin text by Guang Weiran (1913-2002), as well as a carefully-crafted, singable English translation that, nonetheless, remains as faithful to Xian’s original musical conception as possible. A significant aspect of this work has been the incorporation of the considerable, unwritten body of performance traditions that have derived from the series of revisions that the work has undergone and the sizable body of recorded performances. It is the author’s hope that, having undertaken these tasks, this iconic Chinese choral work may become just as accessible and popular with Western choirs and audiences.
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MPW00292 (left), MPW 00450 (center), MPW00500 (right).
The *Yellow River Cantata* by Xian Xinghai\(^1\) (1905-1945) was the first multi-movement Chinese choral composition to gain widespread performance outside of mainland China. Despite its enduring popularity among Chinese people across the world more than seventy years after Xian set Guang Weiran’s (1913-2002) poem to music, the cantata has remained a work performed almost exclusively by Chinese singers and conductors. A staple of Chinese choral literature, the *Yellow River Cantata* has not attracted any significant amount of Western performance or recognition. This inability to resonate with Western choirs may be the result of the difficulties it poses linguistically and instrumentally; Western choirs do not typically sing in Mandarin, or have access to the ethnic folk instruments required by even the most “Western” version of the piece. To complicate matters further, the composition has undergone a series of revisions (during Xian’s life and after his death) that have only made the work’s accessibility to Western performers more problematic. No fewer than six different versions of the *Yellow River Cantata* exist:

1. 1939, Yan’an, Xian Xinghai  
2. 1941, Moscow, Xian Xinghai  
3. 1946, USA, Wallingford Riegger  
4. 1955, Shanghai, Li Huanzhi  
5. 1975, Beijing, Yan Liangkun  
6. 2005, Hongkong, Carmen Koon

Despite this wealth of scores, only the last is commercially available; none provide Western choirs with either an IPA-based guide to pronouncing the original Mandarin text

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\(^1\) Chinese names are written with the family name before the given name. The British Wade-Giles system transliterates Xian’s name as, “Hsien Hsing-hai.”
or an accurate, singable English text that would make non-Chinese performance a viable option. The author has sought to remove these impediments in this new edition, based on the 1975 version, the most widely performed and recorded of the *Yellow River Cantata*.

To facilitate performances in English or Mandarin in the West, this new edition provides both a Romanized, phonetic pronunciation of the Chinese text and a new English singing translation, specifically crafted to preserve as much of the original rhythm and meaning of Xian’s musical setting of the text as possible. The complex political and cultural forces that shaped both Xian’s original score and the subsequent derivative versions have been thoroughly discussed elsewhere; consequently, the focus of this dissertation has been upon those practical elements that seem to have impeded Western performances. The historical background given was consciously limited to biographical facts, essential to the contemporary Western performer.

For this reason, the author decided to produce a two-piano reduction of the 1975 orchestration first. Ultimately, a complete orchestral score (including appropriate Western substitutions for Xian’s designated Chinese instruments) will appear. The author consulted a wide range of recorded performances\(^2\) to extract those subtleties of performance that are not notated in any score. These may or may not have been precisely notated by Xian in the original score, but have, in the author’s opinion, been established as the standard interpretation by subsequent performances. Options for replacing the indigenous Chinese instruments included in Xian’s original score with Western

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\(^2\) See Discography, pp. 388-390.
surrogates, as well as the technical limitations that such a transfer may pose, form another practical layer of this edition.

In an effort to maintain a clear level of separation between the interpretive markings in Xian’s autograph, the subsequent adaptations of it, and the editorial clarifications made by the author to reflect the work’s long performance history, the various levels of changes have been indicated using clearly-differentiated brackets. In general, the following principles have guided the construction of this edition:

1. Wherever possible, Xian’s original rhythms were retained.
2. None of the pitches in the original choral parts were altered or omitted.
3. Markings related to performance added by the editor are clearly differentiated from Xian’s original.
4. As with any translation, occasional changes of rhythm were necessary to accommodate the English syntax. These have been clearly delineated from the original text by the use of smaller noteheads.

Finally, Western performers unfamiliar with the historical and cultural contexts that shaped Guang’s poem and Xian’s musical setting of it must acquire a basic understanding of how the music embodied the specific cultural constructs of that time in Chinese history and the emotions emanating from them. Therefore, our first task is to examine the Chinese text of the *Yellow River Cantata*, a work originally written to stir up feelings of nationalism and patriotism during China’s struggle against Japanese
oppression.\textsuperscript{3} This task requires a closer look at the cultural landmarks to which both text and music make reference. In order to understand why this work remains so close to the musical heart of the Chinese people today, we must separate the cultural symbolism of the music from the emotionally-charged attitudes engendered by the Sino-Japanese War. Only then, can Xian’s composition be evaluated purely on its musical merit, quite apart from whatever political uses may have been made of it.

\textsuperscript{3} The Second Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937 and lasted till the end of World War II. Beyond the scope of this document is a consideration of the ways that Xian’s music was subsequently used to serve the doctrinal points of view that were not necessarily held by the composer himself.
CHAPTER 1: THE YELLOW RIVER AS A SYMBOL

The Yellow River Cantata was written in 1939, during a period of great suffering following Japan’s invasion of China. It tapped into the Chinese people’s deep yearning to become a strong nation, free from foreign exploitation. According to Rhodes Farmer (a war correspondent for the Melbourne Herald):

Japan within 36 years had expanded five-fold, increasing her territories from 140,000 sq. miles to about 764,000 sq. miles – all at China’s expense. Now the Japanese planned to weld North China’s 400,000 sq. miles on to Manchuria, forming an economic block from Korea to the Yellow River.

The Japanese were not interested in economic co-operation with China. They wanted to own the raw material sources of North China; they wanted cheap Chinese labour to produce them.1

At more than three thousand miles in length, the Yellow River is second only to the Yangtze River as China’s longest waterway. The yellowish-brown hue that gives the river its name comes from the massive amounts of silt (loess) picked up as the waters rush eastward to the sea. Called “Mother River of the Chinese nation” and “the cradle of the Chinese civilization,” the Yellow River is as vital a resource for China as the Nile is for Egypt. Farming villages began to spring up in the Yellow River valley in the Neolithic era (around 9500 BC). Dynasties since have either flourished from effective control of the river or fallen as a result of its floods.

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1 Rhodes Farmer. Shanghai Harvest: a diary of three years in the China war. (Glasgow and London: Gilmour and Dean, Ltd., 1945) 13.
Just as the bald eagle (unique to North America) represents freedom, strength, and majesty as the national symbol of the U.S., the Yellow River joins Chinese hearts everywhere to their homeland, history, and roots. Beyond its importance providing water for agriculture and hydroelectric power, the Yellow River nurtures the spirit and strength of the Chinese people. In Lanzhou, the capitol of Gansu Province, a statue was built to symbolize the Yellow River as the mother of Chinese people.
CHAPTER 2: GENESIS OF THE TEXT AND MUSIC

As a nation, China suffered humiliation at the hands of foreign powers during the Opium Wars (1839-42, 1856-60) and Sino-Japanese Wars (1894-5, 1937-45). In the early twentieth century, the conflict and unrest caused by feudalism, the Boxer Rebellion, and a series of revolutions beginning in 1911 culminated in the outbreak of Civil War (1927). Intermittent fighting between Japan and China resumed in 1931. The Chinese Central Government’s Ministry of Education organized a Mass Education Specialists’ Conference in 1933, at which resolutions concerning mass education during the national crisis were passed to realize the following goals:

1. Heighten the spirit of hatred against the enemy.
2. Work up the courage of independence and self-reliance.
3. Understand the responsibility in joint efforts to curb national crisis.
4. Acquire the habit of fortitude and the ability to withstand hardships.
5. Help organizations in their ability for self-defense.
6. Develop the physical stamina to withstand hardships.
7. Cultivate the habit to buy native products.
8. Indoctrinate the people with knowledge in national defense.\(^2\)

After the second Sino-Japanese War began in 1937, a new social education initiative was launched with the following objectives:

1. To awaken national consciousness.
2. To stimulate sentiments in carrying on the War of Resistance.
3. To indoctrinate knowledge on the War of Resistance.\(^3\)

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\(^3\) *Ibid.*, 11.
The arts played a significant role in accomplishing these objectives. Troupes of musicians and actors toured China, performing in large cities, towns, and villages, reaching over ten million people. The revolutionary poet Guang Weiran was the leader of one such group, the Enemy Resistance Third Drama Troupe. In November 1938, his team needed to cross the Yellow River bank in the vicinity of the Hukou waterfall at Shanxi. It was the harrowing experience of crossing the river that inspired Guang to write a four-hundred-line poem in eight sections, which Xian Xinghai set to music the following year as the *Yellow River Cantata*. Wu Xiling, a member of Guang’s troupe, related this account of their crossing:

Hukou is one of the most dangerous gorges on the Yellow River. Here, the gorge chopped the river into two uneven grounds. The rolling waters spanning two to three li squeezed into the narrow mouth of the gorge that was only a few zhang wide, thundering powerfully like a massive herd of running cattle. The torrents of the enormous waterfall churned up mud and plunged downwards, creating sprays of waves that were several meters high; its roar shook both heaven and earth. If one stood for a few minutes near the edge of the gorge, the muddy waterfall and its sprays would suddenly appear to resemble the steep slope of a mountain. Your ears would become numb from the deafening roar, only returning to normal until you were five to six li from the gorge.

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4 Or the 3rd Squad of the Anti-Enemy Troupe
5 This is Shǎnxī province. There is also Shānxī/Shaanxi province. They are separate regions, and the Yellow River marks the border between them.
6 1 li = 500 meters
7 1 zhang ≈ 3.33 meters
8 Yuyi Qi and Yan Li, eds. “Zhongguo jin xiandai yinyueshi ziliao congkan,” *Xian Xinghai Zhuanji 4* (Guangzhou: China Arts Research Center Music Research Institute, 1983), 59-64. Her complete narrative may be found as Appendix C.
Guang Weiran created continuity within his lengthy poem by linking the various scenes and people mentioned in different movements. What follows is a sampling of the poet’s extra-musical ideas taken from Xian’s *Composition Notes on the Yellow River Cantata*.  

The Yellow River’s heroic spirit appears on the plains of Asia, symbolizing the greatness of Chinese national feelings. From past to present, many poets have sung praises to the Yellow River.

The *Yellow River Cantata* seeks to project a similarly stirring and realistic portrait.

Under the dark cloudy skies, amidst the huge crashing waves, the Yellow River boatmen battled with all their might against the wild winds and pouring rain to cross over to the opposite shore, reaching the final victory.

There are two slightly differing accounts of the libretto’s genesis. According to Hon-Lun Yang, “Guang’s decision to write the poem as a cantata libretto only came when Xian Xinghai went to visit him at the hospital, as he was recuperating from a horse accident. Xian mentioned the meeting in his diary dated February 26, 1939.”

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9 The complete description can be found in Appendix D
11 The entry indicated that Xian visited Guang, who was hospitalized after falling and breaking his bone.
colleague, Wu Xiling, noted that the poet fell off his horse and broke his arm in mid-January on their way to Yan’an. Wu recorded that “it was not until after he was hospitalized that he officially began penning the words down.” According to Wu, Xian heard Guang recite the complete text to the *Yellow River Cantata* on February 18, 1939 at a Lunar New Year’s Eve celebration. If any ambiguity surrounded the libretto’s genesis, documentary evidence reveals that Xian set Guang’s libretto, originally called *Huangheyin*, in only six days. The compositional process commenced on March 26, 1939 with a preliminary sketch regarding the voicing of each movement that Xian entered in his diary:

1. Song of the Yellow River Boatmen (Mixed Choir)  
2. Ode to the Yellow River (Male Solo)  
3. Yellow River’s Water from Heaven Descends (Recitation Song)  
4. Yellow Water Ballad (Unison)  
5. Musical Dialogue on the River Bank (Duet)  
6. Yellow River Lament (Female Solo)  
7. Defend the Yellow River (Canon)  
8. Roar! Yellow River (Mixed Choir)

The same source indicates that Xian completed the music for all eight movements by March 31, 1939.

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13 Yuyi Qi and Yan Li, eds. “Zhongguo jin xiandai yinyueshi ziliao congkan”, 59-64. See Appendix C.  
14 *Xian Xinghai Quanji*, 263.
Text

What follows is a new English translation of the cantata’s Chinese text made by this author. Immediately preceding each movement’s text are Xian’s notes about the musical program of the cantata (in italics). Two descriptions are included – the first taken from Xian’s Composition Notes (Chuangzuo zaji)15 written in Moscow in 1940 using the pseudonym Huang Xun; the second is taken directly from the entry for April 8, 1939 in Xian’s diary.16 Following the text, additional commentary is provided by the author to clarify the historical context that shaped the poem.

The scene of the boatmen crossing the Yellow River is depicted in the very first movement of the cantata. Here, the boatmen embody an attitude of facing adversity and their adversary with strength, determination, and a fighting spirit.

1. **Song of the Yellow River Boatmen (Chorus)**
   
   Begins with an opening scene of a few dozen Yellow River boatmen battling the perilous waves as they cross the river, full of fighting strength; ends with the boat arriving at shore, boatmen heave a sigh of relief, relaxed and cheerful.

1. **Prelude – Song of the Yellow River Boatmen**

   If you listen in peace, you will discover a painting that has around a dozen fishermen rowing their boats with their faces radiating the fighting spirit. There are two sentiments in this movement that are notable: the tension in the opening depicts the scene of fishermen as they struggle with the waves to cross the Yellow River, as they sing, “Row forward,... The last part is a bit more relaxed. Before the fishermen crossed the river, they were in a jolly mood. After they have had a hearty laugh [from having gotten past the most turbulent waters of the crossing], their worries dissipated, putting them at ease once again.

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15 Xian’s Composition Notes (Chuangzuo zaji) Xian Xinghai Quanj, vol. 1, 145-8. Xian’s complete notes appear in Appendix D.
[1] Song of the Yellow River Boatmen

Recitation
Friends! Have you seen the Yellow River?
Have you crossed the Yellow River?
Do you remember scenes of the boatmen
risking their lives to battle the perilous waves?
If you have forgotten, then listen!

Chorus
Hai-yo! Row!
Row, forge ahead! Hai-yo!
Stormy clouds veil the sky!
Surging waves as high as mountains!
Cold winds slap our faces!
Surfs crash into the boat!
Fellow boatmen, keep a lookout!
Helmsman, hold firm!
Stay alert, do not slack off!
Fight for your lives, do not be afraid!
Hai! Row!

Do not fear the mountainous waves!
Boating on the Yellow River is like fighting at the front,
Unite and forge ahead! Hai! Row!
Row, forge ahead! Hai-yo! Hahaha!

The shore is in our view,
now we have reached the shore.
Hearts, calm down, catch a breath.
Soon, we will again risk our lives fighting those raging waves!
Hai-yo! Row! Hey!
2. **Ode to the Yellow River (Male Solo)**

Written in the form of an ode with bold and unrestrained emotion, praises of the Yellow River’s might and strength are sung loudly; the power of the Yellow River’s rushing waters can be heard in the accompaniment.

2. **Ode to the Yellow River**

This movement is composed in the form of a laud/anthem. Laudes often carry a bold and unrestrained passion; this one praises the might and strength of the Yellow River. Scored for a tenor solo, it is a moving piece. One can even hear the strong flowing currents of the Yellow River in the accompaniment!

[2] **Ode to the Yellow River**

**Recitation**

Ah! My friends!
The heroic spirit of the Yellow River dominates the plains of Asia, representing the vigor of our nation, mighty and strong!
Here, facing the Yellow River, we sing our song of praise.

**Solo**

I stand on the mountain peak,
gazing at the Yellow River rolling towards the southeast.
Golden waves surge, lofty waters rise;
muddy swirling rapids mark its sinuous course
down from the Kunlun mountain, rushing toward the Yellow Sea;
dividing the central plains of China into southern and northern parts.

Ah, Yellow River!
You are the cradle of the Chinese people!
You have nurtured five thousand years of ancient culture;
many heroic tales have taken place on your shores!

Ah, Yellow River!
You are mighty and strong, like a giant you appear on the plains of Asia,
using your heroic physique to build our people’s defense.

Ah, Yellow River!
You rush along to the horizon, majestic,
extending your arms like countless strips of iron towards both northern and southern shores.

Our people’s mighty spirit will flourish under your nurture!

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In the end, Xian decided to use a baritone instead.
From your example, our homeland’s heroic sons and daughters will learn to become just as mighty and strong as you!

Figure 2.2 View of the Yellow River

In the preceding movement, Xian used a narrator to provide logical continuity. His persistent use of this device not only linked the separate movements, but also produced an interplay between the poetic text and Xian’s music. Xian’s approach is reminiscent of Arthur Honegger’s use of a similar device, when he adapted the dramatic music he had previously composed for René Morax’s play, *Le Roi David*, for concert hall performance in 1923.¹⁸

3. **Yellow River’s Waters from Heaven Descends (Recitation)**

New form, not with the big drum or just mere recitation, but a recitation song. The narrator must have a firm grasp of the emotions in this piece, and more importantly, speak with strength and boldness.

3. **Yellow River’s Water from Heaven Descends**

The text is recited in this movement. I chose the Sanxian [three-stringed banjo] as the accompanying instrument and not the drum or the typical Beijing opera accompaniment style, to express the content of the spoken words. In Europe, there is a type of solo song with independent vocal and accompaniment parts, advocated by the composer Wolf.¹⁹ However, this is probably the first experiment in China where a Sanxian is employed both as an accompaniment as well as to express the content of the text, in such a way that it can stand independently as a piece. Besides the roll of the waves that can be heard in the Sanxian’s tune, two other melodies have also been

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¹⁸ Honegger, like Xian, studied composition with Vincent D’Indy in Paris.
¹⁹ Hugo Wolf (1860-1903), composer of hundreds of *Lieder*, is known for his skill creating form based on his reading of the text.
incorporated: one is “Man Jiang Hong” and the other is “March of the Volunteers,” but only excerpts from these have been used (this is due to the structuring of the tune).

A typical orchestra for the Beijing opera (Jingju) is made up of melodic (two-stringed fiddles, a lute, and the double-reed suona) and percussion (gongs, cymbals, one or two drums, and wooden clappers) instruments. The percussion section is inseparable from all the dramatic elements.

[3] Yellow River’s Water from Heaven Descends

Recitation (Incidental music to recited poetry)

Yellow River!
We want to learn to become as mighty and strong as you!
Here, before you, we offer a poem,
confiding in you the catastrophes suffered by our people.

Recitation, accompanied by the Sanxian

Yellow River’s water, descended from heaven –
sweeping, surging forward;
the cries of the hissing river shatter our courage!
The river is China’s major artery,
rapidly circulating the people’s lifeblood throughout the land.

∞∞∞

The red sun shines high,
it’s golden rays burst open from the surface of the water.
The moon rises over the mountains east,
it’s silver beams on the river glimmer like snow.
The river shakes, and leaps, like a flying dragon,
traversing ten thousand miles²⁰ each day, emptying into the vast eastern sea.

From Hukou²¹ to Longmen,²²
strange battle formations are displayed in the sky;²³

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²⁰ One mile in Chinese measurement is 500 meters, or c. 1640 feet.
²¹ Hukou (Kettle Mouth) is a gushing waterfall on the Yellow River. It is also where the poet Guang Weiran was so impressed by the force of the river that he was inspired to write the text to this cantata.
²² Longmen (Dragon Gate) is downstream from Hukou and is the narrowest (hence the swiftest) part of the Yellow River in that region. It is nearly impossible to navigate from Hukou to Longmen. That part of the river is like a dragon that cannot be tamed.
people do not dare lean close to the riverside;  
even a poisonous dragon does not dare dwell on the river bottom.

From ten miles away, see the thick plumes of smoke rising upwards,  
as from a large blazing fire, blanketing the entire sky;  
this cauldron brings our lifeblood to a rolling boil;  
in fact, when the cold air closes in, your whole body trembles.

The river groans and quakes, emitting the power of a billion horses,  
shaking the earth’s crust and dispersing the dark clouds in the sky.

～～～～

Ah, Yellow River!  
The king of rivers!  
When enraged, it is a mad wild beast,  
worse than ten million poisonous pythons;  
making waves, stirring up storms, and wrecking the people’s embankment;  
therefore, on both shores of the Yellow River, terrible calamities took place:

the river devoured people on both shores,  
it leveled over hundreds of miles of villages,  
causing tens of thousands of fellow countrymen to be exiled  
into an unfamiliar land, old and young,  
struggling on the brink of starvation,  
hanging on the verge of death.

～～～～

Today, people on the two shores  
once again suffer unprecedented calamities:  
On Asia’s level plains, pirates from the East  
are letting out murderous fumes of death;  
starvation and death are like the cachectic fever,  
spreading infection on the shores of the Yellow River.

～～～～

23 From Hukou to Longmen, the river is flanked by mountain ridges so high that it looks as though the troops are in some strange formation in the sky.
24 The 1887 flood killed an estimated 900,000 to 2 million people, and the 1931 flood claimed 1 to 3.7 million lives.
25 A chronic disease occurring in India, China, Pakistan, the Mediterranean littoral, the Middle East, South and Central America, Asia, and Africa caused by parasites transmitted by the bite of a species of sandfly; the organisms grow and multiply in the lungs, then the parasites spread throughout the body.
Ah, Yellow River!
you nurture our people’s growth:
you have seen with your own eyes
the calamities that this ancient nation
has suffered for five thousand years!

Since ancient times,
numerous bloody battles have unfolded on the shores of the Yellow River.
Piles of white bones fill your body,
and your surface is stained dark red with blood!

Yet, you have never seen ruthlessness like that unleashed today;
nor have you seen the Yellow Emperor’s 26 sons and grandsons
mobilizing the entire country as they do today.

On the shores of the Yellow River,
scores of guerilla fighters and field units
are scattered like stars, spread out like chess pieces behind the enemy;
from within the green muslin tents, valiant battles are launched
amid the cluster of ten thousand mountains!

Ah, Yellow River!
You record our people’s history through the dynasties;
from ancient to present, many heroes rose along your banks.
But, never before have you seen four hundred million fellow countrymen
united like steel and iron;
hundreds of thousands of heroes spill their blood to defend the country of their forefathers;
the brave and honorable tales of these heroes are like your raging waves –
strong, intense, and awesome!

Ah, Yellow River!
Have you ever heard victory’s triumphant songs sung on your shores?
Have you ever seen the iron army of our home country ambush the enemy,
spread out like a net that covers both earth and sky?
They guard your shores, preventing the enemy from crossing over!
Their goal is to bury the ferocious enemy beneath your billowing waves!

26 A well-known ancestor of the Chinese race.
Ah, Yellow River!
You rush and roar,
angrily ridding the fascists evil demons,
singing their burial song!
Your deafening roar travels across our homeland’s plains,
a triumphant song to honor our people’s great victory!
Roar out loud, across our homeland’s plains,
the triumphant song to honor our people’s great victory!

Figure 2.3 Hukou Waterfall

4. **Yellow Water Ballad (Two-Part Women’s Chorus)**
Simple wording, although must be expressed as painful moans; different from the typical song of melancholy, in that this one conceals hope and fighting spirit.

4. **Yellow Water Ballad**
This is composed like a folksong and sung in unison. The tune is simple, carrying expressions of pain and moaning. Unlike the usual folksongs that convey decadence, the Yellow River Ballad is full of hope and earnest endeavor!
[4] Yellow Water Ballad

Recitation
We are sons and daughters of the Yellow River,
who arduously strive toward victory with each passing day!
But each day that the enemy lives,
is one more day that we cannot rest.
If you doubt this,
then listen to the painful groans of the multitudes on the river to the east.

Chorus
Yellow water, rushing eastward,
flowing for ten thousand miles.
Swift waters, high waves,
racing rapids sound like cries of tigers and wolves.
Open canals and build embankments,\(^{27}\)
for to the east lies level soil
fertile for sprouting wheat and fragrant soy flowers.
Men and women, young and old, live in happy prosperity.

But since the enemy came, these common people have suffered great calamities!
Treachery, wickedness, burning, and murder create a desert of desolation;
people escorting the elderly and carrying the young disperse in all directions to flee death;
losing fathers and mothers, they are unable to return to their home villages!

Yellow waters rush along day and night,
as families are torn apart!

On May 11, 1938, Nationalist Chinese troops under the command of General Chiang Kai-Shek deliberately broke levees along the Yellow River in an attempt to stop the advancing Japanese troops. Approximately 500,000 to 900,000 people perished in the resulting flood. Dick Wilson gave the following account of the hardships this incident caused:

General Shang pressed the button, the dykes exploded and a breach some 200 yards wide was driven into the earthen banks at Huayuanhou. The water hesitated

\(^{27}\) See the Yellow River Valley map (p. 16), which shows the dykes, canals, and irrigation regions.
maddeningly, but at last spilled over with a roar and swarmed onto the Japanese, drowning their advance guard by the thousand, miring their tanks and guns into the ground and throwing an impassable wall of water between the Japanese and Zhengzhou.

The Yellow River waters thus rolled down the Lulu and Huai river beds to the south, eventually to merge with the Yangzi near Shanghai. For several weeks these rivers, thus widened, interposed a barrier between the two armies. The Chinese gained the vital respite they needed, while the Japanese plans had to be scrapped.

Eleven cities and 4000 villages were flooded by this action, crops and farms across three provinces were devastated, and 2 million people were made homeless. One can only guess at the price which the Chinese government had later to pay for that involuntary contribution to the war effort. ²⁸

Figure 2.4 Yellow River: Dykes and Canals

The resulting devastation was not limited to combat areas as Theodore H. White and Annalee Jacoby recount in their book, Thunder out of China. ²⁹ At the opening session of the Brussels Conference on November 3, 1937, Dr. Wellington Koo, first Delegate of China, condemned the Japanese’s actions in his speech:

According to the Japanese Admiralty’s own announcement of October 14th last, 62 cities and towns in eight provinces were bombed by Japanese naval aircraft alone. Widely scattered cities like Nanking, Canton, Soochow and Taiyuan have been subjected to almost daily attacks, ranging sometimes from 3 to 15 raids a day. In a single raid on an open, defenceless [sic] city of Sunkiang in Kiangsu Province a week ago, Japanese bombs from the air massacred nearly 1,000 civilians, of whom a great part were helpless women and children. The civilized world has never seen such utterly ruthless methods of warfare and such stark indifference to considerations of decency. 30

5. **Musical Dialogue on the River Bank (Duet)**

Composed in the form of a folksong employing the registers of Shanbei and Shaanxi, full of local flavor, call and response format, fitted to an accompaniment with Chinese flavor and percussion instruments, relaxing and interesting to hear, but narrative in style.

5. **Yellow River Musical Dialogue**

Composed in the style of a folksong (using Shaanxi tones), the two voice parts in the final three sections are constructed by combining their earlier melodic material. The accompanying Sanxian and Erhu also share the same relationship as the solo voices in their musical interactions. Also, the introduction is rather relaxed and amusing.


**Recitation**

Families torn apart, wives and husbands, children and parents!

Will we forever be refugees?

Listen, as two villagers dialogue on the Yellow River’s bank.

**A:** Zhang No. 3, 31 let me ask you,

Where is your hometown?

**B:** My home is in Shaanxi,

three hundred miles from the river.

**A:** Let me ask you, in your hometown,

did you farm the land or trade?

**B:** I held the hoe, plowed the fields, planted sorghum and millets.


31 A prefix used before the number indicating the order of birth of the children in the family as a form of address that shows affection or familiarity.
A: Why then are you here, 
  wandering the bank, lonely and sorrowful?

B: Please don’t bring up painful matters; 
my home was destroyed and I know not the fate of my family.

A: Zhang No. 3, don’t be sad, 
  my fate is worse than yours!

B: Why, Wang No. 7, 
  where is your hometown?

A: I used to do business in the northeast; 
eight long years I’ve had no news from home.

B: All this said, you and I, 
  both have homes we can’t return to!

A & B duet
Within our hearts, enmity and hatred 
swirl like the rapids of the Yellow River!
  On the Yellow River bank, 
let us both resolve to fight back!

For our country, we will become soldiers, 
go up Taihang mountain to fight as guerillas!
  From this day, you and I together, 
will fight to regain our homeland!

After the capture of Nanking, the capital of the Republic of China, on December 9, 
1937, a number of women, variously estimated as between 20,000 and 80,000 were raped 
in the span of six weeks, making this one of the worst instances of rape in the annals of 
warfare. In her book, *The Rape of Nanking: the forgotten Holocaust of World War II*, Iris 
Chang recounts these horrors:

During the mass rape the Japanese destroyed children and infants, often because 
they were in the way. Eyewitness reports describe children and babies suffocating from 
clothes stuffed in their mouths or bayoneted to death because they wept as their mothers
were being raped. American and European observers of the Rape of Nanking recorded numerous entries like this one: “415. February 3, about 5 P.M. at Chang Su Hsiang (near Ta Chung Chiao) three soldiers came and forced a woman to throw away her baby and after raping her they went away laughing.”

Figure 2.5 Human Suffering in the Sino-Japanese War

Japanese soldiers also competed in killing contests to see who would be the first to kill one hundred Chinese. They ran assembly-line burials and executions, forcing one group of Chinese captives to dig their own grave, a second group burying the first, a third group burying the second, etc. Live bodies were mutilated, burned, frozen, or fed to dogs. These Chinese experiences were comparable to the suffering of the European Jews under the Nazi regime.

Figure 2.6 Mass Grave at the Huangpo Massacre Site, Hubei Province

6. **Yellow River Lament (Female Solo)**
This elegy should be sung with tears held back, sounds uttered by a woman after having been defiled. Here, you can imagine what the enemy has been spreading as the “Way of the Emperor” inside their territory was really like.

6. **Yellow River Lament**
Voices of oppressed women and sounds of their humiliation are portrayed. The melody is deeply moving and tragic, a lament sung with tears in the eyes. If the soloist does not possess these sentiments when singing, the listeners will certainly not be able to share in those emotions; hence attention should be given to this.

[6] **Yellow River Lament**

**Recitation**
Friends! We will fight to regain our homeland!
Our country is in such disarray!
Can any man with wife and children bear the enemy’s humiliation?
Dear compatriots, listen to a woman’s sorrowful and tragic singing.

**Solo**
Oh wind, do not howl!
Oh clouds, do not hide!
Oh Yellow River, do not whimper!
Tonight, I stand before you and tearfully
pour out my hatred and grief.

Oh fate, so bitter!
Oh life, so hard!
My enemy, you have no conscience!
My precious child, you died so horribly!

Between us there was no hatred or grudge,
yet you consigned me to a nameless existence in this world!

Oh wind, do not howl!
Oh dark clouds, do not hide!
Oh Yellow River, do not whimper!
Tonight, I will throw myself into your embrace,
to wash away my sorrows and sufferings!

Oh, husband, you’re as far away as the horizon!
We shall reunite again below the earth!
Think how your wife and children died so tragically!
You must avenge this blood debt!
You must make them pay for their atrocities!

7. **Defend the Yellow River (Unison, Round in two, three, and four parts)**

This piece is a round, growing from one part, to two, three, and then four. Very powerful and grand, rising and falling in waves, like the strong guerilla soldiers, vanishing and reappearing.

7. **Defend the Yellow River**

Written as a round, from two parts, it builds to four. Every entry needs to be sung strongly and confidently. It is composed using only Chinese melodies. After the third and fourth voices enter, the inner parts accompany with “long-a-long, long-a-long,” which should be sung stylistically to create interest. All of it should be strong and grand, rising and falling with endless variations; the melody should be brought out fully at all times.

[7] **Defend the Yellow River**

**Recitation**

Sons and daughters of China,
who among you is willing to be slaughtered like pigs and sheep?
We must resolve to be victorious,
to defend the Yellow River!
To defend northern China!
To defend all of China!

Chorus
The wind howls, horses neigh, the Yellow River roars!
To the west stands a towering hill,
East and north of the river, sorghum has ripened.
Amid the thousands of mountains there are many heroes!
Inside green muslin tents live valiant guerilla warriors!
Armed with guns made here and elsewhere, waving large knives and long spears,
they defend our hometowns!
Defend the Yellow River!
Defend northern China!
Defend all of China!

In a letter dated September 15, 1938, Dr. Chu Chia-hua, the President of the Chinese League of Nations\textsuperscript{33} Union and Vice-Chairman of the International Federation of League of Nations Societies wrote:

During the past seven years, more than 2,000,000 square kilometers of Chinese territory have been occupied and approximately 150,000,000 Chinese people directly affected by the continued aggression of these militarists. In spite of the vast extent of such ravages, however, Japan is continuing her aggression upon China with renewed vigor. As a result of China’s unshakable determination to resist to the last, the ferocity of the invaders has increased in corresponding measure to their exasperation. The slaughtering of innocent civilians, the bombing of undefended cities, the extensive use of poisonous gases, the open violation of international conventions prohibiting resort to chemical warfare – these barbarous acts have shown beyond doubt that Japan is not only the enemy of China but is defying humanity itself. Perceiving that not only her own existence is at stake but human civilization itself is endangered, China has entered into a solemn resolve to carry on the struggle to the last, for she believes that this is the only effective way to quarantine the spread of the Nipponese peril to the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{33} The League of Nations was an inter-governmental organization founded as a result of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles (replaced by the United Nations after WWII) to promote international cooperation and peace. It was first proposed in 1918 by President Woodrow Wilson, although the United States Congress never ratified the treaty that established it.

8. Roar! Yellow River

A mix of unison and part-singing. Sincere, mighty, strong and stately, containing much enthusiasm and excitement as well. The last two sentences, “To all of China’s suffering people, sound the battle cry! To laborers all over the world, sound the battle cry!” is consecutively repeated five times, accompanied by twelve B-flat trumpets and tubas, and six French horns. During the performance, they are raised, their calls sounding forth like battle cries across the entire earth. ......

8. Roar! Yellow River

Scored for a four-part large chorus, this movement uses combinations of two, three, and four different voice parts. The melody is robust and grand, yet full of warmth and encouragement, which is one of the most important themes of the Yellow River Cantata. The last two sentences, “To all of China’s suffering people, sound the battle cry! To laborers all over the world, sound the battle cry!” This must be sung continuously for three, four, five times, etc. until the listeners have identified with those same sentiments, before moving on to the ending. It is best if the bugle plays the main melody, accompanied by war drums, so as to better display the greatness of the Yellow River. Its roar inspires the suffering masses and the laboring people in the entire world.
[8] **Roar! Yellow River**

**Recitation**

Listen, the Pearl River roars angrily!
The Yangtze River is raging on!
Ah! Yellow River!
Raise up your angry waves, let loose your wild bellows,
sound the battle cry for all of China’s oppressed people!

**Chorus**

Roar, Yellow River!
Raise up your angry waves, let loose your wild bellows!
Workers across the land cry out for battle!

For such an ancient nation to suffer so much!
Our cruelly oppressed people can no longer bear the torment!
But for China, a new day is already dawning;
four hundred and fifty million people have united,
pledging their lives to defend this soil!

Listen: the Songhua River is calling,
the Heilong River is calling;
the mighty Pearl River\(^35\) roars its defiance:
all along the Yangtze River, beacon lights are burning!

Ah! Yellow River! Roar on!
To all of China’s suffering people, sound the battle cry!
To laborers all over the world, sound the battle cry!

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\(^{35}\) A river in southeast China that flows into the South China Sea.
CHAPTER 3: THE MEETING OF EAST AND WEST

3.1 The Composer

Xian Xinghai (1905-1945) lived a cosmopolitan life, albeit one fraught with poverty and hardship. Born fatherless\textsuperscript{36} in the Portuguese colony of Macao in 1905, Xian spent his early childhood with his grandfather in Panyü, part of the Guangdong (Canton) Province of southern China. Xian’s first name, “Xinghai” (星海) means “stars” and “sea,” as he was born on a clear night in a boat on the Pearl River.\textsuperscript{37} After his grandfather’s death in 1912,\textsuperscript{38} Xian and his mother relocated to the British colony of Singapore, where she put him through four years of study in the Chinese classics and a year of English instruction, after which he completed the last two years of his primary education in Singapore at a school\textsuperscript{39} affiliated with Lingnan University. Thus, hymn-singing and piano lessons were Xian’s first exposure to Western music. The year of Xian’s grandfather’s death, reckoned by Richard Kraus as 1911,\textsuperscript{40} is disputed by Hon-Lun Yang.

\textsuperscript{36} Xian’s fisherman father (Xian Xitai) died at sea before he was born, leaving his peasant mother (Huang Suying) to raise him alone, while working as a servant.


\textsuperscript{38} Hon-Lun Yang, “The Making of a National Musical Icon: Xian Xinghai and His Yellow River Cantata”, in Annie J. Randall, Music, Power and Politics (New York and London: Routledge, 2005) 88. My synopsis of Xian’s biography is largely based on Kraus and this source.

\textsuperscript{39} The school principal was a graduate of Columbia University’s Teachers College in New York.

\textsuperscript{40} Richard Kraus, “The Ambiguous Legacy of Composer Xian Xinghai,” 41.
In 1918, Xian returned to China for secondary and tertiary education at Lingnan University in Guangzhou. The university, originally known as Canton Christian College, was founded in 1888 by Reverend Andrew P. Happer, a Presbyterian minister, medical doctor, educator, and missionary in China. At Lingnan University, Xian came under the influence of an anonymous American teacher, who taught him violin and introduced him to Western classical music and philosophy. The role of this “American professor” is another discrepancy between the published articles of Yang and Kraus. The latter records that Xian studied under two American teachers, a violin teacher as well as a “controversial American philosophy teacher [who] was even more important in introducing Xian to the world of Western art, talking to him after class of Beethoven, Bach, Picasso, Matisse, and modern Western thought.” In Lingnan, Xian also learned to play the clarinet, joined a brass band, and became a prominent member of the local YMCA. According to Kraus, Xian taught himself to play the clarinet, but according to Yang, as well as Melvin and Cai, Xian’s violin teacher was also his clarinet teacher. After graduating in 1928, Xian was among the first group of students to enroll at the recently opened Shanghai National Conservatory, which had been established in 1927 by

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41 Xian was first a student of the university’s Preparatory Department before enrolling at the parent university in 1924.
43 Ibid., 88, “Professor B” (note 7, 107) introduced Xian to the music of Bach, Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven.
44 Richard Kraus, “The Ambiguous Legacy of Composer Xian Xinghai,” 42. “Professor B” was a “former preacher, …a pianist and a Hegelian, and holder of a German doctorate.” (note 5, 225)
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid., 43.
Dr. Xiao Youmei, an alumnus of the Leipzig Music Academy. From its inception, the Shanghai Conservatory had been a school of privilege, its staff largely comprised of foreign émigrés, many of whom came from the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra, which was founded by Mario Paci in 1919. Unfortunately, at the moment that the Shanghai Conservatory was born, there was a Nationalist government campaign launched that eventually led to considerable reduction in the government funding provided to the Conservatory. In 1929, the National government lowered the status of the Conservatory to that of a vocational school. To make up for this reduced subsidy, a tuition hike was implemented that led to student protests. As an organizing member of these student protests, Xian was expelled from the National Conservatory. This consequence was the first in a long series of personal setbacks for Xian, all of which involved politics and money.

The immediate effect was Xian’s decision to leave Shanghai and pursue his musical education elsewhere. “Barred from attending the only conservatory in China, but determined to keep studying Western classical music, Xian got a job stoking coal on a British ship sailing to Singapore and from there made his way to Paris.”

In 1930, Xian set out for Paris, a destination that made sense on several levels; not only was Paris becoming the musical capital of Europe, but Xian had a personal contact

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50 Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, Rhapsody in Red, 31 ff.
51 Ibid., 110.
52 Ibid., 116.
53 Ibid.
living there.\textsuperscript{54} Ma Sicong, a violinist from Canton, was the first Chinese student to be accepted at the Paris Conservatory (1928).\textsuperscript{55} When Xian arrived in Paris, Ma introduced him to his teacher, the violinist Paul Oberdorfer,\textsuperscript{56} who subsequently became the private teacher of Xian. Shortly thereafter, Xian enrolled at the Schola Cantorum, the private music school founded by Charles Bordes, Alexandre Guilmant, and Vincent d’Indy (1894) to counter the opera-dominated curriculum of the Paris Conservatoire. Here, he studied with music theory with Noël Gallon and composition with Vincent d’Indy and Guy de Lioncourt. As Richard Kraus has indicated, “Xian’s personal life in Paris was no easier than it had been in China… [his] poverty made him unpopular with other Chinese students in Paris, most of whom were supported by their wealthy families…”\textsuperscript{57} Kraus richly documents the emotional pain that Xian suffered in Paris due both to his rejection by the other Chinese students, his continual poverty, and his increasingly radical political ideas. Xian’s contact with other Chinese guest workers in France and newsreel accounts of the incredible suffering endured by the Chinese people at that time contributed even more to his sense of unease in Paris.

Ironically, it was this combination of experiences that led to his first compositional breakthrough. The orchestral song, \textit{Wind}, was his direct response to all of

\textsuperscript{54} Hon-Lun Yang, “The Making of a National Musical Icon”, 88.
\textsuperscript{55} Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, \textit{Rhapsody in Red}, 122.
\textsuperscript{56} “Oberdoeffer” and “Oberdorffer” are other spellings of the name.
\textsuperscript{57} Richard Kraus, “The Ambiguous Legacy of Composer Xian Xinghai,” 46.
these personal difficulties. From the following description of his life at that time, one is able to appreciate the strong emotions that led to the composition of this piece:

I was living in a small attic at the top of a seven-story house; all the room’s doors and windows were broken. The winters in Paris are colder than China’s, and on that winter night, a strong wind was also blowing. I didn’t have a comforter and couldn’t sleep. There was nothing I could do except to light the lamp and compose. Who would have thought that the wind was so fierce, it blew out my kerosene lantern (I couldn’t afford to install electric lighting) repeatedly. I became very dejected; I was shivering, listening to the freezing winds batter against the walls and pass through the windows, fiercely roaring and hissing. My heart was like the wind, pounding with emotions. All of the bitterness, cruelty, pain, and misfortunes of life and of our homeland surged forth. I could not suppress my feelings, thus by means of the wind, I wrote out my emotions and completed this composition.

Indeed, it was this piece, submitted in support of his application to the Paris Conservatoire that secured Xian’s place in the senior composition class taught by Paul Dukas in 1934. Xian also studied conducting with Marcel Labey. According to Hon-Lun Yang, it was the death of Paul Dukas in 1935 that precipitated Xian’s return to Shanghai. If Xian expected that his return to China would improve his life, he soon learned that he was no better off there than he had been in Paris. His attempts to establish contacts with prominent local musicians, while initially promising, all led to disappointment. “Xian even turned to a gypsy ensemble from Shanghai’s night life in search of performers for his music.” Eventually, Xian was able to secure a number of smaller jobs, working as a music producer for the Pathé Music Record Company (currently known as EMI) and composing film music for Xinhua Yinyue Gongsi (New Chinese Music Company).

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58 All attempts to locate this composition have been futile.
60 Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, Rhapsody in Red, 123.
61 Ibid., 89.
The most prominent musical figure in Shanghai was Maestro Mario Paci, Founder and Conductor of the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra, and a graduate of the Paris Conservatoire. As recounted in *Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese*, Xian believed that Paci’s invitation for him to conduct the SMO in a performance of Beethoven’s *Eighth Symphony*, was undoubtedly an opportunity that, in Xian’s mind, validated his status as a “Western” musician trained at the Paris Conservatoire. “But the project was aborted in rehearsal, when some of the European orchestra’s musicians refused to play under the baton of a Chinese, especially when a violinist on the faculty of the Shanghai Conservatory described Xian’s expulsion a few years before.”  

63 Xian had opposed “the corruption of the National Conservatory” as leader of the student protest against tuition increases. Under pressure from the leading players of his orchestra, Maestro Paci rescinded the invitation leading to what Xian regarded as his public humiliation and as a denial of his claim to be a member of the Shanghai musical establishment.64

Xian’s recourse to this humiliation was to seek the intervention of Aaron Avshalomov (1894-1965),65 who spoke with Paci on his behalf without success. To soften this harsh blow, Avshalomov comforted Xian with words he would always

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64 Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red*, 123.
remember: “Don’t get discouraged. A musician’s life and career do not depend on one performance. You work hard and two years from now when you know the Chinese situation better, you will become China’s first composer.”

Xian’s association with Avshalomov was manipulated to combat the increasing “Westernization” of Chinese music, a movement that greatly concerned Avshalomov, the Sinophile. In a series of articles written in the mid-1930s, Avshalomov voiced his fear that the rapid rise of Western music, implicit in the founding of the National Conservatory, would ultimately lead to the extinction of Chinese music:

> The present generation in China is so much influenced by all this that within a decade or two it may “Europeanize” Chinese musical activity entirely. If this happens we should regret that classical Chinese music would no longer exist to serve as a basis for building a truly Chinese modern music.

Avshalomov found ardent support for his position in fellow Russian pianist and composer Alexander Tcherepnin (1899-1977), who had joined the faculty of the Shanghai Conservatory in 1934 after completing a concert tour of China, during which he became enthralled with the country. Both Avshalomov and Tcherepnin had fled Russia during the Bolshevik Revolution and taken refuge in Shanghai. As Russian expatriates, they initially championed the uniquely Russian perception of the Western classical repertory. In that sense, they were ideally suited to the pro-Western musical activities that characterized both the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra and the Shanghai Conservatory.

“The concern and support of foreigners like Avshalomov and Tcherepnin was welcomed

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by young Chinese composers such as Xian and He Luting.”\textsuperscript{68} In large part, it was the advocacy of both Russians for an enhanced role for the use of native Chinese musical material and for original compositions based upon it. Their initiative to balance what had heretofore been a largely Western musical regimen in Shanghai proved attractive and, save for the outbreak of war in 1937, their efforts may have produced a much more substantial body of music. Tcherepnin, in particular, was a strong advocate of the role of folk music, both in his own compositions and in those of his Chinese students. However, the outbreak of the war resulted in the departure of Tcherepnin and his new bride, the Chinese pianist, Ming Lei-Hsien, for Paris.

The Sino-Japanese War led to a new role for music in Chinese society, namely a means of awakening the Masses and rallying their support against the invading Japanese. Xian found a new platform for his compositional efforts in the various artistic movements such as the National Salvation Song Movement, the National Defense Song Movement, the New Music Movement, etc., all of which found common cause in the creation of revolutionary nationalistic music.

These songs were not intended to be great music; they were music for mobilization: their quick rhythms, easy range, easily enunciated and highly political lyrics were initially designed to inspire political courage and to aid mass demonstrations. By singing together, young Chinese would build a shared consciousness. The marchlike beat would help them advance on a demonstration target in unity and with resolve.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{68} Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, \textit{Rhapsody in Red}, 126.
\textsuperscript{69} Richard Kraus, “The Ambiguous Legacy of Composer Xian Xinghai,” 49-50.
“Some musicians ridiculed Xian for writing such political songs, but the change gave Xian a place of his own in the Chinese art world.”  

In the West, a prominent example of music as propaganda includes the use of *Le Marseillaise* and hymns to the “Supreme Being” written by Gossec, Méhul, and others during the French Revolution. Indeed, the Marxist element in China took advantage of the political chaos created by the Sino-Japanese War to forge alliances with the Chinese nationalist groups, forming avowedly communist associations like the League of Left Wing Writers, the Soviet Union Friendship Society, and the Chinese New Music Research Society. To them, “Music… was more than the beautiful art and sometime tool of social change and nation-building promoted by men like Xiao Youmei; instead, it was ‘a weapon for liberating the masses’ which it was their obligation to wield.”

A prime example of this use of sung music as propaganda is the song, *March of the Volunteers*, composed by Nie Er for the patriotic movie, *Children of the Storm*, in 1935. According to Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, the text of this famous song by Tian Han became a virtual model for many of the nearly four hundred revolutionary songs that Xian composed by 1938, such as “Protect Marco Polo Bridge,” “National Salvation Demonstration Song,” “Song of War of Resistance to Japan,” “To the Enemy’s Rear,” etc. Though these songs are Chinese in content, their roots are steeped in the Western tradition of hymnody brought into China through missionary education, of which Xian

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70 Ibid., 49.
was a product. “Choirs and glee clubs were a feature of every missionary-run university, and the Y.M.C.A. introduced massed song recitals in Shanghai and other cities, a foretaste of something very popular in Communist China today.”

Xian Xinghai’s YMCA origins are carefully concealed in most publications about the life of this most venerated of composers in the People’s Republic. Yet the linkage between songs for the salvation of the nation and those for the salvation of souls was apparent to Xian’s contemporaries. W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood report hearing Chinese parishioners at a Church of Canada mission in rural Henan singing as a hymn Nie Er’s “March of the Volunteers,” retrofitted with Christian vocabulary, although Tian Han’s chorus of “Arise! Arise!” is happily suited for both political and religious use.

March of the Volunteers
(Republic of China’s National Anthem)

起来！
Arise!

不愿做奴隶的人们！
All who refuse to be slaves!

把我们的血肉，
Let our flesh and blood,

筑成我们新的长城！
form our new Great Wall!

中华民族到了最危险的时候，
As the Chinese nation faces its most perilous moment,

每个人被迫着发出最后的吼声。every person is compelled to let out their final roar.

起来！起来！起来！
Arise! Arise! Arise!

我们万众一心，
Our million hearts beat as one.

冒着敌人的炮火，前进！
Brave the enemy’s fire, march on!

冒着敌人的炮火，前进！
Brave the enemy’s fire, march on!

前进！前进！进！
March on! March on! On!

Xian “also practiced a kind of working-class musicology which the Communist Party has not celebrated. He once accompanied a Southern Society friend to visit singing

76 This did not become the National Anthem of the Republic of China until 1949.
girls in Nanjing, sitting at the side and recording their tunes while his friend socialized in their company.”

The rise of so many organizations that shared the same cause, i.e. providing a common front against the Japanese invasion, exposed Xian to the full range of leftist intellectuals and artists. As early as 1935, Xian was active in communist organizations such as the Song Composers Association, a group of left wing musicians that included Lu Ji and He Luting. One of these exposures was Xian’s involvement with Save the Country Performance Troupe (a traveling theatre troupe led by Tian Han, the author of *The March of the Volunteers* and an active opponent of the Nationalist government). Tian Han’s group came to Wuhan in 1937, and when the troupe moved on, Xian decided to remain behind to train a cadre of students in the creation of music-related initiatives to boost the morale of the citizens and troops during the war. He soon became Head of Music Activities for the Joint Commission for Military Affairs, a position that allowed him to organize a series of communal singing events; the music for these was precisely the kind of songs he had already composed in Shanghai, and continued to compose in Wuhan. In an essay, “A Few Issues Concerning China’s Current Stage in the New Music Movement,” Xian wrote:

> Music for the Masses must be accepted and grasped by the Masses, hence, it needs to be simple, with an understanding of the psychology of the Masses at the same time. We must use music as a weapon for fighting, so that when the Masses use it to battle the enemy, great results can be produced. The current heroic songs not only make the enemy soldiers shudder, but can also cause them to be opposed to war as well as

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79 Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red*, 164.
warlords. Music for the Masses is a strong force in the war resistance! It is also a weapon that the Masses long for during war resistance.  

Melvin and Cai imply that this activity made Xian “increasingly sympathetic to the communist cause” and that Xian hesitated to accept appointment as a Professor at Lu Xun Academy of Arts and Literature out of concern as to “whether Yanan would prove to be an environment in which he could compose freely, and whether he would be able to leave once he got there.” These two references suggest that Xian was a less than committed communist at this point, more concerned about his artistic freedom than advancement within the Party apparatus. These chaotic times allowed rival political factions in China to set aside their differences in opposition to the far greater threat of the Japanese invaders. Such conditions make it difficult to ascertain precisely what Xian’s personal politics were at this time. Nonetheless, Xian was ultimately persuaded by enthusiastic telegrams from the faculty at Lu Xun Academy urging his acceptance of the post at Yan’an, and chose to further his association with groups and members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In doing so, Xian was one of many left wing intellectuals who flocked to Yan’an, lured by the Communist Party’s enticement of employment and status. On November 3, 1938, Xian arrived at the communist base at Yan’an to take up his post at the Lu Xun Academy, which had just been established that Spring.  

As Melvin and Cai point out:

Left-leaning intellectuals flocked to Yanan to help run these new institutions and the once-barren village quickly sprouted newspapers, poetry clubs, theatrical troupes, and

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81 Xian Xinghai Quanji, 123.
82 Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, Rhapsody in Red, 164.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid.
85 Xian Xinghai Quanji, 386.
associations dedicated to drama, music, fine arts, and culture in general. Indeed, while political and military planning were of paramount concern to the Communist leadership, culture – especially performing and visual arts – also played a vital role in their revolutionary blueprints because of its tremendous value as a propaganda tool.  

At Yan’an, Xian taught choral composition and conducting; he personally conducted the Academy’s chorus and taught at other local schools. We know that he composed or co-composed two operas, part of a first symphony, two cantatas, and hundreds more “save-the-country” songs. Xian composed the *Yellow River Cantata* in March, 1939, two months prior to submitting his application to become a member of the CCP on May 15, 1939. Xian joined the CCP on June 14, 1939 and the very next month, was given a promotion to become the Chair of the Music Department at Lu Xun Academy. Xian was made an official CCP member on December 3, 1939.

Before turning to an examination of the *Yellow River Cantata* itself, it is imperative that we follow Xian’s career to Russia and the premature end of this uniquely gifted composer’s life. Xian’s work at Yan’an continued through the Spring of 1940, when the Central Committee of the Communist Party ordered him to go to Moscow ostensibly to write music for a Soviet documentary film about the Communist Eighth Route Army. Yang elaborates on the doubts raised about the real purpose of Xian’s trip to Russia:

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86 Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red*, 159-60.
88 *Xian Xinghai Quanji*, 385.
90 Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red*, 165.
It is still an unsolved puzzle as to why Xian was sent to Moscow. In the PRC, the subject is taboo. As related by Xian’s wife in her short memoirs about the composer, Xian was sent to Moscow for an unspecified “task” in May 1940. Before the trip, Mao even received Xian and his family at his home. Xian’s diary entries stopped after his departure from Yan’an. Between May and November of 1940, Xian wrote to his wife regularly. In the last letter to his wife dated September 18, 1941, he casually wrote the following words: “Perhaps you understand why I haven’t written you for such a long time, and now, at last there is this chance, so I just drop in a few lines.” Unlike in his other letters, Xian was evasive about his condition in this last letter; aside from telling her that he missed her and their daughter, he merely asked his wife to be strong and said that he longed for the time when they would see each other again. More curious is the fact that Xian took up the name Huang Xun after leaving Yan’an.  

The fact that Xian’s Composition Notes contain no mention of composing film music does nothing to allay these suspicions.

Whatever the reason for going there, we know only a few facts about the remainder of Xian’s life, which ended in Moscow on October 30, 1945. The first is that, while there, he had contact with the prominent Russian composers of the day, such as Rheinold Gliere (1875-1956) and Dmitri Kabelevsky (1904-1987). Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953), was, in fact, already aware of Xian’s music, having introduced his composition for orchestra and solo female voice, Wind, for a radio broadcast. The second indisputable biographical detail is that Xian’s arrival in Moscow coincided with the Nazi invasion of Russia. This development effectively ended any hopes of completing the documentary film project that was the supposed reason for his being in Moscow. Furthermore, the increasing prospects of war made Xian’s Russian hosts either less interested or less able to engage with him. This change of status and perhaps a reasonable

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91 Ibid., note 16, 107.
94 Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, Rhapsody in Red, 123.
fear for his own safety led Xian to attempt to leave Russia and return home. Two separate attempts to return to China both resulted in yearlong detentions, first in Mongolia and then in Kazakhstan. Yang suggests that Xian’s inability to return to China was more complicated than it may have seemed, since a number of his colleagues did manage to return home safely.\(^95\) Whatever the truth may be, Xian completed his first symphony (*National Liberation Symphony*) dedicated the work to “the Central Committee of the great Chinese Communist Party and its Glorious Leader Comrade Mao Zedong,” re-orchestrated the *Yellow River Cantata* in Western notation to facilitate international performance and composed a second symphony (*Sacred Battle*), dedicated to Stalin and the Soviet Red Army, all while under detention.\(^96\) Despite contrary opinions among the Chinese, Xian regarded this symphony as his most serious work. As Xian’s illness progressed inexorably toward death, he began to organize his works, even to the point of assigning opus numbers to some. This recognition was more readily accorded the works he composed in Moscow than his earlier Chinese works, most notably the hundreds of revolutionary songs composed in Shanghai.\(^97\)

On October 30, 1945, at the age of forty, Xian died in Moscow’s Kremlin Hospital from complications associated with pneumonia, peritonitis, heart, and liver disease.\(^98\) A memorial service was held in Yan’an two weeks after his death, and the

\(^{95}\) *Ibid.*, 89.
\(^{97}\) Richard Kraus, “The Ambiguous Legacy of Composer Xian Xinghai,” 64.
tribute from Mao read: “Mourn the People’s Musician, Comrade Xian Xinghai!” The end of Xian’s physical existence did not, however, mark the end of his artistic significance within China. With regard to the enduring popularity of the *Yellow River Cantata*, Yang takes pains to describe the posthumous efforts made by the CCP to accommodate music that Xian regarded as essentially nationalistic to the emerging ideological goals of socialist realism. When Xian composed the *Yellow River Cantata* in Yan’an, he was working for CCP; however, his music was driven more by nationalist fervor and the goal of uniting the Chinese people against the invading Japanese than by any ideological considerations. The attempts to re-cast Xian’s music to fit a later political agenda succeeded only in making the piece more popular among Chinese nationals of every political spectrum.

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3.2 The Composition

Xian became actively involved in the intellectual debate concerning the shape and content of art in the new China at Yan’an. His essay “On National Form in Chinese Music” strongly argued in favor of developing new art forms rather than recycling Western models. Xian’s position is summed up in the following sentences from that essay:

Personally, I propose that we let content determine form, and use the modern advanced musical viewpoint to produce new content. We should ensure that the content of music can reflect reality—the thoughts, feelings and lives of the nation.

The music that Xian wrote to demonstrate his belief combined formal structures that were Western in origin with melody and instrumentation that were drawn from indigenous Chinese music. The first such work was an opera entitled March of the Army People, written by Xian with input from his colleagues, performed by the staff and students of Lu Xun Academy in January, 1939.

The opera – really more of an operetta – had two acts and three scenes which depicted the sorrows and suffering brought about by war. While its musical structure of overtures, arias and recitatives were Western, its melodies were taken from Chinese folk songs and its instrumentation included first and second violin; accordion, harmonica; huqin; sanxian; dizi (Chinese bamboo flute); and a Chinese percussion section with drums, gong, temple blocks, and bamboo clappers.

This opera was immediately followed by another work of similar scope using the same combination of Western forms and Eastern musical material – the Yellow River Cantata. Xian originally scored his Yellow River Cantata for eleven Chinese instruments.

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101 Ibid.
102 Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, Rhapsody in Red, 165.
103 Ibid., 165-6.
and harmonica, although he had intended to score the work for a Western orchestra, had
the performing resources been available to him in Yan’an:

The use of Chinese instruments was more than an esthetic whim. Yan’an was so
poor that it had no piano… Other than a handful of such easily portable items as violins
and accordions, there were no Western instruments in Yan’an, leading Xian to assemble
available Chinese instruments to discover if he could use them to compensate for the
lack of pianos, oboes, and violas. ¹⁰⁴

His choral and instrumental writing both tended toward simple unison or two-part
textures, resulting in a composition that was easy to learn and perform. The work’s
heterophonic texture was simultaneously Western (i.e., French) and Chinese. Xian’s use
of Chevé notation, the system of musical notation most widely used by the Chinese
people, ensured that the Yellow River Cantata would be accessible to the highest possible
percentage of the people. Below is an excerpt from the Yellow River Cantata in Chevé
notation:

Xian had the most difficulty composing the second movement of the *Yellow River Cantata*. Wu Xiling, who conducted the premiere of the *Yellow River Cantata* and met regularly with Xian as he composed the piece, gave the following account of his arduous process:

…I came up with three versions, but none of them were to my satisfaction. Today, I spent the entire day trying to write this movement, and it is still unfinished. When I see the word ‘Ode’, I immediately associate it with the religious work, *Messiah*. I am trying hard to rid all influences from religious songs of praise in my writing; I must create a kind of new music that possesses Chinese national characteristics, a praise melody that could also exhibit emotions of this modern age. …there are some melodies in Kunqu105 that are a bit Ode-like in flavor, but they are unable to demonstrate the Yellow River’s great fighting spirit.” 106

This quotation reveals the inner turmoil that Xian struggled with in trying to achieve this goal. Both compositions exhibit the uneasy co-existence of forms that are clearly Western in origin and music that seeks to be Chinese in a new and unique way.

While stationed in Moscow in 1941, Xian completely revised the orchestration of his cantata to make it more “Western.” The table below compares Xian’s original instrumentation of the *Yellow River Cantata* in 1939 at Yan’an with his 1941 revision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1939 Yan’an</th>
<th>1941 Moscow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Harmonica</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Xiao San Xian</em> (Small three-stringed Banjo)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Da San Xian</em> (Large three-stringed Banjo)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Piccolo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

105 One of the oldest extant forms of Chinese opera that flourished from the sixteenth to eighteenth century. 106 Yuyi Qi and Yan Li, eds. “Zhongguo jin xiandai yinyueshi ziliao congkan”, 59-64. See Appendix C.
| **Dizi in G** (Bamboo Flute) | Flute (2)  
|                            | Oboe (2)  
|                            | English Horn  
|                            | Clarinet in Bb (2)  
|                            | Bass Clarinet in Bb  
|                            | Bassoon (2)  
|                            | Double Bassoon  
|                            | Horn in F (4)  
|                            | Trumpet in Bb (3)  
|                            | Trombone (3)  
|                            | Tuba  
|                            | Harp  
|                            | Timpani  
|                            | Snare Drum  
|                            | Triangle  
| **Mu Yu** (Wood Block) | **Mu Yu** (Wooden Fish)  
| **Zhu Ban** (Bamboo Clappers) | **Zhu Ban** (Bamboo Clappers)  
| **Bo** (Cymbals) | **Xiao Bo** (Small Cymbals)  
| **Luo** (Gong) | Tam-tam (**Luo**)  
| **Gu** (Drum) | **Tang Luo** (Suspended Gong)  
| **Ling** (Bell) | Bass Drum  
|                            | Tambourine  
|                            | Xylophone  
|                            | **Chinese Xiao Gu** (Small Drum)  
| **Er Hu** (Chinese two-stringed Fiddle) | Violin I  
|                            | Violin II  
|                            | Viola  
|                            | Cello  
| **Da Hu** (Tenor member of **Er Hu** family) | Double Bass  

The reaction of the American journalist, Edgar Snow, who had heard a performance of Xian’s original version of the *Yellow River Cantata* in China, described his experience of hearing the newly-expanded orchestration, as follows:

That was a weird orchestra [Xian] put together… The Catholic church organ for a piano, two or three violins, a home-made cello or two, some Chinese flutes, clarinets, yang-ch’ins, and hu-ch’ins, improvised instruments of some kind made of old Standard oil tins with gut strung over them, a few pieces of battered brass, cymbals, army drums and
trumpets. Did he also use a few cannon? Somehow he got his melody and his fugue out of them. Before he began he told me what his cantata was all about, scene by scene, movement by movement; the whole epic of the historic river down to the enemy invasion, the struggle to hold the banks, and the prophecy of victory, revolution, liberation. He was passionately sincere about it. The audience listened raptly to the mystifying half-Western, half-Asian noises. In that starlit night you could almost feel the Yellow River itself joining in the final roar of the cantata – and the Japanese were not far behind. At the end of it people wept and cheered.\(^{107}\)

The radical changes in orchestration suggest that Xian’s original scoring of the *Yellow River Cantata*, designed for wartime performances given by itinerant Chinese drama troupes (comprised of both professionally trained and amateur members) with limited resources, was deemed inadequate by the composer during his stay in Russia. What began as a purely nationalistic composition in China simply did not pass muster in the vibrant life of Moscow. Whether Xian’s decision to re-orchestrate the cantata along more typically Western orchestral lines was the composer’s desire from the composition’s inception or the result of adverse reaction from the Moscow musical elite whom Xian had desired to please is impossible to determine with any degree of certainty. If Xian’s original scoring of the *Yellow River Cantata* had been limited by the available size and skill of performance ensembles, his arrival in Moscow most definitely opened up new sonoric vistas. Freed from the limitations operative in China, and encouraged by the more sumptuous style of contemporary Russian music, Xian undertook this extensive re-orchestration, which he documented in his *Composition Notes*:

> Having seen how well the work was received by those participating in the war efforts at numerous locales, I desired from very early on to make improvements to the original score written in Chevé notation, by writing it in Western staff notation with the chorus accompaniment rescored for a symphonic orchestra, but because of my busy teaching and composing schedule, I had not found the time to begin. However, in the spring of

1941, I was able to complete this project smoothly. The orchestrated version will enable this piece to be played in Europe, America, and other countries; compared to the former version that used the Chevé notation, this is more internationalized, yet at the same time remaining nationalistic in style and possessing progressive techniques.\textsuperscript{108}

In spite of the performance constraints on Xian at the time of the cantata’s composition, the autograph version already juxtaposes Chinese folksong with operatic-like arias, and Chinese scales with major/minor third relationships. The rave reviews accorded the work wherever it was performed led Xian to believe that the Yellow River Cantata could be transformed into a work with an orchestration designed to appeal to foreign audiences. His 1941 rescoring of the cantata retained the essentially Chinese character of the music, despite the expansion of its musical forces. Xian did not eliminate all of the Chinese instruments, but reduced the original eleven to five percussion instruments used on a limited basis.\textsuperscript{109} He also converted the Chevé notation to Western staff notation, expanded the component of the classical harmonic writing, and added an overture. By this transformation, Xian demonstrated his notion of “world” music, synthesized from both oriental and occidental idioms:

The national form for music is quite similar to that of the arts. When composing, in order to actualize national form in music, we must draw from the old form and enrich it with new content while incorporating external progressive techniques.\textsuperscript{110}

Xian could hardly have been aware that two documented performances of the work took place in America, the first in 1941 at a university in New York and the second in 1943 at Princeton University with Paul Robeson as the baritone soloist. This 1943

\textsuperscript{108} Xian Xinghai Quanji, 145.
\textsuperscript{109} All five in the fifth movement, and one in the sixth movement.
\textsuperscript{110} Xian Xinghai Quanji, 122.
performance by Westminster Choir on October 9, conducted by John Finley Williamson at the War Memorial Hall in Trenton, New Jersey, marked the premiere of a new English version of the *Yellow River Cantata*, commissioned from Wallingford Riegger by the China Aid Council. The 1946 publication of the cantata in Riegger’s English translation with piano accompaniment introduced Riegger’s arrangement of Xian’s work to the American public with the following notes (the advertisement’s errata are corrected in footnotes):

**The Composer of the “Yellow River Cantata”**

Hsu Hsing-hai\(^{111}\) was born in Canton in 1907\(^{112}\). He studied at Lingnan University and at the National Music Conservatory in Shanghai. Although he was very successful as a conductor of the school orchestra and chorus, Hsu wanted to compose. After acquiring a good background of traditional Chinese music and some understanding of the Western idiom, he went to Paris where he studied composition with Dukas and Prokofieff.\(^{113}\) On his return to China in 1935, he became instructor of mass singing for the National Military Council. He wrote songs which were sung widely because they expressed the aspirations of his people. These songs were work songs and marching songs, and had a rhythmic pattern that fitted the needs of the hard-pressed, hard-working Chinese for whom he wrote them.

Hsu left his post with the Military Council in 1938 to go to North China to the Lu Hsun\(^{114}\) Academy of Arts at Yenan,\(^{115}\) founded in 1937 and named for China’s great liberal writer, Lu Hsun. He was appointed director of the music department. In the next few years he wrote a number of cantatas based on the activities of the people.

**YELLOW RIVER CANTATA**, written in 1939, is the story of the heroic fight against the enemy in the face of terrible suffering and almost overwhelming odds. Based on traditional Chinese folk melodies, the Cantata was performed many times at the request of the army and the peasants and soon spread throughout China. Themes from the Cantata are published in Chinese song books printed in Chungking.\(^{116}\)

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\(^{111}\) “Hsien Hsing-hai” or “Xian Xinghai”

\(^{112}\) Xian was born in 1905.

\(^{113}\) Xian’s other compositional teacher was Vincent D’Indy, not Sergei Prokofieff, although Prokofieff did compliment Xian on his piece, “Wind,” which won first place in a composition competition (*Xian Xinghai Quanji*, 99).

\(^{114}\) Also spelled “Lu Xun.”

\(^{115}\) Also spelled “Yan’an.”

\(^{116}\) Also spelled “Chongqing.”
Other works for chorus and orchestra which combine the Western musical form with traditional Chinese melody are the “Production Movement Cantata” and the “September 18th Cantata.” Hsu Hsing-hai’s songs are beginning to appear in collections of Chinese songs. It is the hope of China Aid Council, the agency of United China Relief which supports the medical and child care work in the area where the Lu Hsun Academy is located, that Hsu Hsing-hai’s music will become known and loved in the United States as it is in China.

— The Publishers

The fact that an English version of the *Yellow River Cantata*, an extended work, was produced and performed as early as 1941 for the express purpose of strengthening political ties between China and America and building a cultural bridge between these two divergent cultures, provides additional incentive for making this work as accessible to the Western, specifically American, performance as possible. The United States had extended kindness and generosity to China when she cried out to the world for help during the Sino-Japanese War:

At that time, many nations adopted the attitude of “watching a fire from the other side of the river.” Britain and France merely made interpellations. The United States was the only nation which opposed Japan in consonance with the spirit of Stimson’s principle of non-recognition. American public opinion clearly denounced Japan on her ambition in aggression. This fully reflected the American foreign policy toward China and Japan.  

As to economic assistance, the United States had furnished China with financial support long before the Pearl Harbor Incident… By the time the war in the Pacific broke out in December 1941, U.S. President Roosevelt asked the Congress for additional financial assistance. The request was submitted to Congress on January 31, 1942 asking for US$500 million to loan to China, and was quickly passed. In his cable message to Generalissimo Chiang, President Roosevelt stated: “This bill was unprecedentedly, swiftly, and unanimously passed in the Senate and the House of Representatives…”  

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118 Ibid., 19.
Below are three war posters printed in America, in support of China’s fight against Japan:

Figure 3.1 War Posters
3.3 Variants

In addition to the 1941 Moscow version, the *Yellow River Cantata* now exists in four additional versions, each produced to meet specific performance needs. The length, tonality, and orchestration of the movements in these versions vary considerably. Table 3 compares these six versions of the *Yellow River Cantata* in terms of number of measures (excluding repeats).

![Table 3: Length of Movements](image)

**Version 1**

The autograph version of the *Yellow River Cantata* was composed in 1939 at the Lu Xun Arts Academy in Yan’an, a communist base where Xian served as Director of the Music Department. His original score was limited to a small Chinese orchestra\(^{119}\) plus harmonica, written in Chevé notation.\(^{120}\)

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\(^{119}\) See Table 4 for the complete list of instruments used.

\(^{120}\) For further background information, see translated articles in Appendix C and D.
Version 2

In 1941, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party sent Xian to Moscow, purportedly to participate in a film music project. While there, Xian completely reshaped the *Yellow River Cantata*, adding an overture and lengthening seven of the eight original movements. Most significant was his decision to re-score the cantata for a standard “Western” symphony orchestra. The only parts of the original “Chinese” orchestration that he retained were five Chinese percussion instruments. This revision and the autograph are the only versions in the composer’s own hand. The four subsequent incarnations of the cantata did not involve the composer.

Version 3

In 1946, the China Aid Council commissioned an English-language version from the American composer Wallingford Riegger (1885-1961). He produced a piano adaptation of the autograph, which was before Xian had written an overture. Two movements (three and six) were deleted. Riegger’s version was published by Leeds Music Corporation of New York, but went out-of-print when the Leeds catalogue was purchased by MCA Music Publishing in 1964 (subsequently renamed Universal Music Publishing in 1999).

Version 4

In 1955, Li Huanzhi produced a performance version for the *Junwei Zhongzhen* (Military Commissariat Central Politburo) Song and Dance Group, revising it in 1987 for

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121 Xian’s former composition and conducting student at the Lu Xun Academy in Yan’an, 1938. Li stayed on to teach at the academy after completing his studies there.
the Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra. This version is based on Xian’s 1941 re-scoring of the work for the Western orchestra.

**Version 5**

In 1975, conductor Yan Liangkun and members of the Central Philharmonic Orchestra undertook a performance of the *Yellow River Cantata* to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of Xian’s death. The same group had already engaged in a collective re-working of Xian’s original sketches for the cantata, producing the *Yellow River Piano Concerto* in 1970 that has received greater national and international exposure than the cantata.

**Version 6**

In December 2005, the Chung Chi Choir of The Chinese University of Hong Kong performed the cantata using a new two-piano version,\(^\text{122}\) which was subsequently published by Chinese University Press to make the work more accessible. The Chief Editor, Carmen Koon,\(^\text{123}\) chose to retain the third movement of Xian’s Moscow revision, accompanied by the Sanxian (Chinese three-string Banjo).

\(^{122}\) The piano parts replaced most of the Western orchestration.

\(^{123}\) Guan Meiru
Table 4 compares the four orchestrated versions of the *Yellow River Cantata*. Instruments used for the first time are in bold text, and the Chinese instruments are italicized, with a description provided below.¹²⁴

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instrument</th>
<th>Yan’an</th>
<th>Moscow</th>
<th>Shanghai Philharmonic</th>
<th>Central Philharmonic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harmonica</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Xiao San Xian</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><em>Xiao San Xian</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Da San Xian</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><em>Da San Xian</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dizi in G</strong></td>
<td>Piccolo</td>
<td>Flute (2)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Flute (2)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oboe (2)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>English Horn</strong></td>
<td>English Horn</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Clarinet in Bb (2)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bass Clarinet in Bb</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bassoon (2)</strong></td>
<td>Bassoon (2)</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Double Bassoon</strong></td>
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<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Horn in F (4)</strong></td>
<td>Horn in F (4)</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Trumpet in Bb (3)</strong></td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Trombone (3)</strong></td>
<td>Trombone (3)</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuba</strong></td>
<td>Tuba</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Harp</strong></td>
<td>Harp</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Timpani</strong></td>
<td>Timpani</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Snare Drum</strong></td>
<td>Snare Drum</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Triangle</strong></td>
<td>Triangle</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mu Yu</strong></td>
<td><em>Mu Yu</em></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Zhu Ban</strong></td>
<td><em>Zhu Ban</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bo</strong></td>
<td><em>Cymbals (Bo)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Cymbals (Bo)</em></td>
<td><em>Cymbals (Bo)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Xiao Bo</strong></td>
<td><em>Xiao Bo</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Luo</strong></td>
<td><em>Tam-tam (Luo)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Tam-tam (Luo)</em></td>
<td><em>Tam-tam (Luo)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tang Luo</strong></td>
<td><em>Tang Luo</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Shou Luo</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gu</strong></td>
<td>Bass Drum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tambourine</strong></td>
<td>Tambourine</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ling</strong></td>
<td>Xylophone</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chinese Xiao Gu</strong></td>
<td><em>Chinese Xiao Gu</em></td>
<td></td>
<td><em>Chinese Da Gu</em></td>
<td><em>Chinese Da Gu</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹²⁴ Images that are not public domain are used with permission from China People Promotions, [http://www.chinesemusic.co.uk](http://www.chinesemusic.co.uk).
‘Er Hu’
‘Da Hu’
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

‘Xiao Tang Gu’
‘Pipa’
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello
Double Bass

---

**Dizi in G – Chinese bamboo flute**

A transverse bamboo flute with a range of about two and a half octaves. It is made in different keys. The instrument has a blow hole and usually six finger holes. A thin, slightly stretched membrane covers the hole next to the blow hole, and buzzes when the bamboo flute is played, producing a reedy and bright timbre.

---

**Mu Yu – wooden fish**

A rounded, hollowed out wood block in the shape of a fish, struck with a wooden stick. It comes in different sizes, varying in timbre.

---

**Zhu Ban – bamboo clappers**

A clapper made from two rectangular plates of bamboo, approximately seven by three inches, tied together with the convex sides facing each other, played using different wrist techniques. Rhymed storytelling (*Kuai Ban*) a popular form of Chinese folk art is performed to the beat of the clappers.

---

**Bo – cymbals**

*Xiao Bo* are small cymbals about six inches in diameter. Originally made of copper, they are now made of high-tin bronze. *Diao Bo* is a suspended cymbal:
Luo – gong/tam-tam  
*Tang Luo – suspended gong*

A gong made of high-tin bronze, ranging in size between three to four inches to three to four feet, with either a flat or convex resonating area. Larger gongs are struck with a mallet, smaller gongs with bamboo or wooden sticks.

*Gu* – drum  
*Chinese Xiao Gu – small drum*  
*Chinese Da Gu – big drum*  
*Xiao Tang Gu – small hall drum*

A drum commonly in the shape of a barrel, with a wooden shell, and two drumheads made of cowhide or pig skin. Small drums are around eight to twelve inches in diameter, and large drums can be over three feet.

*Ling* – Chinese bell

Two small bells made of high-tin bronze with no internal clappers, roughly an inch and a half in diameter, connected by a string. They sound higher than a Triangle when struck together.
**Er Hu** – two-stringed fiddle  
*Da Hu* – Tenor fiddle  
A fretless two-stringed fiddle usually made of ebony or sandalwood, with a range of approximately three octaves. The horsehair bow is permanently sandwiched between two silk, nylon, or metal strings, and travels horizontally across the snake skin resonator to produce a nasal timbre. In a Chinese orchestra, the *erhu* assumes a similar role as the violin in a Western orchestra, and is most often tuned to an open fifth, the D and A above middle C. The *dahu* is the tenor member of the *erhu* family, tuned an octave lower than the *erhu*.

**Xiao San Xian** – small banjo  
*Da San Xian* – large banjo  
A fretless three-stringed banjo commonly made from padauk or red sandalwood, with snake skin covering both sides of the resonator. The nylon-wound steel strings are plucked with a plectrum or the fingernails. It is primarily used as an accompanying instrument, often for the voice. Its function is similar to that of a basso continuo.

**Pipa** – plucked lute  
A pear-shaped fretted four-stringed lute with a three and a half octave range. “Pi” and “pa” are two kinds of strokes used when playing the Pipa. Nylon-wound steel strings have replaced silk ones, making it necessary for plectrums to be attached to the fingertips when playing the instrument.
CHAPTER 4: PRODUCING AN ENGLISH PERFORMING EDITION

4.1 Textual and Musical Considerations

The process for arriving at this English performing translation is documented in Appendix A. All lines are constructed from a literal English translation of each Chinese character; next, musical and textual considerations (i.e. rhythms, word stresses, rhyme, etc.) are factored in. Wherever possible, the author has attempted to preserve the meaning of the original text. The following examples excerpted from movements 1 and 4 illustrate the complexities involved in this process.

Example 1a: The Translation Process

不怕那千丈波涛高如山！
不  怕  那  千  丈  波  涛  高  如  山
not  fear  that  thousand  ten  feet  surging  big  waves  high  as  mountains
Do not fear the mountainous waves!

行船好比上火线，
行  船  好  比  上  火线
sailing  boat  is  like  going  to  front  line
Boating on the Yellow River is like fighting at the front,

团结一心冲上前！
团  结  一  心  冲  上  前
group  bind  one  heart  charge  on  forward
Unite and forge ahead!
By making a word-for-word English translation of the original Chinese text available in the Appendix, the author provides others with the option of creating their own translation of the *Yellow River Cantata*. As an example of this process, options the author had originally considered are shown in parenthesis.

**Example 1b: Musical and Textual Considerations**

![Musical notation]

*Fear not the waves that look so mountainous!*

*(Boating's just like fighting at the front!)*

*(This is like the battle front!)*

*Let us forge ahead as one!*

**Example 2: Written to Sung Text**

水又急，浪又高，

水 | 又 | 急 | 浪 | 又 | 高
water | both | swift | waves | also | high

Swift waters, high waves,

奔腾叫啸如虎狼。

奔 | 腾 | 叫 | 啸 | 如 | 虎 | 狼
rush | gallop | cry | hiss | like | tigers | wolves

racing rapids sound like the cries of tigers and wolves.
4.2 Evolution and Transformation – The Unique Case of Movement Three

Although numerous re-workings of the *Yellow River Cantata* for specific performances have created various versions of the work, the resulting changes were largely cosmetic; Xian’s original movements have remained largely intact. However, the third movement of the *Yellow River Cantata* is a notable exception, having undergone drastic transformations over the decades. Conceived in the 1939 autograph solely as a recitation movement, Xian scored the accompaniment for a single instrument, the Large Sanxian (three-stringed banjo). Nowadays, the original Sanxian part is often played a step higher on a Pipa. This substitution was made necessary because over the past few decades, there has been a significant decline in Sanxian players, leading many Chinese orchestras to eliminate the instrument entirely. Given this fact, many Chinese conservatories have ceased offering instruction in the Sanxian.

Of this particular movement, Xian wrote:

The text is recited in this movement. I chose the Sanxian [three-stringed Chinese instrument] as the accompanying instrument and not the drum or the typical Beijing opera accompaniment style, to express the content of the spoken words. In Europe, there is a type of solo song with independent vocal and accompaniment parts, advocated...
by the composer Wolf.\textsuperscript{125} However, this is probably the first experiment in China where a Sanxian is employed both as an accompaniment as well as to express the content of the text, in a manner that it can stand independently as a piece. Besides the roll of the waves that can be heard in the Sanxian’s tune, two other melodies have also been incorporated: one is “Full River Red”\textsuperscript{126} and the other is “March of the Volunteers,”\textsuperscript{127} but only excerpts from these have been used (this is due to the structuring of the tune).\textsuperscript{128}

Xian indicated that movement 3 was written using a “New form, not with the big drum or just mere recitation, but a recitation song. The narrator must have a firm grasp of the emotions in this piece, and more importantly, speak with strength and boldness.”\textsuperscript{129}

He intentionally created a subtext for the listeners by weaving fragments from the musical settings of two famous patriotic poems into the Sanxian accompaniment. The portions of “Full River Red” and “March of the Volunteers” quoted are bracketed below, as well as when they occur in the Sanxian part (see pp.138-141).

\textit{Full River Red}
\begin{quote}
(Man Jiang Hong)
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{125} The Austrian composer Hugo Wolf (1860-1903) composed hundreds of Lieder. He is noted for his ability to condense expansive musical ideas and his skill in creating form based on his interpretations of the text.

\textsuperscript{126} 满江红 (mǎn jiāng hóng): a patriotic poem

\textsuperscript{127} 义勇军进行曲 (yì yŏng jūn jíng xíng qŭ): The People’s Republic of China’s National Anthem.

\textsuperscript{128} \textit{Xian Xinghai Quanji}, 37-38.

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Ibid.}, 146.
怒发冲冠
Wrath makes my hair stand in my helmet.

凭栏处
Leaning on the railings,

潇潇雨歇
I see the drizzling rain has ceased.

抬望眼
Lifting my eyes

仰天长啸
toward the sky, I let out a long roar,

壮怀激烈
releasing strong and intense emotions.

三十功名尘与土
Thirty years\textsuperscript{130} of rising in ranks are nothing but dust, even having covered

八千里路云和月
eight thousand \textsuperscript{131}li\textsuperscript{131} with troops, under the moon and clouds.

莫等闲
Do not be idle;

白了少年头
when the hairs whiten on your head of youth,

空悲切
you may regret it.

靖康耻
The shame from the capture of our emperors,\textsuperscript{132}

犹未雪
has not yet been avenged.

臣子恨
When will this hatred in us, the emperor’s subjects,

何时灭
be quenched?

驾长车踏破贺兰山缺
On war chariots, let us break through the He Lan Mountain Pass,

壮志饥餐胡虏肉
let us resolve to feast on the enemy’s flesh, and

笑谈渴饮匈奴血
drink their blood while laughing and talking.

待从头收拾旧山河
When we have re-conquered our lost land,

朝天阙
we shall pay tribute at the imperial court.

\textsuperscript{130} The poet was 31 years old when he wrote the poem in 1133.
\textsuperscript{131} A traditional Chinese unit of measurement. One \textit{li} is approximately 1/3 of a mile.
\textsuperscript{132} An event which occurred in 1126, where two emperors were captured by foreign invaders.
March of the Volunteers  
(Yiyongjun Jinxingqu)  
National Anthem of the People's Republic of China

Tian Han (1898-1968)  
Nie Er (1912-1935)

The original accompaniment for the third movement is included in the score (pp.138-141) in addition to the author’s new version. This seven-minute movement is frequently omitted in performances of the Yellow River Cantata due to the sheer length of the recited text and the more dramatic presentation of similar text in other movements, both sung and spoken. Every revision of Xian’s original orchestration of movement 3 is significantly shorter than the original. The following table documents these changes in length and instrumentation in these various reconstructions.

Table 5: Movement Three Length and Orchestration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yan’an</th>
<th>Moscow</th>
<th>Shanghai</th>
<th>Central</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>1939 Xian</td>
<td>1941 Xian</td>
<td>1955/1987</td>
<td>1975</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>320 measures</td>
<td>332 measures</td>
<td>289 measures</td>
<td>163 measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>Narrator</td>
<td>Narrator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In his 1941 revision, Xian replaced the Sanxian with an entirely Western orchestra, substituting the original wave-like glissandi written for the Sanxian with a different figuration, resulting in an additional twelve measures. While the *pizzicato* string section recreates the articulation of the plucked Sanxian and there seems to be an attempt at the beginning to maintain the textural transparency of the original version through the use of staccatos in the other sections, the intimacy of the autograph version is completely lost when the percussion and brasses enter.
With the Westernization of the compositional medium and its added layer of harmonic complexity, the improvisatory feel and folk-like simplicity of the original was lost as well. In trying to notate the style of traditional Sanxian playing as accurately as possible, Xian used thirteen tempo indications in the 320-measure original; in his 332-measure orchestral revision, he needed only eight.

Table 6: Movement Three Tempo Markings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yan’an Xian 1939</th>
<th>Moscow Xian 1941</th>
<th>Shanghai Philharmonic 1955/1987</th>
<th>Central Philharmonic 1975</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Moderato</em> m.29 <em>ad lib</em></td>
<td><em>Allegretto</em> m.65 <em>a tempo vivo</em></td>
<td><em>Allegretto</em> m.11 <em>piu mosso</em></td>
<td><em>Tempo a piacere</em> m.2 <em>poco animato</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.53 <em>piu mosso</em></td>
<td>m.93 <em>Allargando</em> m.107 <em>a tempo</em></td>
<td>m.60 <em>Allargando</em> m.74 <em>a tempo</em></td>
<td>m.46 <em>poco lento e poco a poco accel.</em> m.62 <em>poco lento e poco a poco accel.</em> m.115 <em>con moto</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.79 <em>piu lento</em></td>
<td>m.156 <em>piu mosso</em> m.198 <em>piu mosso</em></td>
<td>m.123 <em>piu mosso</em> m.162 <em>a tempo</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.94 <em>piu mosso</em></td>
<td>m.275 <em>piu mosso</em> m.295 <em>Allegro</em></td>
<td>m.165 <em>piu mosso</em> m.232 <em>piu mosso</em> m.256 <em>Allegro</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.123 <em>piu mosso</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.143 <em>piu allegro</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.165 <em>Lento</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.185 <em>piu mosso</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.210 <em>Allegro</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.353 <em>piu mosso</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.394 <em>accel.</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m.404 <em>Prestissimo</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The Shanghai Philharmonic version was based on Xian’s 1941 version. Forty-three measures were cut\(^{133}\) to reduce the distance between sections of the poem. The bass clarinet, double bassoon, and triangle were also removed. The Central Philharmonic version sought to restore the stylistic authenticity of the original by employing a solo Pipa in the opening (since competent Pipa players are easier to find) to playing a modal, improvisatory melody in free tempo. The low strings enter softly, providing a drone and...

\(^{133}\) Measures 38-41, 55-83, and 218-227 in Xian’s 1941 version.
pizzicato accompaniment that allows seamless transition into a Western orchestral climax. The Pipa returns, this time incorporating a three-note drone in its figuration, starting slowly, then increasing in tempo and dynamics until, having reached the limits of both, it comes to a dramatic stop. The orchestra takes over at that point, pivoting from the Pipa’s final note back to a tonal alternation of D major and A minor chords.

4.3 Performance Practice and Orchestration Options

For Western conductors interested in programming the *Yellow River Cantata*, the scoring for Pipa and Sanxian need not become an obstacle, since the Mandolin, Mandola, and Banjo will all function well as adequate substitutes. A Banjo tablature for the Sanxian parts in the fifth movement has been included. In addition, editorial markings have been added to each movement. The recordings that may be commercially available are listed in Appendix F according to the ease with which they may be obtained.

Despite intermittent performances of the *Yellow River Cantata* by Western choirs (both in English and in Chinese), the performance history of Xian’s seminal work outside of mainland China has relied almost entirely on Chinese choral groups. The author has undertaken this new edition in order to make this work more accessible to Western choirs by providing a singing English translation and a phonetic transliteration of the original Chinese text.

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134 See Appendix E.
CHAPTER 5: CHORAL SCORE
1. Song of the Yellow River Boatmen
(Chorus)

Guang Weiran (1913-2002)  
Xian Xinghai (1905-1945)
NARRATOR: Friends! Have you seen the Yellow River? Have you crossed the Yellow River?

Do you remember scenes of the boatmen risking their lives to battle the perilous waves?
If you have forgotten, then listen!
S

Hai-yo!
hai yo

A

Hai-yo!
hai yo

T

Hai-yo!
hai yo

B

Row, hua yo row, hua yo row, hua yo row, hua yo row, hua yo row, hua yo

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

Row, row, row, row, row, row, row.
Hai yo!
Row, row, row!
Hai yo!
Row, row, row!
Hai yo!
Row, row, row!
Hai yo!
Row, row, row!
Hai yo!
Row, row, row!
Hai yo!
Row, row, row!
Hai yo!
Row, row, row!
For ward row!

Row!

For ward row!

Row!

For ward row!

Row!

For ward row!

Row!

For ward row!

Row!

For ward row!

Row!

For ward row!

Row!

For ward row!

Row!

For ward row!

Row!
For ward row!

For ward row!

Row!

chong shang qian

chong shang qian

Row!

chong shang qian

For ward row!

huan yo chong shang qian

huan yo chong shang qian

Row!

huan yo chong shang qian

huan yo chong shang qian

Row!

chong shang qian

chong shang qian

Row!

chong shang qian

chong shang qian

Row!

chong shang qian

chong shang qian

Row!

chong shang qian

chong shang qian

Row!

chong shang qian

chong shang qian

Row!

chong shang qian

chong shang qian

Row!

chong shang qian

chong shang qian

Row!

chong shang qian

chong shang qian

Row!

chong shang qian

chong shang qian

Row!

chong shang qian

chong shang qian

Row!

chong shang qian

chong shang qian

Row!

chong shang qian

chong shang qian
Clouds of darkness

Ten.  S  A  B

Haiyo!
hai yo

Pno. 1  Pno. 2

Haiyo!
hai yo

(meno mosso)
Toss- ing waves—reach
bo tao na___

Fac- es stung—by
leng feng na___

Ten.

S

A

T

B

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

veil the sky!
zhe man tian

moun- tains high!
gao ru shan

veil the sky!
zhe man tian

moun- tains high!
gao ru shan

veil the sky!
zhe man tian

moun- tains high!
gao ru shan
Ten.

S

A

T

B

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

(piu mosso)

Foam-ing waters

Freezing wind!

Freezing wind!

Freezing wind!

Freezing wind!

Freezing wind!

Freezing wind!

Foam-lang hua na

Piu shang lian

Crashing in?

Piu shang lian

Crashing in?

Piu shang lian

Crashing in?

Piu shang lian

Crashing in?
(allegro con brio)

Ten.

S

Hai-yo!
hai yo

A

Hai-yo!
hai yo

T

Hai-yo!
hai yo

B

Row, hua yo hua yo hua yo hua yo hua yo hua yo

Pno. 1

[a tempo]

Pno. 2

[a tempo]
Ten.

S

A

T

B

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

(meno mosso)

Fel-low boat-men

[non rit.] [\( \text{\textit{q}} = 100 \) ]

[non rit.] [\( \text{\textit{q}} = 100 \) ]
List - en helms - man,  
duo shou na  
Do be caut - ious,  
dang xin na

stay a - lert!  
zheng kai yen  
please hold firm!  
ba zhu wan

stay a - lert!  
zheng kai yen  
please hold firm!  
ba zhu wan

stay a - lert!  
zheng kai yen  
please hold firm!  
ba zhu wan

stay a - lert!  
zheng kai yen  
please hold firm!  
ba zhu wan

[marcato]
[accel.]

[marcato]
[accel.]

[marcato]
[accel.]

[marcato]
[accel.]
Ten.  
S  
A  
T  
B  
Pno. 1  
Pno. 2  

Don't slack off!
Row forward!
Ming na dan
Hai hua yo

Give your all and
Never fear!
Bie tou lan
Mo dan han

(piu mosso)
[a tempo]

(a tempo)

(a tempo)

(a tempo)
S

look so mountain-ous!
bo tao gao ru shan

A

look so mountain-ous!
bo tao gao ru shan

T

Fear not the waves that look so mountain-ous!
Bu pa na qian zhang bo tao gao ru shan

B

Fear not the waves that look so mountain-ous!
Bu pa na qian zhang bo tao gao ru shan
We shall fight them as they come!

We shall fight them as they come!

Let us forge a -

Let us forge a -

S

A

T

B

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
Row forward!  Row forward!  Row forward!
hai hua yo  hai hua yo  hai hua yo

head  as  one!
chong  shang  qian
hai hua yo  hai hua yo  hai hua yo

Row forward!  Row forward!  Row forward!
hai hua yo  hai hua yo  hai hua yo

head  as  one!
chong  shang  qian
hai hua yo  hai hua yo  hai hua yo
Row, row, row!
Row, row, row!
Row, row, row!
Row, row, row!
Row, row, row!
Row, row, row!
Row, row, row!
Row, row, row!
Row, row, row!
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Row, row, row!
Row, row, row!
Row, row, row!
Row, row, row!
Row, row, row!
Row, row, row!
For ward row!  For ward row!
hua yo chong shang qian  hua yo chong shang qian

Row!  Row!
chong shang qian  chong shang qian

For ward row!  For ward row!
hua yo chong shang qian  hua yo chong shang qian

Row!  Row!
chong shang qian  chong shang qian

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
For ward row! For ward row!
huayochong shang qian huayochong shang qian

Row! chong shang qian Row! chong shang qian

For ward row! For ward row!
huayochong shang qian huayochong shang qian

Row! chong shang qian Row! chong shang qian
S

97

— Ha ha ha ha ha ha... (hearty laughter for 2 measures)

A

— Ha ha ha ha ha ha... (hearty laughter for 2 measures)

T

— Ha ha ha ha ha ha... (hearty laughter for 2 measures)

B

— Ha ha ha ha ha ha... (hearty laughter for 2 measures)

Pno. 1

—

Pno. 2

—
Andantino $\frac{3}{4} = 96$

Pno. 1

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{strings}
\end{array} \]

Pno. 2

\[ \begin{array}{c}
harp
\end{array} \]
We can see the other shore, now our boat has reached that shore.
S

108

Our hearts are calm-er now, here let us rest a-while. Once a-gain,

xin na an yi an qi na chuan yi chuan hui tou lai

A

108

Our hearts are calm-er now, here let us rest a-while. Once a-gain,

xin na an yi an qi na chuan yi chuan hui tou lai

T

Once hui tou gain, lai

Our hearts are calm-er now, here let us rest a-while. Once a-gain,

xin na an yi an qi na chuan yi chuan hui tou lai

B

Our hearts are calm-er now, here let us rest a-while. Once a-gain,

xin na an yi an qi na chuan yi chuan hui tou lai

Pno. 1

[rit.]

Once hui tou gain, lai

Our hearts are calm-er now, here let us rest a-while. Once a-gain,

xin na an yi an qi na chuan yi chuan hui tou lai

Pno. 2

[rit.]

Once hui tou gain, lai

Our hearts are calm-er now, here let us rest a-while. Once a-gain,

xin na an yi an qi na chuan yi chuan hui tou lai
S

bat - tle the rag - ing wa - ters, fight to the death we'll fight to the death we'll
zai he na huang he nu tao jue yi si zhan jie yi si zhan

A

bat - tle the rag - ing wa - ters, fight to the death we'll fight to the death we'll
zai he na huang he nu tao jue yi si zhan jie yi si zhan

T

bat - tle the rag - ing wa - ters, fight to the death we'll fight to the death we'll
zai he na huang he nu tao jue yi si zhan jie yi si zhan

B

bat - tle the rag - ing wa - ters, fight to the death we'll fight to the death we'll
zai he na huang he nu tao jue yi si zhan jie yi si zhan

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
fight to the death! Ah!

Fight to the death!

jue yi si zhan

jue yi si zhan

Pno. 1

[j]ute!
Hey! hai

Hey! hai

Hey! hai

Hey! hai

Hey! hai

Hey! hai

meno mosso, accel... e rit.

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
2. Ode to the Yellow River
(Baritone Solo)

NARRATOR: Ah! My friends!

The heroic spirit of the Yellow River appears on the plains of Asia,
representing the vigor of our nation, mighty and strong!
Here, facing the Yellow River, we sing our song of praise.
54
of the people of China! To five thousand years of
zhong hua min zu di yao lan wu qian nian di gu guo wen

57
culture you bear witness and the many heroes
hua cong ni zhe er fa yuan duo shao ying xiong di
Bar.

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

Bar.

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

Ah!

Hwang huang

You are strong and mighty
just like a brave and fearless warrior, rising above the Asian plains, your heroic body becomes a strong defense for our
[broadly, expansive]
(andantino)

Bar. 79

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

[broadly, expansive]
(andantino)
Bar. Pno. 1 Pno. 2

84

mighty arms extend
yi xie wanyzhang
far and wide
hao hao

86

reaching out
dang dang
xiang nan bei liang an shen chu

[ \text{\dot=92} ]

piu mosso
Bar.

89

thou-sand strips of i-ron, you nur-ture our peo-ple's spir-it.

qian wan tiao tie di bi bang wo men min zu di wei da jing shen

Pno. 1

92

and help us to grow strong and might-y!

jiang yao zai ni di bao yu xia fa yang zi zhang wo men

Pno. 2

a tempo

Our...
sons and daughters will learn from your example.

ample, to be mighty, majestic, strong and free, to be

yang xiang ni yi yang di wei da jian qiang xiang ni
might-y; ma-jest-ic; strong and

di we-i; da

qiang

free.
3. Yellow River's Water from Heaven Descends
(Poetry with Musical Accompaniment)

NARRATOR: Yellow River! We want to become as mighty and strong as you!
Here, before you, we offer a poem, confiding in you the catastrophes suffered by our people.

Tempo a piacere
[improvisatory feel, ad lib.]

Yellow River's water, descended from heaven - sweeping, surging forward;
the cries of the hissing river shatter our courage!

The river is China's major artery, rapidly circulating the people's lifeblood throughout the land.

The moon rises over the mountains east, its silver beams on the river glimmer like snow.

The red sun shines high, its golden rays burst open from the surface of the water.
The river shakes, and leaps, like a flying dragon, traversing ten thousand miles each day, emptying into the vast eastern sea. From Hukou to Longmen, strange battle formations are displayed in the sky; people do not dare lean close to the riverside; even a poisonous dragon does not dare dwell on the river bottom.

From ten miles away, see the think plumes of smoke rising upwards, as from a large blazing fire, blanketing the entire sky; this cauldron brings our lifeblood to a rolling boil; in fact, when the cold air closes in, your whole body trembles. The river groans and quakes, emitting the power of a billion horses, shaking the earth's crust and dispersing the dark clouds in the sky.
Ah, Yellow River! The king of rivers! When enraged, it is a mad wild beast, worse than ten million poisonous pythons; making waves, stirring storms, wrecking the people's embankment;
therefore, on both shores of the Yellow River, terrible calamities took place.

The river devoured people on both shores, it leveled over hundreds of villages,
causing tens of thousands of fellow countrymen to be exiled into an unfamiliar land, old and young

struggling on the brink of starvation, hanging on the verge of death.
Today, people on the two shores once again suffer unprecedented calamities:

on Asia's level plains, pirates from the East are letting out murderous fumes of death; starvation

and death are like the cachectic fever, spreading infection on the shores of the Yellow River.

Ah, Yellow River! You nurture our people's growth:
you have seen with your own eyes the calamities that this ancient nation has suffered for
five thousand years! Since ancient times, numerous bloody battles have unfolded on your shores.

Piles of white bones fill your body, and your surface is stained dark red with blood!
Yet, you have never ruthlessness like that unleashed today; nor have you seen the Yellow Emperor's
sons and grandsons mobilizing the entire country as they do today.
Ah, Yellow River! Scores of guerilla fighters and field units are scattered like stars,

spread out like chess pieces behind the enemy;
from within the green muslin tents, valiant battles are launched

amid the cluster of ten thousand mountains!
Ah, Yellow River! You record our people's history through the dynasties; from ancient to present, many heroes rose along your banks.
But, never before have you seen four hundred million fellow countrymen united like steel and iron; hundreds of thousands of heroes spill their blood to defend the country of their forefathers;

the brave and honorable tales of these heroes are like your raging waves -

strong, intense, and awesome!
Ah, Yellow River!
Have you ever heard victory's triumphant songs sung on your shores?
Have you ever seen the iron army of our home country ambush the enemy,
spread out like a net that covers both earth and sky?

They guard your shores, preventing the enemy from crossing over!
Their goal is to bury the ferocious enemy beneath your billowing waves!

Ah, Yellow River! You rush and roar,
angrily ridding the fascists' evil demons, singing their burial song!

Your deafening roar travels across our homeland's plains
a triumphant song to honor our people's great victory!

Roar out loud, across our homeland's plains,
the triumphant song to honor our people's great victory!
3. Yellow River's Water From Heaven Descends
(Original Version with Sanxian Accompaniment)
NARRATOR: We are the sons and daughters of the Yellow River, who arduously strive toward victory with each passing day!

*(largo espressivo)*

Andante \[q = \text{ca.60}\]

But each day that the enemy lives, is one more day that we cannot rest.

If you doubt this, then listen to the painful groans of the multitudes on the river to the east.
S

wa - ters rush to the east for ten thou - sand

ben liu xiang dong fang he liu wan li

A

wa - ters rush to the east for ten thou - sand

ben liu xiang dong fang he liu wan li

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
miles.

Waters swift, and

shui you ji

Waters swift, and

chango shui you

chango shui you

Swift, and

Waters swift, and

chango chang

≈

Wa
ers

≈

Waters

ji

ji

names

shui

you

ji

chango

Waters

ji

ji

Swift, and
Massive embankments open canals,
kai he qu zhu di fang
to the east lies level soil,
he dong qian li cheng ping rang

to the east lies level soil,
he dong qian li cheng ping rang

soil, rang

soil, rang

149
fer tile for sprout-ing wheat and flow ers of soy,
mai miao er fei a dou hua xiang

fer tile for sprout-ing wheat and flow ers of soy,
S

All our folk in you rejoice.

A

All our women in you rejoice.

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
\[ \text{Adagio (adagio non molto)} \]

When the vil-lians

When the vil-lians

When the vil-lians
Gone are our parents, gone are the places we call home!

Gone are our parents, gone are the places we call home!

Gone are our parents, gone are the places we call home!

Gone are our parents, gone are the places we call home!

Gone are our parents, gone are the places we call home!
night while death and despairing hearts mourn after
mang qi li zi san tian ge yi fang qi li
Pno. 1

Pno. 2

S

86

A

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

93
5. Musical Dialogue on the River Bank
(Male Duet)

NARRATOR: Families torn apart, wives from husbands, children and parents!
Will we forever be refugees? Listen,* as two villagers dialogue on the Yellow River's bank.

*Musical introduction begins after "Listen."
Home for me was Shaan-xi, from the river

Held the hoe, plowed the field, harvested the

wo di jia zai shan xi guo he hai you

na chu tou geng tian di zhong di gao liang
Why is it that you bear
wei shen me dao ci di

three hundred li.
san bai li
grains they yield.
he xiao mi

[soloists slightly slower]
sor - row all a - lone out here?
he bian liu lang shou gu qí

Please don’t ask,
tong xin shi
my heart grieves, home's destroyed, I fear the worst.
mo ti qi jia po ren wang wu xiao xi
Brother Zhang, don't be sad, oh, my fate is
Used to trade north of here, fam'ly's gone at
zai dong bei zuo sheng yi jia xiang ba nian
just as bad!
least eight years.

Brother Wang, why is that?
All this said, you and I,

Brother Wang, why is that?
wei shen me wang lao qi
All this said, you and I,
zhe me shuo wo he ni

Brother Wang, why is that?
wei shen me wang lao qi
All this said, you and I,
Tell me where your home was at?
ni di jia xiang zai he di
Can't be standing id ly by.
dou shi you jia bu neng hui
Ha - tred boils in our hearts, like the Yellow chou he hen zai xin li ben teng ru tong From this day, you and I, broth - ers in a wei guo jia dang bing qu tai hang shan hang, shang

Ha - tred boils in our hearts, like the Yellow chou he hen zai xin li ben teng ru tong From this day, you and I, broth - ers in a wei guo jia dang bing qu tai hang shan hang, shang

Like ben tai broth the teng ers in a low Yel ru shan in a tong shang

Like ben tai broth the teng ers in a low Yel ru shan in a tong shang

[poco piu animato]  

[q = 132]
Riv-er pact.
dai_hui_qu
won't suc-cumb.
lao_jia_qu.
Ha-tred boils
From
he
this
guo
jia
From
chou
chou
wei
wei
From
From
hen
hen
this
day,
day,
T 1
1.
2.
Allegro

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

S

A

T

B

H

chou
From
wei
guo
jia

From
this
day,
day,

We re-solve to fight back, by this Yelow
huang he bian ding zhu yi za men yi tong

S
We re-solve to fight back, by this Yelow
huang he bian ding zhu yi za men yi tong
Sol - diers we shall be - come, to de-feat we
cong jin hou wo he ni yi tong da hui
Sanxian
(for 5-string banjo, tuning: gCGCD)
NARRATOR: Friends! we will fight to regain our homeland! Our country is in such disarray!
Can any man with wife and children bear the enemy's humiliation?

Pesante $\frac{d}{4} = 64$

Dear compatriots, listen to a woman's sorrowful and tragic singing.

Piangendo $\frac{d}{4} = 60$
Ah, wind, please do not howl, han
feng a ni bu yao jiao yun

[slower]
clouds, please do not veil the light. Yellow River.

ni bu yao duo shan huang he a
I stand before you
pouring out my grief.

wo zai ni mian qian
ku su wo di

hate and grief.

chou he yuan

Sop. 1
Pno. 1
Pno. 2
Oh, my fate, ming a hit-ter fate, oh, my life.

Such a strife, oh, my foes, how can you be so

She yang nan gui zi a ni zhe yang mei xin
Sop. 43

[*** molto rit. ***]

cruel?

Pno. 1

[*** molto rit. ***]

Oh, precious child,
you died too young,
too

Pno. 2

soon!
can

In the past,
wo he ni

Sop. 48

[*** piu mosso ***]

In the past,
i ni si de zhe yang

Pno. 1

P [*** piu mosso ***]

Pno. 2

mf [*** piu mosso ***]
Sop.

we __ held
wu chou you
no grudge,
yet, __ you __ took
wu yuan

Pno. 1

all 1 e-ver
lived.
tou sheng zai ren
jian

Pno. 2
Ah, wild wind, please do not howl, ni bu yao jiao han

Ah, kuang feng, a ni bu yao jiao han

Dark clouds, please do not veil the light, wa - ters of Huang-

Wu yun a ni bu yao duo shan huang he di shui
Sop.

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

64

66

huh, please do not shed your tears.

ni bu yao wu ye

please do not shed your tears.

ni bu yao wu ye

[ritardando] [a tempo]

[ritardando] [a tempo]

[ritardando] [a tempo]

[ritardando] [a tempo]

[ritardando] [a tempo]
This night I enter into your embrace.

\textit{poco agitato} \( \frac{\text{L} = 70}{\text{L}} \)
Sop.

Husband, dear, far from here,

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

In the grave, we'll meet there, bitterly remember

di xia a zai tian yuan ni yao xiang xiang qi zi

75

76
how your wife and little children died. Please, remember, and have this ever ni si de zhe yang can ni yao ti wo ba zhe bi

debt repaid, honor our memories, darling re-claim our
NARRATOR: Sons and daughters of China, who among you is willing to be slaughtered like pigs and sheep? We must resolve to be victorious, to defend the Yellow River! To defend northern China! To defend all of China!
Strong winds zai
roar-pao xiao he xi shan gang wan zhang gao
moun-tains high, to the east the grains have rip-ened.
to the west are gao liang shou liao
he dong he bei
In the mountains battle plans we must decide! Count less

In the mountains battle plans we must decide! Count less

In the mountains battle plans we must decide! Count less

In the mountains battle plans we must decide! Count less

In the mountains battle plans we must decide! Count less

Count less sha

Count less sha

Count less sha

Count less sha
he - roes in the green tents there re - side!

he - roes in the green tents there re - side!

he - roes in the green tents there re - side!

he - roes in the green tents there re - side!

he - roes in the green tents there re - side!

he - roes in the green tents there re - side!
S

Gathering arms for battle, ga-ther-ing arms for battle,
duan qi le tu qiang, hui dong zhe da dao chang mao

A

Gathering arms for battle, ga-ther-ing arms for battle,
duan qi le tu qiang, hui dong zhe da dao chang mao

T

Gathering arms for battle, ga-ther-ing arms for battle,
duan qi le tu qiang, hui dong zhe da dao chang mao

B

Gathering arms for battle, ga-ther-ing arms for battle,
duan qi le tu qiang, hui dong zhe da dao chang mao
Save a village! Save the Hwang-huh! Save our homeland! Chi-na we'll defend!

Save a village! Save the Hwang-huh! Save our homeland! Chi-na we'll defend!

Save a village! Save the Hwang-huh! Save our homeland! Chi-na we'll defend!
Strong winds howl, horses neigh,
Hwang-huh is roaring, Hwang-huh is roaring,
huang he zai pao xiao, huang he zai pao xiao

neigh, neigh, Hwang-huh is roaring, Hwang-huh is roaring,
jiao, jiao, huang he zai pao xiao, huang he zai pao xiao

Hwang-huh is roaring, Hwang-huh is roaring,
huang he zai pao xiao, huang he zai pao xiao

neigh, neigh, Hwang-huh is roaring, Hwang-huh is roaring,
jiao, jiao, huang he zai pao xiao, huang he zai pao xiao
to the west are mountains high,
he xi shan gang wan zhang gao
he dong he bei gao liang shou liao

roaring,
he xi shan gang wan zhang gao
he dong he bei gao liang shou liao

roaring,
he xi shan gang wan zhang gao
he dong he bei gao liang shou liao
there cheng ying hao
Ga duan qi le tu qiang

in you ji jian er cheng ying hao

 mf

 Ga - ther - ing arms for

there cheng re - side!

\( \sum \)

in the green tents there re - side!

mf

Ga - duan qi le tu qiang,

in you ji jian er cheng ying hao

\( \sum \)
S

bat-ri, yang qiang
hui dong zhe da dao

A

gather- ing arms for bat- tle, yang qiang
hui dong zhe da dao

T

Ga- ther- ing arms for bat- tle, yang qiang
hui dong zhe da dao

B

Ga- ther- ing arms for bat- tle, yang qiang
hui dong zhe da dao

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

mf

- - - -
Save a village! Save the Hwang-huh! Save our home-land! China

Bao wei jia xiang bao wei huang he bao wei hua bei bao wei

Battle, chang mao bao wei jia xiang bao wei huang he bao wei hua bei

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
we'll defend!
Chinese, we'll defend!
Strong winds howl, howl, (long) (long) (long) (long)
Hwang-huh is roaring.

Hwang-huh is roaring.

Hwang-huh is roaring.

Hwang-huh is roaring.

The Xi Shan are gang mountains high.

The Xi Shan are gang mountains high.

The Xi Shan are gang mountains high.

The Xi Shan are gang mountains high.
side. hao
(long-guh long-guh long-guh long-guh) Ga-ther-ing arms for
"duan qi le tu qiang"

there cheng re ying hao
(long-guh long-guh long-guh long-guh) Ga-ther-ing arms for
"duan qi le tu qiang"

in the green tents you ji jian er cheng ying hao
(long-guh long-guh long-guh long-guh) Ga-ther-ing arms for
"duan qi le tu qiang"
Yang Battle, Qiang Battle

Guan Qi Le Tu Qiang

Gathering Arms for Battle, Qiang

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
S

\[ \sum_j \]

A

\[ \text{gathering arms for battle,} \]
\[ \text{hui dong zhe da dao chang mao} \]
\[ \text{(long-guh long-guh long-guh)} \]
\[ \text{(long ge long ge long ge)} \]

T

\[ \text{long-guh long-guh) gathering arms for battle,} \]
\[ \text{hui dong zhe da dao chang mao} \]
\[ \text{(long ge long ge long ge)} \]

B

\[ \text{(long-guh long-guh long-guh long-guh)} \]
\[ \text{gathering arms for} \]
\[ \text{hui dong zhe da dao} \]

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
S
save  a vil - lage!  long - guh long - guh long - guh  Save  the
bao  wei  jia xiang  long - ge long - ge long - ge

A
save  a vil - lage!  long - guh long - guh long - guh  Save  the
bao  wei  jia xiang  long - ge long - ge long - ge

T
(long - guh long - guh long - guh)  save  a vil - lage!  Save  the
(long ge long ge long ge)  bao  wei  jia xiang  bao  wei

B
bat - tle,  chang  mao  (long - guh long - guh long - guh)  save  a vil - lage!
(long ge long ge long ge)  bao  wei  jia xiang

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
Hwang-huh! Save our home-land! China we'll defend!

Huang he bao wei hua bei bao wei quan zhong guo

Hwang-huh! Save our home-land! China we'll defend!

Huang he bao wei hua bei bao wei quan zhong guo

Save the Hwang-huh! Save our home-land! China we'll defend!

Bao wei Huang he bao wei hua bei bao wei quan zhong guo
Strong winds howl, horses neigh, Hwang-huh is zai

S

A

T

B

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
Pno. 1

Pno. 2

S

A

T

B

171

roaring Hwang-huh is roaring, to the west are
pao xiao huang he zai pao xiao he xi shan gang

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

171

roaring Hwang-huh is roaring, to the west are
pao xiao huang he zai pao xiao he xi shan gang

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

171

roaring Hwang-huh is roaring, to the west are
pao xiao huang he zai pao xiao he xi shan gang

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
moun-tains high, to the east the grains have rip - ened. In the
wan zhang gao he dong he bei gao liang shou liao wan wan shan

moun-tains high, to the east the grains have rip - ened. In the
wan zhang gao he dong he bei gao liang shou liao wan wan shan

moun-tains high, to the east the grains have rip - ened. In the
wan zhang gao he dong he bei gao liang shou liao wan wan shan

In wan shan
he - roes in the green tents there reside.

zhang li you ji jian er cheng ying hao

...
S

188

Gather-ing arms for bat-tle, gather-ing arms for

duan qi le tu qiang yang qiang hui dong zhe da dao

A

188

Gather-ing arms for bat-tle, gather-ing arms for

duan qi le tu qiang yang qiang hui dong zhe da dao

T

188

Gather-ing arms for bat-tle, gather-ing arms for

duan qi le tu qiang yang qiang hui dong zhe da dao

B

188

Gather-ing arms for bat-tle, gather-ing arms for

duan qi le tu qiang yang qiang hui dong zhe da dao

Pno. 1

188

Gather-ing arms for bat-tle, gather-ing arms for

duan qi le tu qiang yang qiang hui dong zhe da dao

Pno. 2
8. Roar, Yellow River!
(Chorus)
NARRATOR: Listen, the Pearl River roars angrily! The Yangtze River is raging on!

*Allegretto* [performance tempo is faster]
Ah! Yellow River! Raise up your angry waves, let loose your wild bellows,
sound the battle cry for all of China's oppressed people!
rit. molto

rag-ing on, Hwang - - huh!
hou ba huang he

S

a tempo

A

T

B

Pno. 1

rit. molto

rag-ing on, Hwang - - huh!
hou ba huang he

Pno. 2

rit. molto

a tempo

a tempo
Raise up your angry bil-lows, roar
xian qi ni di nu tao fa chu

raise up your bil-lows, roar
xian qi ni di nu tao fa chu

raise up your bil-lows, roar
xian qi ni di nu tao fa chu

[for rehearsal only]

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
all earth's people, sound out, sound out the loud battle
lao dong di ren min fa chu zhan dou di jing

sound out the loud battle cry!
fa chu zhan dou di jing hao

ple, sound out the loud battle cry!
min fa chu zhan dou di jing hao
Andante

\[ \dot{\text{= ca.60}} \]

S

A

T

B

Pno. 1

Pno. 2

\text{cry!}

\text{hao}
pain we can no longer bear.

Five thousand years of hardship,

Suffered cruel oppression,

Five thousand years of hardship,

Suffered cruel oppression,
suffered cruel oppression,
tied to the diaphragm

pain we can no longer bear,
bear

we have long endured,
endured,

we
have
long
endured,
endured,

we have long endured,
endured,
S

73

pain we can no long - er bear.
ku tong shou bu liao

A

no long - er bear.

T

long - er bear.
shou bu liao

B

we can no long - er bear.
zhong ku nan shou bu liao

Pno. 1

73


Pno. 2
Allegretto [performed Presto]

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
China, dawn-ing a new be-gin-ning, mil-lions and mil-lions have
Dan Shi, xin zhong guo yi jing po xiao si wan wan wu qian wan
gathered to protect and defend, our
min zhong yi jing tuan jie qi lai
our

251
S

88

coun-try and our land! Oh hark, oh hark,
tong ba guo tu bao ni ting ni ting

A

88

coun-try and our land! Oh hark, oh hark,
tong ba guo tu bao ni ting ni ting

T

88

coun-try and our land! Oh hark, oh hark,
tong ba guo tu bao ni ting ni ting

B

88

coun-try and our land! Oh hark, oh hark,
tong ba guo tu bao ni ting ni ting

Pno. 1

88

Pno. 2

88
Song - hwa River's calling,
song hua jiang zai hu hao

Song - hwa River's calling,
song hua jiang zai hu hao

Song - hwa River's calling,
song hua jiang zai hu hao

Song - hwa River's calling,
song hua jiang zai hu hao

94

Note: The text appears to be a combination of English and Chinese, indicating a title or phrase associated with a musical composition or notation.
Hey-long River's calling,
Hark, oh hark, Pearl River is
hei long jiang zai hu hao
zhu jiang fa chu le ying yong di

Hey-long River's calling,
Hark, oh hark, Pearl River is
hei long jiang zai hu hao
zhu jiang fa chu le ying yong di

Hey-long River's calling,
Hark, oh hark, Pearl River is
hei long jiang zai hu hao
zhu jiang fa chu le ying yong di

Hey-long River's calling,
Hark, oh hark, Pearl River is
hei long jiang zai hu hao
zhu jiang fa chu le ying yong di
Maestoso \( \frac{\text{L}}{\text{M}} = 72 \)
S
sound out the battle cry!
zhan dou di jing hao

A
sound out the battle cry!
zhan dou di jing hao

T
sound out the battle cry!
zhan dou di jing hao

B
sound out the battle cry!
zhan dou di jing hao

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
tempo di marcia  \[ \frac{\text{bpm}}{=100} \text{ with constant accel. to the end} \]

Facing all the earth's laboring people.

Facing all the earth's laboring people.

Facing all the earth's laboring people.

Facing all the earth's laboring people.

Facing all the earth's laboring people.
let the battle cry sound forth!
fa chu zhan dou di jing hao
poco a poco accel...

S

\begin{music}
\begin{align*}
\text{Facing all the earth's laboring people,} \\
\text{xiang zhe quan shi jie lao dong di ren min}
\end{align*}
\end{music}

A

\begin{music}
\begin{align*}
\text{Facing all the earth's laboring people,} \\
\text{xiang zhe quan shi jie lao dong di ren min}
\end{align*}
\end{music}

T

\begin{music}
\begin{align*}
\text{Facing all the earth's laboring people,} \\
\text{xiang zhe quan shi jie lao dong di ren min}
\end{align*}
\end{music}

B

\begin{music}
\begin{align*}
\text{Facing all the earth's laboring people,} \\
\text{xiang zhe quan shi jie lao dong di ren min}
\end{align*}
\end{music}

Pno. 1

\begin{music}
\begin{align*}
\text{poco a poco accel...} \\
\text{poco a poco accel...}
\end{align*}
\end{music}

Pno. 2

\begin{music}
\begin{align*}
\text{poco a poco accel...} \\
\text{poco a poco accel...}
\end{align*}
\end{music}
S

\[ \text{let the battle cry sound forth!} \]
fa chu zhan dou di jing hao

A

\[ \text{let the battle cry sound forth!} \]
fa chu zhan dou di jing hao

T

\[ \text{let the battle cry sound forth!} \]
fa chu zhan dou di jing hao

B

\[ \text{let the battle cry sound forth!} \]
fa chu zhan dou di jing hao

Pno. 1

\[ \text{let the battle cry sound forth!} \]
fa chu zhan dou di jing hao

Pno. 2

\[ \text{let the battle cry sound forth!} \]
fa chu zhan dou di jing hao
Facing all the earth's laboring people,
xiang zhe quan shi jie lao dong di ren min

Facing all the earth's laboring people,
xiang zhe quan shi jie lao dong di ren min

Facing all the earth's laboring people,
xiang zhe quan shi jie lao dong di ren min

Facing all the earth's laboring people,
xiang zhe quan shi jie lao dong di ren min

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xiang zhe quan shi jie lao dong di ren min

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xiang zhe quan shi jie lao dong di ren min

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xiang zhe quan shi jie lao dong di ren min

Facing all the earth's laboring people,
xiang zhe quan shi jie lao dong di ren min

Facing all the earth's laboring people,
xiang zhe quan shi jie lao dong di ren min

Facing all the earth's laboring people,
xiang zhe quan shi jie lao dong di ren min

Facing all the earth's laboring people,
xiang zhe quan shi jie lao dong di ren min

Facing all the earth's laboring people,
let the battle cry sound forth!
fa chu zhan dou di jing hao

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
Facing all the earth's laboring people,

Facing all the earth's laboring people,

Facing all the earth's laboring people,

Facing all the earth's laboring people,

Facing all the earth's laboring people,
Vivace

let the battle cry sound forth!

hao

Pno. 1

Pno. 2
APPENDIX A: TRANSLATION

《黄河大合唱》
yellow river big combine sing
Yellow River Cantata

[1] 黄河船夫曲
yellow river boat men song
Song of the Yellow River Boatmen

（朗诵）
clear read aloud
Recitation

朋友！你到过黄河吗？
friends you been before yellow river ?
Friends! Have you seen the Yellow River?

你渡过黄河吗？
you cross over yellow river ?
Have you crossed the Yellow River?

你还记得河上的船夫，
you still remember river on the boat men
Do you remember scenes of the boatmen
stake their lives with frightening big waves startling waves

If you have forgotten,

then listen!

Chorus

Hai-yo! Row!

Row, forge ahead! Hai-yo!

1 惊涛骇浪: can also mean a situation or life full of perils
乌云哪，遮满天！
black clouds - cover fully sky
Stormy clouds veil the sky!

波涛哪，高如山！
surging big waves - high as mountains
Surging waves as high as mountains!

冷风哪，扑上脸！
cold winds - slap on faces
Cold winds slap our faces!

浪花哪，打进船！咳哟！
wave sprays - thrash into boat hai yo
Surfs crash into the boat!

伙伴哪，睁开眼！
partners comrades - open eyes
Fellow boatmen, keep a lookout!

舵手哪，把住腕！
helmsman - tightly hold wrist
Helmsman, hold firm!

当心哪，别偷懒！
watch out - do not slack off
Stay alert, do not slack off!

伙伴: partisans
拼命哪里，莫胆寒！

stake lives - do not be terrified
Fight for your lives, do not be afraid!

咳！划哟！

hai row yo
Hai! Row!

不怕那千丈波涛高如山！

not fear that thousand ten feet surging big waves high as mountains
Do not fear the mountainous waves!

行船好比上火线，

sailing boat is like going to front line
Boating on the Yellow River is like fighting at the front,

团结一心冲上前！咳！划哟！

group bind one heart charge on forward hai row yo
Unite and forge ahead! Hai! Row!

划哟，冲上前！咳哟！（大笑）哈哈哈

row yo charge on forward hai yo big laugh hahaha
Row, forge ahead! Hai-yo! Hahaha!

我们看见了河岸，

we see - river shore
The shore is in our view,
我们登上了河岸。

we step onto - river shore

now we have reached the shore.

心哪，安一安，

hearts - calm awhile calm

Hearts, calm down,

气哪，喘一喘。

breath - pant awhile pant

catch a breath.

回头来，再和那黄河怒涛

turn around come again with that yellow river raging waves

Soon, we will again risk our lives fighting those raging waves!

决一死战！咳哟！划哟！哎！

do or die hai yo row yo hey

Hai-yo! Row! Hey!
啊！朋友！黄河以它英雄的气魄，
Ah! My friends! The heroic spirit of the Yellow River
出现在亚洲的原野，
dominate the plains of Asia,
它表现出我们民族的精神，
representing the vigor of our nation,
伟大而又坚强！
mighty and strong!
这里，我们向着黄河，
Here, facing the Yellow River,
唱出我们的赞歌。

sing out our - praise song
we sing our song of praise.

(独唱)

single sing
Solo

我站在高山之巅，

I stand on the mountain peak,

望黄河滚滚，奔向东南。
gazing at the Yellow River rolling towards the southeast.

金涛澎湃，掀起万丈狂澜；
golden big waves surge rise up ten thousand ten feet
violent swelling waters
Golden waves surge, lofty waters rise;

浊流宛转，结成九曲连环；
muddy swirling rapids mark its sinuous course
muddy currents winding turning form nine bends linked loops
muddy swirling rapids mark its sinuous course

---

3 万丈: lofty
4 九曲: zigzag
从昆仑山下，奔向黄海之边；
from Kunlun mountain down rushing towards yellow sea - side
down from the Kunlun mountain, rushing toward the Yellow Sea;

把中原大地，
making central plains expansive land
dividing the central plains of China

劈成南北两面。
cut become south north two sides
into southern and northern parts.

啊，黄河！你是中华民族的摇篮！
ah yellow River you are China people race ‘s cradle
Ah, Yellow River! You are the cradle of the Chinese people!

五千年的古国文化，
five thousand years - ancient nation culture

从你这儿发源：
from you here develop origin
You have nurtured five thousand years of ancient culture;

多少英雄的故事，在你的身边扮演！
how many heroic - tales at your body side played acted
many heroic tales have taken place on your shores!
Ah, Yellow River! You are mighty and strong,

Ah, Yellow River! You are mighty and strong,

Ah, Yellow River! You are mighty and strong,

Ah, Yellow River! You are mighty and strong,

Ah, Yellow River! You are mighty and strong,

Ah, Yellow River! You are mighty and strong,

Ah, Yellow River! You are mighty and strong,

Ah, Yellow River! You are mighty and strong,

Ah, Yellow River! You are mighty and strong,

Ah, Yellow River! You are mighty and strong,

Ah, Yellow River! You are mighty and strong,

Ah, Yellow River! You are mighty and strong,
Our people’s mighty spirit

will flourish under your nurture!

From your example, our homeland’s heroic sons and daughters will learn
to become just as mighty and strong as you!
[3] 黄河之水天上来

Yellow River's Water from Heaven Descends

（配乐诗朗诵）

Incidental music to recited poetry

黄河！我们要学习你的榜样。

Yellow River! We want to learn

像你一样地伟大坚强。

to become as mighty and strong as you!

这里，我们要在你面前，献上一首诗。

Here, before you, we offer a poem,

配乐: incidental music
倾诉我们民族的灾难。

倾诉我们民族的灾难

pour out tell our people race's calamities hardships

confiding in you the catastrophes suffered by our people.

（朗诵，三弦伴奏）

朗 诵 三 弦 伴 奏

clear read aloud three strings accompany tune

Recitation, accompanied by the Sanxian

黄河之水天上来，

yellow river's water, descended from heaven –

排山倒海，汹涌澎湃，

topple mountain overturn sea tumultuous rush forth sound of waves

sweeping, surging forward;

奔腾叫啸，使人肝胆破裂！

rush gallop cries hiss cause people's liver gall break split

the cries of the hissing river shatter our courage!

它是中国的大动脉，在它的周身，

it is China's major artery, rapidly circulating

灾难: disaster, catastrophe

排山倒海: sweeping

澎湃: surge

奔腾: (of waves) to surge forward

肝胆: courage
奔流^{13} 着民族的热血。

红日高照，水上金光迸裂。

月出东山，河面银光似雪。

它震动着，跳跃着，

像一条飞龙，

日行万里^{14}，注入浩浩的东海。

---

^{13}奔流: flow at great speed
^{14}里: Chinese mile (500 meters, or c. 1640 feet)
虎口^{15}龙门^{16}，摆成天上的奇阵^{17}；

From Hukou to Longmen, strange battle formations are displayed in the sky;

人人，不敢在它身边挨近；

people do not dare lean close to the riverside;

就是毒龙，

even if poisonous dragon

even a poisonous dragon

也不敢在水底存身。

does not dare dwell on the river bottom.

从十里外，

From ten miles away,

仰望着它的浓烟上升；

see the thick plumes of smoke rising upwards,

^{15}虎口 (壶口/Hukou/Kettle Mouth) is a gushing waterfall on the Yellow River. It is also where the poet Guang Weiran was so impressed by the force of the river that he was inspired to write the text to this cantata.

^{16}龙门 (Dragon Gate) is downstream from 虎口 and is the narrowest (hence the swiftest) part of the Yellow River in that region. It is nearly impossible to navigate from Hukou to Longmen. That part of the river is like a dragon that cannot be tamed.

^{17}From 虎口 to 龙门, the river is flanked by mountain ridges so high that it looks as though the troops are in some strange formation in the sky.
like burning entire sky large fire
as from a large blazing fire, blanketing the entire sky;

cause you feel to fervent blood boil rise
this cauldron brings our lifeblood to a rolling boil;

in fact, when the cold air closes in,

your whole body trembles.

The river groans and quakes,

emitting the power of a billion horses, shaking the earth's crust
冲散了天上的乌云。
wash out scatter - sky above 's dark clouds
and dispersing the dark clouds in the sky.

啊，黄河！河中之王！
Ah, Yellow River! The king of rivers!

它是一匹疯狂的野兽啊，
it is a mad ferocious - wild beast -
When enraged, it is a mad wild beast,

发起怒来，赛过千万条毒蟒；
develop rise anger come surpasses thousand ten thousand
worse than ten million poisonous pythons;

它要作浪兴波，
it wants to make waves stir storms
making waves, stirring up storms,

冲破人间的堤防^{18}；
collide break human world 's dike protection
and wrecking the people's embankment;

^{18} 堤防：embankment
于是，黄河两岸，

因此，on both shores of the Yellow River，

遭到可怕的灾殃：

suffered terrible - disasters calamities
terrible calamities took place:

它吞食了两岸的人民，

the river devoured people on both shores，

它吞食了两岸的人民，

it devoured - two shores - people

削平了数百里外的村庄，

destroyed leveled - many hundred miles surrounding - villages farms
it leveled over hundreds of miles of villages，

使千百万同胞，

cause thousand hundred ten thousand fellow countrymen
causing tens of thousands of fellow countrymen to be exiled

扶老携幼，流亡他乡，

escorting elderly carrying young exiled alien land
into an unfamiliar land, old and young，

19 The 1887 flood killed an estimated 900,000 to 2 million people, and the 1931 flood claimed 1 to 3.7 million lives. On May 11, 1938, Nationalist Chinese troops under the command of General Chiang Kai-Shek deliberately broke levees along the Yellow River in an attempt to stop the advancing Japanese troops. Approximately 500,000 to 900,000 people perished in the resulting flood.
struggling at starvation line on death line on
struggling on the brink of starvation, hanging on the verge of death.

nowadays two shores ' people
Today, people on the two shores

once again suffer unprecedented calamities:

pirates from the East are letting out murderous fumes of death

let out murderous poisonous flames
on Asia's level plains;

starvation and death are like the cachectic fever,
在黄河的两岸传染。

啊，黄河！

啊，黄河！

你抚养着我们民族的成长：

你亲眼看见，

这五千年的古国遭受过多少灾难！

自古以来，在黄河边上

on yellow river two shores spread infect

spreading infection on the shores of the Yellow River.

Ah, Yellow River!

you nurture our people's growth:

you have seen with your own eyes

the calamities that this ancient nation has suffered for five thousand years!

Since ancient times,
unfolded numerous bloody battles have unfolded on the shores of the Yellow River.

Piles of white bones fill your body,

and your surface is stained dark red with blood!

Yet, you have never seen

ruthlessness like that unleashed today;

nor have you seen the Yellow Emperor's sons and grandsons

mobilizing the entire country as they do today.

21 黄帝 is a well known ancestor of the Chinese race.
在黄河两岸，在黄河两岸，在黄河两岸，在黄河两岸，

at yellow river two shores

On the shores of the Yellow River,

游击兵团，野战兵团，

guerilla warfare corps field operations corps

scores of guerilla fighters and field units

星罗棋布，散布在敌人后面；

stars cover chess spread scattered spread at enemy's rear

are scattered like stars, spread out like chess pieces behind the enemy;

在万山丛中，在青纱帐里，

in ten thousand mountains clusters midst in green muslin tents within

from within the green muslin tents, valiant battles are launched

展开了英勇的血战！

launched started - brave valiant - bloody battles

amid the cluster of ten thousand mountains!

啊，黄河！

ah yellow river

Ah, Yellow River!

22 星罗棋布：spread all over the place
你记载着我们民族的年代：
你记载着我们民族的年代
你记载着我们民族的年代
你记载着我们民族的年代

You record our people's history through the dynasties;

古往今来，在你的身边
古往今来
古往今来
古往今来

from ancient to present,

兴起了多少英雄豪杰！
兴起了多少英雄豪杰
兴起了多少英雄豪杰
兴起了多少英雄豪杰

many heroes rose along your banks!

但是，你从不曾看见
但是你从不曾看见
但是你从不曾看见
但是你从不曾看见

However, never before have you seen

四万万同胞，像今天这样
四万万同胞
四万万同胞
四万万同胞

four hundred million fellow countrymen

团结得如钢似铁：
团结得如钢似铁
团结得如钢似铁
团结得如钢似铁

united like steel and iron;

千百万民族英雄，
千百万民族英雄
千百万民族英雄
千百万民族英雄

hundreds of thousands of heroes
为了保卫祖国
为了保卫祖国为了保卫祖国为了保卫祖国为了保卫祖国
in order to defend guard forefathers country
spill their blood to

洒尽他们的热血；
洒尽他们的热血洒尽他们的热血洒尽他们的热血洒尽他们的热血；；；
spilled all their fervent blood
defend the country of their forefathers;

英雄的故事，像黄河怒涛，
英雄的故事像黄河怒涛英雄的故事像黄河怒涛英雄的故事像黄河怒涛，
heroes' tales like yellow river raging waves
the brave and honorable tales of these heroes are your raging waves,

山岳一般地壮烈！
山岳一般地壮烈山岳一般地壮烈山岳一般地壮烈山岳一般地壮烈！
kops characteristic of strong intense
strong, intense, and awesome!

啊，黄河！
啊黄河啊黄河啊黄河
ah yellow river
Ah, Yellow River!

你可曾听见，在你的身旁
你可曾听见在你的身旁你可曾听见在你的身旁你可曾听见在你的身旁
you have ever before heard at your body side
Have you ever heard

响彻了胜利的凯歌？
响彻了胜利的凯歌响彻了胜利的凯歌响彻了胜利的凯歌响彻了胜利的凯歌？
sounds penetrating - victory's triumphant songs
victory's triumphant songs sung on your shores?
你可曾看见，祖国的铁军

you have ever before seen forefathers country’s iron army

Have you ever seen the iron army of our home country

在敌人的后方，

at enemy’s rear direction

ambush the enemy,

布成了地网天罗？

spread to form earth net sky cover

spread out like a net that covers both earth and sky?

他们把守着黄河两岸，

they guard yellow river two shores

They guard your shores,

不让敌人渡过！

not letting enemy cross over

preventing the enemy from crossing over!

他们要把疯狂的敌人

they want to take mad ferocious enemy

Their goal is to bury the ferocious enemy

埋葬在滚滚的黄河！

bury in billowing yellow river

beneath your billowing waves!
啊，黄河！

你奔流着，怒吼着，

你怒吼着，叫啸着，

向着祖国的原野，

响应我们伟大民族的胜利的凯歌！
向着祖国的原野，
向着祖 国 的 原 野
facing towards forefathers country ’s level plains
Roar out loud, across our homeland’s plains,

响应我们伟大民族的胜利的凯歌！
响应 我们 伟大 民 族 的 胜利 的 凯 歌
responding to our mighty people race ’s victory ’s triumphant song
the triumphant song to honor our people’s great victory!
我们是黄河的儿女，

we are yellow river’s sons daughters

We are sons and daughters of the Yellow River,

我们艰苦奋斗，一天天地接近胜利！

who arduously strive toward victory with each passing day!

但是，敌人一天不消灭，

However enemy one day not destroyed

But each day that the enemy is not destroyed,

我们便一天不能安身！

is one more day that we cannot rest.

不信，你听听，

if you doubt this,
河东民众痛苦的呻吟。

then listen to the painful groans of the multitudes of people on the river to the east.

（合唱）

黄水奔流向东方，

Yellow water, rushing eastward,

河流万里长。

flowing for ten thousand miles.

水又急，浪又高，

Swift waters, high waves,

奔腾叫啸如虎狼。

racing rapids sound like the cries of tigers and wolves.

开河渠，筑堤防，

Open canals and build embankments,
河东千里成平壤。

麦苗儿肥啊，豆花儿香，

男女老少喜洋洋。

自从鬼子来，百姓遭了殃！

奸淫烧杀，一片凄凉：

扶老携幼，四处逃亡：

丢掉了爹娘，回不了家乡！

\[23\] 四处: all over the place
黄水奔流日夜忙，
妻离子散，天各一方！

yellow waters rush along day and night,
as families are torn apart!
Musical Dialogue on the River Bank

Recitation

Wives separated, children scattered, sky each a direction
Families torn apart, husbands, children and parents!

Will we forever be refugees?

Listen, as two villagers dialogue on the Yellow River's bank.

(A) Zhang No. 3, let me ask you,
你的家乡在哪里？
your hometown at where
Where is your hometown?

（乙）我的家，在山西，
my home at Shanxi
B: My home is in Shaanxi,

过河还有三百里。
cross river still have three hundred miles
three hundred miles from the river.

（甲）我问你，在家里，
I ask you at home in
A: Let me ask you, in your hometown,

种田还是做生意？
plant fields or do business
did you farm the land or trade？

（乙）拿锄头，耕田地，种的高粱和小米。
held hoe plowed fields plant - sorghum and millets
B: I held the hoe, plowed the fields, planted sorghum and millets.

（甲）为什么，到此地，
why come this place
A: Why then are you here,
河边流浪受孤凄？

wandering the bank, lonely and sorrowful?

（乙）痛心事，莫提起，

B: Please don't bring up painful matters,

家破人亡无消息。

my home was destroyed and I know not the fate of my family.

（甲）张老三，莫伤悲，

A: Zhang No. 3, don't be sad,

我的命运不如你！

my fate is worse than yours!

（乙）为什么，王老七，你的家乡在何地？

B: Why, Wang No. 7, where is your hometown?

（甲）在东北，做生意，

A: I used to do business in the northeast;
家乡八年无消息。

八 年 无 消 息
eight long years I've had no news from home.

（乙）这么说，我和你，

B: All this said, you and I,

都是有家不能回！

all have homes not able to return
both have homes we can’t return to!

（甲/乙合唱）

A & B duet

仇和恨，在心里，

enmity and hatred at heart inside
Within our hearts, enmity and hatred

奔腾如同黄河水！

rush gallop like yellow river water
swirl like the rapids of the Yellow River!

黄河边，定主意，咱们一同打回去！

On the Yellow River’s bank, let us both resolve to fight back!
为国家，当兵去，

For our country, we will become soldiers,

太行山上打游击！

go up Taihang mountain to fight as guerillas!

从今后，我和你，

From this day, you and I

一同打回老家去！

together will fight to regain our homeland!
[6] 黄河怨

黄河怨
yellow river lament

Yellow River Lament

（朗诵）

朗 诵

clear read aloud

Recitation

朋友！我们要打回老家去！

朋友

we

要

打

回

老

家

go

friends

want to

fight

regain

old

homes

Friends! We will fight and regain our homeland!

老家已经太不成话了！

老家

已经

太

不成话

old homes already too disheveled

Our country is in such disarray!

谁没有妻子儿女，

谁

没

有

妻子

儿女

who

does not

have

wife

son

daughter

Can any man with wife and children

谁能忍受敌人的欺凌？

谁

能

忍

受

敌人

的

欺凌

who

can

endure

bear

enemy’s

humiliation

bear the enemy’s humiliation?

亲爱的同胞们啊，你听听，

亲爱的

同胞们

啊

你

听听

dearest

compatriots

- you

listen

Dear compatriots,
一个妇人悲惨的歌声。

听一个妇人的悲惨的歌声。

（独唱）

听一个妇人的悲惨的歌声。

（独唱）

听一个妇人的悲惨的歌声。

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听一个妇人的悲惨的歌声。

（独唱）

听一个妇人的悲惨的歌声。

（独唱）

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（独唱）

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（独唱）

听一个妇人的悲惨的歌声。

（独唱）

听一个妇人的悲惨的歌声。

（独唱）

听一个妇人的悲惨的歌声。

（独唱）

听一个妇人的悲惨的歌声。
命啊，这样苦！生活啊，这样难！
命 呀 这样 苦 生活 呀 这样 难
fate oh so bitter life oh so hard
Oh fate, so bitter! Oh life, so hard!

鬼子啊，你这样没心肝25！
鬼子 呀 你 这样 没 心 肝
devils oh you so no heart liver
My enemy, you have no conscience!

宝贝啊，你死得这样惨！
宝贝 呀 你 死得 这样 惨
precious child oh you died so horribly
My precious child, you died so horribly!

我和你无仇又无怨，
我 和 你 无 仇 又 无 怨
me and you no hatred also no grudges
There was no hatred or grudge between us,

偏让我无颜偷生在人间！
偏 让 我 无 颜 偷生 在 人间
still let me no name existence in world
yet you left me to a nameless existence in this world!

狂风啊，你不要叫喊！
狂 风 呀 你 不要 叫 喊
fierce wind oh you do not call shout
Oh wind, do not howl!

乌云啊，你不要躲闪，
乌 云 呀 你 不要 躲闪
dark clouds oh you do not hide
Oh dark clouds, do not hide!

25. 心肝: conscience
黄河的水啊，你不要呜咽！
黄  河    的   水   啊  你   不要   呜咽
yellow  river  's  water   oh  you   do  not  whimper
Oh Yellow River, do not whimper!

今晚，我要投在你的怀中，
今  晚  我  要  投  在  你  的  怀  中
tonight  I  will  throw  in  your  bosom  into
Tonight, I will throw myself into your embrace,

洗清我的千重愁来万重冤！
洗  清  我  的  千重  愁  来
washing  clear  my  thousand-fold  sorrows  come
万重  冤
ten  thousand-fold  injustice
to  wash  away  my  myriad  sorrows  and  sufferings!

丈夫啊，在天边！地下啊，再团圆！
丈夫  啊  在  天  边  地  下  啊  再  团圆
husband  oh  at  sky  edge  earth  below  oh  again  reunite
Oh husband, you’re as far away as the the horizon!
We  shall  reunite  again  below  the  earth!

你要想想妻子儿女死得这样惨！
你  要  想想  妻子  儿  女  死得  这样  惨
you  will  think  of  wife  son  daughter  died  this  tragically
Think  how  your  wife  and  children  died  so  tragically!

你要替我把这笔血债清算！
你  要  替  我  把  这  血  债  清算
you  must  on  behalf  of  me  to  this  blood  debt  settle
You  must  settle  this  blood  debt  for  me!
You must have this debt repaid for me!
保卫黄河
defend yellow river
Defend the Yellow River

（朗诵）
clear read aloud
Recitation

但是，中华民族的儿女啊，
however China people race 's sons daughters -
Sons and daughters of China,

谁愿意像猪羊一般，任人宰割？
who willing as pigs sheep the same let people slaughter slice
who is willing to be slaughtered like pigs and sheep?

我们要抱定必胜的决心，
we must hold firm certainty victory -
We must resolve to be victorious,

保卫黄河！保卫华北！保卫全中国！
defend yellow river defend China north defend all of China
to defend the Yellow River! To defend northern China! To defend all of China!

（多声部合唱）
multiple voice parts combine sing
Chorus
风在吼，马在叫，
wind is howling horses are neighing
The wind howls, horses neigh,

黄河在咆哮！
yellow river is roaring
the Yellow River roars!

河西山冈万丈高，
river west hill ten thousand ten feet high
To the west stands a towering hill,

河东河北，高粱熟了。
river east river north sorghum ripened already
East and north of the river, sorghum has ripened.

万山丛中，抗日英雄真不少！
ten thousand mountain clusters amidst resistance Japanese
Amid thousands of mountain clusters are many heroes!

青纱帐里，游击健儿逞英豪！
green muslin tents inside guerilla warfare valiant fighter boast heroes
Inside green muslin tents there are valiant guerilla warriors!
端起了土枪洋枪，
carrying local guns foreign guns
Armed with local guns and foreign-made guns,

挥动着大刀长矛，
waving large knives and long spears,

保卫家乡！保卫黄河！
defending home village defending yellow river
they defend our hometowns! Defend the Yellow River!

保卫华北！保卫全中国！
defending China north defending all of China
Defend northern China! Defend all of China!
Roar, Yellow River!

Listen, the Pearl River roars angrily!

The Yangtze River is raging on!

Ah! Yellow River!

Raise up your angry waves, let loose your wild bellows,

sound the battle cry for all of China's oppressed people,

---

26 珠江: a river in southeast China that flows into the South China Sea.
发出你战斗的警号吧！

let out your battle - warning signal

sound the battle cry!

（合唱）

combine sing

Chorus

怒吼吧，黄河！

angrily roar - yellow river

Roar, Yellow River!

掀起你的怒涛，发出你的狂叫！

raise up your angry waves let out your maniacal calls

Raise up your angry waves, let loose your wild bellows!

全世界劳动的人民，发出战斗的警号！

whole world laboring people let out battle - warning signal

Workers across the land cry out for battle!

啊 —— 五千年的民族，

ah five thousand years of people race

For such an ancient nation to suffer so much!
铁蹄下的民众，苦痛受不了！

铁蹄 under - people multitudes bitter pain bear unable

Our cruelly oppressed people can no longer bear the torment!

但是，新中国已经破晓；

但是新中国已经破晓

however new China already dawning

But for China, a new day is already dawning;

四万万五千万民众已经团结起来，

四万万五千万民众已经团结起来

four hundred million fifty million people multitudes already

四万万五千万民众已经团结起来，

four hundred and fifty million people have united,

誓死同把国土保！

誓死同把国土保

vow die together - country soil defend

pledging their lives to defend this soil!

你听：松花江在呼号，

你听松花江在呼号

you listen Songhua river is calling signaling

Listen: the Songhua River is calling,

黑龙江在呼号：

黑龙江在呼号

Heilong river is calling signaling

the Heilong River is calling;

27 铁蹄: cruel oppression
珠江发出了英勇的叫啸；

the mighty Pearl River roars its defiance;

扬子江上，燃遍了抗日的烽火！

all along the Yangtze River, beacon lights are burning!

啊！黄河！怒吼吧！

Ah! Yellow River! Roar on!

向着全中国受难的人民，

To all of China’s suffering people,

发出战斗的号角！

sound the battle cry!

向着全世界劳动的人民，

To laborers all over the world,

发出战斗的号角！

sound the battle cry!
APPENDIX B: TRANSLITERATION

International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) Pronunciation Guide

Below lists the IPA symbols used for the sounds of the Mandarin characters in the libretto.

**VOWELS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPA</th>
<th>Examples in English except where indicated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[a]</td>
<td>French “à”; German “Wahn”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ai]</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[au]</td>
<td>Now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ε]</td>
<td>French “des”; Italian “ché”; German “den”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ε]</td>
<td>Net</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[θ]</td>
<td>Her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[i]</td>
<td>Seed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[y]</td>
<td>The vowel produced when buzzing on “z” but without the buzz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[o]</td>
<td>French “faux”; German “Sohn”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ou]</td>
<td>Know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ɔ]</td>
<td>Not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[u]</td>
<td>Boot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[y]</td>
<td>French “tu”; German “kühl”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## CONSONANTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IPA</th>
<th>Examples in English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[b]</td>
<td>Bat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[d]</td>
<td>Dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ʤ]</td>
<td>Joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[dz]</td>
<td>Kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[f]</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[g]</td>
<td>Gut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[h]</td>
<td>Hot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[hw]</td>
<td>What</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[j]</td>
<td>Yam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[k]</td>
<td>Kid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[l]</td>
<td>Leg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[m]</td>
<td>Map</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[n]</td>
<td>Nut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ŋ]</td>
<td>Sing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[p]</td>
<td>Pod</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[r]</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[s]</td>
<td>Sun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ʃ]</td>
<td>Shy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[t]</td>
<td>Tip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[ts]</td>
<td>Dots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[tʃ]</td>
<td>Chat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[w]</td>
<td>Wall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
《黄河大合唱》Yellow River Cantata

黄 河 大 合 唱
huáng hé dà hé chàng
hwâŋ hә da hә tʃaŋ

[1] 黄河船夫曲 Song of the Yellow River Boatmen

黄 河 船 夫 曲
huáng hé chuán fū qǔ
hwâŋ hә tʃwan fu tʃy

（朗诵）Recitation

朗 诵
lǎng sòng
laŋ soŋ

朋友！你到过黄河吗？Friends! Have you seen the Yellow River?

朋 友 你 到 过 黄 河 吗
péng yǒu nǐ dào guò huáng hé mā
pәŋ joʊ ni daʊ gwɔ hwaŋ hә ma

你渡过黄河吗？Have you crossed the Yellow River?

你 渡 过 黄 河 吗
nǐ dù guò huáng hé mā
ni du gwɔ hwaŋ hә ma

你还记得河上的船夫，Do you remember scenes of the boatmen

你 还 记 得 河 上 的 船 夫
nǐ hái jì dé hé shàng dè chuán fū
ni hә jì dә hә jәn dә tʃwan fu

拼着性命和惊涛骇浪

pīn zhe xìng mìng hé jīng tāo hài làng
pin ʤә xiŋ miŋ hә dziŋ taʊ hә lanŋ

1 惊涛骇浪: can also mean a situation or life full of perils
如果你已经忘掉的话，If you have forgotten,
如果 你 已 经 忘 掉 的 话
ru guo ni yi jing wangle diao de hua

那么，你听吧！then listen!
那 么 你 听 吧
na me ni ting ba

（合唱） Chorus
合 唱
he chang

咳哟！划哟！Hai-yo! Row!
咳 哟 划 哟
hai yo hua yo

划哟，冲上前！咳哟！ Row, forge ahead! Hai-yo!
划 哟 冲 上 前 咳 哟
hua yo chong shang qian hai yo

乌云，遮满天！Stormy clouds veil the sky!
乌 云 哪 遮 满 天
wu yun na zhe man tian

波涛，高如山！Surging waves as high as mountains!
波 涛 哪 高 如 山
бо tao na gao ru shan

冷风，扑上脸！Cold winds slap our faces!
冷 风 哪 扑 上 脸
leng feng na pu shang lian
浪花哪，打进船！咳哟！Surfs crash into the boat!

伙伴哪，睁开眼！Fellow boatmen, keep a lookout!

舵手哪，把住腕！Helmsman, hold firm!

当心哪，别偷懒！Stay alert, do not slack off!

拼命哪，莫胆寒！Fight for your lives, do not be afraid!

咳！划哟！Hai! Row!

不怕那千丈波涛高如山！Do not fear the mountainous waves!

行船好比上火线，Boating on the Yellow River is like fighting at the front,
团结一心冲上前！咳！划哟！Unite and forge ahead! Hai! Row!

划哟，冲上前！咳哟！（大笑）哈哈哈哈 Row, forge ahead! Hai-yo! Hahahaha!

我们看见了河岸，The shore is in our view,

我们登上了河岸。now we have reached the shore.

心哪，安一安，Hearts, calm down,

气哪，喘一喘。catch a breath.

回头来，再和那黄河怒涛 Soon, we will again risk our lives

决一死战！咳哟！划哟！哎！fighting those raging waves! Hai-yo! Row! Hey!

团结一心冲上前！咳！划哟！Unite and forge ahead! Hai! Row!

划哟，冲上前！咳哟！（大笑）哈哈哈哈 Row, forge ahead! Hai-yo! Hahahaha!
[2] **Ode to the Yellow River**

### 黄河颂 huáng hé sòng

黄 河 颂
huáng hé sòng

### （朗诵）Recitation 啊！朋友！Ah! My friends!

朗 诵 啊 朋 友
lǎng sòng à péng yǒu

### 黄河以它英雄的气魄，The heroic spirit of the Yellow River

黄 河 以 它 英 雄 的 气 魄
huáng hé yǐ tā yīng xióng de qì pò

### 出现在亚洲的原野，dominates the plains of Asia

出 现 在 亚 洲 的 原 野
chū xiàn zài yà zhōu de yuán yě

### 它表现出我们民族的精神，representing the vigor of our nation,

它 表 现 出 我 们 民 族 的 精 神
tā biǎo xiàn chū wǒ mén mín zú de jīng shén

### 伟大而又坚强！mighty and strong!

伟 大 而 又 坚 强！
wěi dà ér yòu jiān qiáng

### 这里，我们向着黄河，Here, facing the Yellow River,

这 里 我 们 向 着 黄 河
zhè lǐ wǒ mén xiàng zhe huáng hé

---

- 翻译：李周平
- 校对：王明

---

- 黄：huáng
- 河：hé
- 颂：sòng
- 啊：à
- 朋：péng
- 友：yǒu
- 英：yīng
- 雄：xióng
- 气：qì
- 魄：pò
- 亚：yà
- 洲：zhōu
- 的：de
- 原：yuán
- 野：yě
- 民：mín
- 族：zú
- 的：de
- 精：jīng
- 神：shén
- 伟：wěi
- 大：dà
- 而：ér
- 坚：jiān
- 强：qiáng
- 这：zhè
- 里：lǐ
- 我：wǒ
- 们：mén
- 向：xiàng
- 着：zhe
- 黄：huáng
- 河：hé
- 这：zhè
- 里：lǐ
- 我：wǒ
- 们：mén
- 乡：xiāng
唱出我们的赞歌。

we sing our song of praise.

（独唱）

Solo

我站在高山之巅，I stand on the mountain peak,

望黄河滚滚，奔向东南。

gazing at the Yellow River rolling towards the southeast.

金涛澎湃，掀起万丈狂澜；

Golden waves surge, lofty waters rise;

浊流宛转，结成九曲连环；

muddy swirling rapids form loops on its sinuous course;

从昆仑山下，down from the Kunlun mountain,

奔向黄海之边；

rushing toward the Yellow Sea;

3 万丈: lofty
4 九曲: zigzag
把中原大地，dividing the central plains of China
把中 原大 地
bǎ zhōng yuán dà dì

劈成南北两面。啊，黄河！into southern and northern parts. Ah, Yellow River!
劈 成 南 北 两 面 啊 黄 河
pī chéng nán běi liǎng miàn à huáng hé

你是中华民族的摇篮！
你 是 中 华 民 族 的 摇 篮
nǐ shì zhōng huá mín zú de yáo lán

你有五千年的古国文化；
你 有 五 千 年 的 古 国 文 化
nǐ yǒu wǔ qiān nián de gǔ guó wén huà

从你这儿发源；
从 你 这 儿 发 源
cóng nǐ zhè ér fā yuán

多少英雄的故事，在你的身边扮演！
多 少 英 雄 的 故 事 在 你 的 身 边 扮 演
duō shǎo yīng xióng de gù shi zài nǐ de shēn biān bàn yǎn

啊，黄河！你是伟大坚强，
啊 黄 河 你 是 伟 大 坚 强
à huáng hé nǐ shì wěi dà jiān qiáng

You are the cradle of the Chinese people!
You are the cradle of the Chinese people!

You have nurtured five thousand years of ancient culture;
五 千 年 的 古 国 文 化
wǔ qiān nián de gǔ guó wén huà

From you this origin;
从 你 这 儿 发 源
cóng nǐ zhè ér fā yuán

Many heroic tales have taken place on your shores!
多 少 英 雄 的 故 事 在 你 的 身 边 扮 演
duō shǎo yīng xióng de gù shi zài nǐ de shēn biān bàn yǎn

Ah, Yellow River! You are mighty and strong,
Ah, Yellow River! You are mighty and strong,
像一个巨人，出现在亚洲平原之上，like a giant you appear on the plains of Asia,

xiàng yī gè jù rén

chū xiàn zài yà zhōu píng yuán zhī shàng

用你那英雄的体魄，using your heroic physique

yòng nǐ nà yīng xíng di tǐ pò

zhù chéng wǒ mén mín zú de píng zhàng

浩浩荡荡，向南北两岸，majestic, extending your arms like countless strips of iron

hào dàng xiàng nán běi liǎng àn

伸出千万条铁的臂膀，towards both northern and southern shores.

shēn chū qiān wàn tiáo tiě de bì bǎng

我们民族的伟大精神，Our people’s mighty spirit

wǒ mén mín zú de wěi dà jīng shén
将要在你的保育下，发扬滋长！will flourish under your nurture!
将要 在 你的 保 育 下
jiāng yào zài nǐ de bǎo yù xià
dzjaŋ jau dzəi ni di bau jy sja

发扬滋长
fā yáng zī zhǎng
fa jaŋ dzɣ dʒaŋ

我们祖国的英雄儿女，
From your example, our homeland's heroic sons and daughters
我们 祖 国 的 英 雄 儿 女
wǒ mén zǔ guó de yīng xióng ér nǚ
wo mən du gwɔ di iŋ sjoŋ ər ny

将要学习你的榜样， will learn
将要 学 习 你 的 榜 样
jiāng yào xué xí nǐ de bǎng yàng
dzjaŋ jau fhɛ si ni di baŋ jəŋ

像你一样的伟大坚强！to become just as mighty and strong as you!
像 你 一 样 的 伟 大 坚 强
xiàng nǐ yī yàng de wěi dà jiān qiáng
sjəŋ ni ji jaŋ di weɪ da dzjəŋ tʃəŋ
**[3] 黄河之水天上来**  **Yellow River’s Water from Heaven Descends**

黄 河 之 水 天 上 来
huáng hé zhī shuǐ tiān shàng lái

**（配乐7 诗朗诵）** Incidental music to recited poetry

配 乐 诗 朗 诵
pèi yuè shī lǎng sòng

（朗诵） Recitation 黄河！Yellow River!

朗 诵 黄 河
lǎng sòng huáng hé

**我们学习你的榜样， We want to learn**

我 们 要 学 习 你 的 榜 样
wǒ mén yào xué xí nǐ de bǎng yàng

像你一样地伟大坚强。to become as mighty and strong as you!

像 你 一 样 地 伟 大 坚 强
xiàng nǐ yī yàng de wěi dà jiān qiáng

**这里，我们要在你面前，献上一首诗，Here, before you, we offer a poem,**

这 里 我 们 要 在 你 面 前
zhè lǐ wǒ mén yào zài nǐ miàn qián

献 上 一 首 诗
xiàn shàng yī shǒu shī

---

7 配乐: incidental music
倾诉我们民族的灾难。confiding in you the catastrophes suffered by our people.

（朗诵，三弦伴奏）Recitation, accompanied by the Sanxian

黄河之水天上来，Yellow River's water, descended from heaven –

奔腾，使人肝胆破裂！the cries of the hissing river shatter our courage!

它是中国的大动脉，The river is China's major artery,

在它的周身，rapidly circulating

灾难: disaster, catastrophe
排山倒海: sweeping
澎湃: surge
肝胆: courage
奔流^{13} 着民族的热血。the people's lifeblood throughout the land.
bēn liú zhe mín zú de rè xuè
bәn lju ʤә min dә re ʃwɛ

红日高照，水上金光迸裂。The red sun shines high, its golden rays burst open from the surface of the water.
hóng rì gāo zhào shuǐ shàng jīn guāng bèng liè
hoŋ rɤ gaʊ ʤә ʃweɪʃә dә jɤi jәn ɡwɛ bәŋ ʃwɛ

月出东山，河面银光似雪。The moon rises over the mountains east, its silver beams on the river glimmer like snow.
yuè chū dōng shān hé miàn yín guāng sì xuě
jwɛ ʧu ʤә ʃweɪʃә ʃwɛ sɤ ʃwɛ

它震动着，跳跃着。The river shakes, and leaps,
tā zhèn dòng zhe tiào yuè zhe
ta ʤәn doŋ ʤә tjaʊ jwɛ ʤә

像一条飞龙，like a flying dragon,
xiàng yī tiáo fēi lóng
sjɑŋ ji tjaʊ fɛi lɒŋ

日行万里^{14}，注入浩浩的东海。traversing ten thousand miles each day, emptying into the vast eastern sea.
rì xíng wàn lǐ zhù rù hào de dōng hǎi
rɤ sjaŋ wan li ʤu ru hau hau dә dәŋ hәi

^{13}奔流: flow at great speed
^{14}里: Chinese mile (500 meters, or c. 1640 feet)
From Hukou to Longmen, strange battle formations are displayed in the sky:

人，不敢在它身边挨近； people do not dare lean close to the riverside;

也不敢在水底存身。 does not dare dwell on the river bottom.

从十里外，From ten miles away,

仰望着它的浓烟上升； see the thick plumes of smoke rising upwards,

虎口（或壶口）/Hukou is a gushing waterfall on the Yellow River. It is also where the poet Guang Weiran was so impressed by the force of the river that he was inspired to write the text to this cantata.

龙门 is downstream from 虎口 and is the narrowest (hence the swiftest) part of the Yellow River in that region. It is nearly impossible to navigate from hukou to longmen. That part of the river is like a dragon that cannot be tamed.

From 虎口 to 龙门，the river is flanked by mountain ridges so high that it looks as though the troops are in some strange formation in the sky.
象烧着漫天大火，as from a large blazing fire blanketing the entire sky;
象烧着漫天大火

使你感到热血沸腾；this cauldron brings our lifeblood to a rolling boil;
使你感到热血沸腾

其实，凉气逼来，in fact, when the cold air closes in,
其实凉气逼来

你会周身感到寒冷。your whole body trembles.
你会周身感到寒冷

它呻吟着，震荡着，The river groans and quakes,
它呻吟震荡着

发出十万万匹马力，emitting the power of a billion horses,
发出十万万匹马力

摇动了地壳，shaking the earth's crust
摇动了地壳

冲散了天上的乌云。and dispersing the dark clouds in the sky.
冲散了天上的乌云
Ah, Yellow River! The king of rivers!

Ah, Yellow River, the king of rivers!

It is a mad wild beast, when enraged.

When enraged, it is a mad wild beast,

Worse than ten million poisonous pythons;

Making waves, stirring up storms,

Making waves, stirring up storms,

And wrecking the people’s embankment;

And wrecking the people’s embankment;

Therefore, on both shores of the Yellow River,

Therefore, on both shores of the Yellow River,

18 堤防: embankment
遭到可怕的灾殃：terrible calamities took place:
zāo dào kě pà de zāi yǎng

它吞食了两岸的人民，the river devoured people on both shores,
tā tūn shí le liǎng àn de rén mín

削平了数百里外的村庄，it leveled over hundreds of miles of villages,
xuē píng le shù bǎi lǐ wài de cūn zhuāng

使千万同胞，causing tens of thousands of fellow countrymen to be exiled
shǐ qiān bǎi wàn tóng bāo

扶老携幼，流亡他乡，into an unfamiliar land, old and young,
fú lǎo xié yòu líu wáng tā xiāng

挣扎在饥饿线上，struggling on the brink of starvation,
zhēng zhá zài jī è xiàn shàng
dząŋ dʒa dzaɪ dʒi ә sjɛn jaŋ

死亡线上。 hanging on the verge of death.
sǐ wáng xiàn shàng
sv wanʃ sjɛn jaŋ
Today, people on the two shores

Once again suffer unprecedented calamities:

On Asia’s level plains, pirates from the East

are letting out murderous fumes of death;

starvation and death are like the cachectic fever,

---

19黑热病: a chronic disease occurring in India, China, Pakistan, the Mediterranean littoral, the Middle East, South and Central America, Asia, and Africa caused by parasites transmitted by the bite of a species of sandfly; the organisms grow and multiply in the lungs, then the parasites spread throughout the body.
在黄河的两岸传染。spreading infection on the shores of the Yellow River.

啊，黄河！ Ah, Yellow River!

你抚育着我们民族的成长： you nurture our people's growth:

你亲眼看见 you have seen with your own eyes

这五千年的古国 the calamities that this ancient nation

遭受过多少灾难！ has suffered for five thousand years!

自古以来，在黄河边上 Since ancient times, numerous bloody battles
展开了无数血战，have unfolded on the shores of the Yellow River.

让垒垒白骨，堆满你的河身，Piles of white bones fill your body,

殷殷鲜血，染红你的河面！and your surface is stained dark red with blood!

敌人残暴，如同今天这般；ruthlessness like that unleashed today;

也从没有看见，黄帝的子孙

nor have you seen the Yellow Emperor's sons and grandsons

20 黄帝 is a well known ancestor of the Chinese race.
像今天这样，开始了全国动员。mobilizing the entire country as they do today.

在黄河两岸，On the shores of the Yellow River,

游击兵团，野战兵团，scores of guerilla fighters and field units

星罗棋布21， are scattered like stars, spread out like chess pieces

散布在敌人后面： behind the enemy;

在万山丛中，在青纱帐里，

from within the green muslin tents, valiant battles are launched

---

21星罗棋布: spread all over the place
展开了英勇的血战！valiant battles are launched!

zhǎn kāi le yīng yǒng de xuè zhàn
dǎn kǎi lè jīng jiōng de jiān
dǎn kǎi lè jīng jiōng de jiān

啊，黄河！Ah, Yellow River!

à huáng hé
a hwaŋ hә

你记载着我们民族的年代：You record our people’s history through the dynasties;

nǐ jì zǎi zhe wǒ mén mín zú de nián dài
ni dzi dzai dzә wo mәn min dzu de njɛn daɪ

古往今来，在你的身边 from ancient to present,

gǔ wǎng jīn lái zài nǐ de shēn biān
gu waŋ dzin laɪ dzaɪ ni de jɛn bjɛn

但，你从不曾看见 But, never before have you seen

dàn shì nǐ cóng bú céng kàn jiàn
dan ʃɤ ni tsoŋ bu tsәŋ kan dzjɛn

但是，你从不曾看见 But, never before have you seen

dàn shì nǐ cóng bú céng kàn jiàn
dan ʃɤ ni tsoŋ bu tsәŋ kan dzjɛn

四万万同胞，像今天这样 four hundred million fellow countrymen

sì wàn wàn tóng bāo xiàng jīn tiān zhè yàng svә wәn wәn toŋ bau sjәn zin tjɛn dzә jaŋ
团结得如钢似铁；united like steel and iron;
团结得如钢似铁；
团结得如钢似铁；
团结得如钢似铁；

千百万民族英雄， hundreds of thousands of heroes
千百万民族英雄，
千百万民族英雄，
千百万民族英雄，

为了保卫祖国 spill their blood to
为了保卫祖国
为了保卫祖国
为了保卫祖国

洒尽他们的热血；defend the country of their forefathers;
洒尽他们的热血；
洒尽他们的热血；
洒尽他们的热血；

英雄的故事，像黄河怒涛，
the brave and honorable tales of these heroes are like your raging waves –

山岳一般地壮烈！ strong, intense, and awesome!
山岳一般地壮烈！
山岳一般地壮烈！
山岳一般地壮烈！

啊，黄河！ Ah, Yellow River!
啊，黄河！
啊，黄河！
啊，黄河！

你可曾听见，在你的身旁 Have you ever heard
你可曾听见，在你的身旁
你可曾听见，在你的身旁
你可曾听见，在你的身旁
响彻了胜利的凯歌？ victory's triumphant songs sung on your shores？

你可曾看见，祖国的铁军 Have you ever seen the iron army of our home country

在敌人的后方，ambush the enemy,

布成了地网天罗 spread out like a net that covers both earth and sky?

他们把守着黄河两岸， They guard your shores,

不让敌人渡过！ preventing the enemy from crossing over!

他们要把疯狂的敌人 Their goal is to bury the ferocious enemy

埋葬在滚滚的黄河！ beneath your billowing waves!
啊，黄河！ Ah, Yellow River!

你奔流着，怒吼着， You rush and roar,

你怒吼着，叫啸着， Your deafening roar

响应我们伟大民族的胜利的凯歌！

a triumphant song to honor our people's great victory!
向着祖国的原野，Roar out loud, across our homeland's plains,

响应我们伟大民族的胜利的凯歌！
the triumphant song to honor our people’s great victory!

xiàng zhe zǔ guó de yuán yě
xiǎng yìng wǒ mén wěi dà mín zú
de shèng lì de kǎi gē
我们是黄河的儿女，We are sons and daughters of the Yellow River,

我们艰苦奋斗，一天天地接近胜利！

但是，敌人一天不消灭，But each day that the enemy is not destroyed,

不信，你听听，If you doubt this,
河东民众痛苦的呻吟。
then listen to the painful groans of the multitudes of people on the river to the east.

河 东 民 众 痛 苦 的 呻 吟
hé dōng mín zhòng tòng kǔ de shēn yín

（合唱） Chorus
合 唱
hé chàng

河流万 万 万 万 流万十千里长
hé liú wàn lǐ cháng

水又急，浪又高，Swift waters, high waves,
水 又 急 浪 又 高
shuǐ yòu jí làng yòu gāo

奔腾叫啸如虎狼。racing rapids sound like the cries of tigers and wolves.
奔 腾 叫 啸 如 虎 狼
bēn téng jiào xiào rú hǔ láng

开河渠，筑堤防，Open canals and build embankments,
开 河 渠 筑 堤 防
kāi hé qú zhù dī fáng

河东千里成平壤。for to the east lies level soil
河 东 千 里 成 平 塌
hé dōng qiān lǐ chéng píng rǎng
麦苗儿肥啊，豆花香，fertile for sprouting wheat and fragrant soy flowers.
麦 苗 儿 肥 啊 豆 花 香
mài miáo ér féi à dòu huā xiāng

男女老少喜洋洋。Men and women, young and old, live in happy prosperity.
男 女 老 少 喜 洋 洋
nán nǚ lǎo shào xǐ yáng

自从鬼子来，百姓遭了殃！But since the enemy came, these common people have suffered great calamities!
自 从 鬼 子 来 百 姓 遭 了 殃
zì cóng guǐ zǐ lái bǎi xìng zāo liǎo yāng

奸淫烧杀，一片凄凉；Treachery, wickedness, burning, and murder create a desert of desolation;
奸 淫 烧 杀 一 片 凄 凉
jiān yín shāo shā yī piàn qī liáng

扶老携幼，四处逃亡；people escorting the elderly and carrying the young disperse in all directions to flee death;
扶 老 携 幼 四 处 逃 亡
fú lǎo xié yòu sì chù táo wáng

黄水奔流日夜忙；Yellow waters rush along day and night,
黄 水 奔 流 日 夜 忙
huáng shuǐ bēn liú rì yè máng

22四处：all over the place
妻离子散，天各一方！ as families are torn apart!

妻    离    子    散    天    各    一    方
qī    lí    zǐ    sàn    tiān    gè    yī    fāng

tsi    li    dzɤ    san    tjɛn    ge    ji    fəŋ

（朗诵）Recitation

妻离子散，天各一方！
Families torn apart, wives and husbands, children and parents!

但是，我们难道永远逃亡?
Will we forever be refugees?

你听听吧，这是黄河边上，Listen, as two villagers

两个老乡的对唱。Dialogue on the Yellow River’s bank.

（甲）张老三，我问你，A: Zhang No. 3, let me ask you,
你的家乡在哪里？Where is your hometown？
nǐ de jiā xiāng zài nǎ lǐ
ni de dzja sjaŋ dzaɪ na li

（乙）我的家，在山西，B: My home is in Shaanxi，
yǐ wǒ de jiā zài shān xī
ji wɔ dwɑ dzja dzai Jan si

过河还有三百里。three hundred miles from the river.
guò hé hái yǒu sān bǎi lǐ
gwɔ hә haɪ you san baɪ li

（甲）我问你，在家里，A: Let me ask you, in your hometown，
jiā wǒ wèn nǐ zài jiā lǐ
dzja wo wәn ni dzai dzja li

种田还是做生意？did you farm the land or trade？
zhòng tián hái shì zuò shēng yì
dʒoŋ tjɛn hә fʃɔ ʃәŋ ji

（乙）我拿锄头，耕田地，种的高粱和小米。
B: I held the hoe, plowed the fields, planted sorghum and millets.
yǐ ná chú tou gēng tián dì
ji nә tʃu tou gәŋ tjɛn di

（甲）为什么，到此地，A: Why then are you here，
jiā wèi shén me dào cǐ dì
dzja wɛi fʃәn me dau tʃɤ di
河边流浪受孤凄？wandering the bank, lonely and sorrowful?
河水边流浪受孤凄
hè biān liú làng shòu gū qī

（乙）痛心事，莫提起，B: Please don’t bring up painful matters,
乙痛心事莫提起
yǐ tòng xīn shì mò tí qǐ

家破人亡无消息。
my home was destroyed and I know not the fate of my family.
家破人亡无消息
jiā pò rén wáng wú xiāo xi

（甲）张老三，莫伤悲，A: Zhang No. 3, don't be sad,
甲张老三莫伤悲
jiǎ zhāng lǎo sān mò shāng bēi

我的命运不如你！my fate is worse than yours!
我 的 命 运 不 如 你
wǒ di ming yùn bù rú nǐ

（乙）为什么，王老七，B: Why, Wang No. 7,
乙为 什 么 王老七
yǐ wèi shén me wáng lǎo qī

你的家乡在何地？where is your hometown？
你 的 家 乡 在 何 地
nǐ di jiā xiāng zài hé dì

（甲）在东北，做生意，A: I used to do business in the northeast;
甲在 东 北 做 生 意
jiā zài dōng běi zuò shēng yì

家乡八年无消息。 eight long years I've had no news from home.

家乡八年无消息。 nine long years I've had no news from home.

（乙）这么说，我和你。 B: All this said, you and I,

乙 这 么 说 我 和 你。

都 是 有 家 不 能 回。 both have homes we can't return to!

都 是 有 家 不 能 回。 both have homes we can't return to!

仇和恨，在心里。 Within our hearts, enmity and hatred

仇 和 恨 在 心 里。

奔腾如同黄河水！ swirl like the rapids of the Yellow River!

奔 腾 如 同 黄 河 水。

咱们一同打回去！ let us both resolve to fight back!

咱 们 一 同 打 回 去。
为国家，当兵去，For our country, we will become soldiers,
为国当兵去
wèi guó jiā dāng bīng qù

太行山上打游击！ go up Taihang mountain to fight as guerillas!
太行山上打游击
tài háng shān shàng dǎ yóu jī

从今后，我和你，From this day, you and I
从今后我和你
cóng jīn hòu wǒ hé nǐ

一同打回老家去！ together will fight to regain our homeland!
一同打回老家去
yī tóng dǎ huí lǎo jiā qù
[6] 黄河怨 Yellow River Lament

（朗诵）Recitation

friend! We will fight and regain our homeland!

朋友们要打回老家去！

朋友！我们要打回老家去！

老家已经太不成话了！

谁没有妻子儿女，

谁没有妻子儿女能忍受敌人的欺凌？

亲爱的同胞们啊，你听听

一个妇人悲惨的歌声。
（独唱）Solo

风啊，你不要叫喊！ Oh wind, do not howl!

今晚，我在你面前，Tonight, I stand before you in tears,

哭诉我的仇和怨。to pour out my hatred and grief.

今晚，你不要躲闪！ Oh clouds, do not hide!

黄河啊，你不要呜咽！ Oh Yellow River, do not whimper!

命啊，这样苦！ Oh fate, so bitter!

生活啊，这样难！ Oh life, so hard!
鬼子啊，你这样没心肝！ My enemy, you have no conscience!
guǐ zǐ à nǐ zhè yàng méi xīn gān
gweĩ dzɤ a ni dzɤ jəŋ mei sin gan

宝贝啊，你死得这样惨！ My precious child, you died so horribly!
bǎo bèi à nǐ sǐ de zhè yàng cǎn
bau beɪ a ni sv də dzɤ jəŋ tsan

我和你无仇又无怨， There was no hatred or grudge between us,
wǒ hé nǐ wú chóu yòu wú yuàn
wɔ hә ni wu tɭʊ jʊŋ wu jwɛn

偏要我无颜偷生在人间！ yet you left me to a nameless existence in this world!
piān yào wǒ wú yán tōu shēng zài rén jiān
pjɛn jaʊ wɔ wu ʃәŋ tʊ jɛŋ dzɛr ɾәŋ dzjɛn

狂风啊，你不要叫喊！ Oh wind, do not howl!
kuáng fēng à nǐ bù yào jiào hǎn
kwaŋ fәŋ a ni bu jaʊ hæn

乌云啊，你不要躲闪， Oh dark clouds, do not hide!
wū yún à nǐ bù yào duǒ shǎn
wu jyn a ni bu jau dwɔ ʃan

黄河的水啊，你不要呜咽！ Oh Yellow River, do not whimper!
huáng hé de shuǐ à nǐ bù yú yè
hwaŋ hә de fweɪ a ni bu jau wu je

今晚，我要投在你的怀中， Tonight, I will throw myself into your embrace,
jīn wǎn wǒ yào tóu zài nǐ de huái zhōng
dzin wan wo jau tou dzəri ni di hwai dzonŋ

24. 心肝: conscience
洗清我的千重愁来万重冤! to wash away my myriad sorrows and sufferings!

丈夫啊，丈夫啊，丈夫啊，丈夫啊，在天边在天边在天边在天边!!

地下啊，地下啊，地下啊，地下啊，再团圆再团圆再团圆再团圆!!

你要想想妻子儿女死得这样惨，你要想想妻子儿女死得这样惨，你要想想妻子儿女死得这样惨，你要想想妻子儿女死得这样惨，你要替我把这笔血债清算，你要替我把这笔血债清算，你要替我把这笔血债清算，你要替我把这笔血债清算，你要替我把这笔血债清还，你要替我把这笔血债清还，你要替我把这笔血债清还，你要替我把这笔血债清还，你要替我把这笔血债清还!!
这笔血债清还
zhè bǐ xuè zhài qīng huán
dʒә bi ʃwɛ ʤaɪ tsiŋ hwan
保卫黄河 Defend the Yellow River
bǎo wèi huáng hé

保卫华北 bǎo wèi huá běi

保卫全中国 bǎo wèi quán zhōng guó

（朗诵）Recitation
lǎng sòng

但是，中华民族的儿女啊，Sons and daughters of China,
dàn shì zhōng huá mín zú de ér nǚ à

谁愿意像猪羊一般，谁愿意像猪羊一般，谁愿意像猪羊一般，谁愿意像猪羊一般，任人宰割？who is willing to be slaughtered like pigs and sheep?
shuí yuàn yì xiàng zhū yáng yī bān, rèn rén zǎi gē

我们要抱定必胜的决心，We must resolve to be victorious,
wǒ mén yào bào dìng bì shèng de jué xīn

保卫黄河! 保卫华北! to defend the Yellow River! To defend northern China!

保卫全中国! To defend all of China!

（多声部合唱）Chorus

多声部合唱

duō shēng bù hé chàng

dwo jẽŋ bu he ŭŋ

风在吼，马在叫， The wind howls, horses neigh,

风在吼 马在叫

fēng zài hǒu mǎ zài jiào

fẽŋ dzai hou ma dzai dzjau

黄河在咆哮！ the Yellow River roars!

黄河在咆哮

huáng hé zài páo xiāo

hwai he dzai pau sjau

河西山冈万丈高，To the west stands a towering hill,

河西山冈万丈高

hé xī shān gāng wàn zhàng gāo

hẽ si jan gan wan dzan gau

河东河北，高梁熟了。East and north of the river, sorghum has ripened.

河东河北

hé dōng hé běi gāo liáng shóu liǎo

hẽ doŋ he bei gau ljan jou ljaʊ

万山丛中，抗日英雄真不少！Amid thousands of mountain clusters are many heroes!

万山丛中

wàn shān cóng zhōng
dwan jan tsɔŋ dzɔŋ

抗日英雄真不少

kàng rì yīng xióng zhēn bù shǎo

kaŋ rɤ jiŋ ŭŋ dzan bu jau

青纱帐里，游击健儿逞英豪！

Inside green muslin tents there are valiant guerilla warriors!

青纱帐里

qīng shā zhàng lǐ
tsiŋ ja dzan li
端起了土枪洋枪，Armed with local guns and foreign-made guns,
挥动着大刀长矛，waving large knives and long spears,
保卫家乡！保卫黄河！they defend our hometowns! Defend the Yellow River!
保卫华北！保卫全中国！Defend northern China! Defend all of China!
Roar, Yellow River!

怒吼吧，黄河！

nù hǒu ba huáng hé

 Veranstaltung Recitation

朗 诵

lǎng sòng

Listen, the Pearl River roars angrily!

听啊，珠江在怒吼！

tīng à zhū jiāng zài nù hǒu

扬子江在怒吼！

yáng zǐ jiāng zài nù hǒu

Ah! Yellow River!

啊 黄河

à huáng hé

掀起你的怒涛

掀 起 你 的 怒 涛

xiān qǐ nǐ de nù tāo

发出你的狂叫

发 出 你 的 狂 叫

fā chū nǐ de kuáng jiào

向着全中国被压迫的人民

向 着 全 中 国 被 压 迫

xiàng zhe quán zhōng guó bèi yā pò

珠江: a river in southeast China that flows into the South China Sea.

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25 珠江: a river in southeast China that flows into the South China Sea.
的人民
dèi rén mín
dèi rén mín

发出你战斗的警号吧！sound the battle cry for all of China's oppressed people!
发出你战斗的警号吧！
fa chū nǐ zhàn dòu de jǐng hào ba
fa chú ni dzan dou de dzjŋ hau ba

（合唱）Chorus
合唱
hé chàng
hē tʃaŋ

怒吼吧，黄河！Roar, Yellow River!
怒吼吧，黄河！
nù hǒu ba huáng hé
nu hou ba hwaŋ hē

掀起你的怒涛，Raise up your angry waves,
掀起你的怒涛，
xiān qǐ nǐ de nù tāo
sjɛn tsi ni di nu tau

发出你的狂叫！let loose your wild bellows!
发出你的狂叫！
fā chū nǐ de kuáng jiào
fa chú ni di kwaŋ dzjaʊ

全世界劳动的人民，Workers across the land
全世界劳动的人民，
quán shì jiè láo dòng de rén mín
ʧwɛn fʃ dzje lau doŋ di ren min

发出战斗的警号！cry out for battle!
发出战斗的警号！
fā chū zhàn dòu de jǐng hào
fa chú dzan dou de dzjŋ hau
啊 —— 五千年的民族，For such an ancient nation

五 千 年 的 民 族

千年的民族

For such an ancient nation

苦难真不少！to suffer so much!

苦难真不少

to suffer so much!

铁蹄下的民众，Our cruelly oppressed people

铁蹄下的民众

Our cruelly oppressed people

苦痛受不了！can no longer bear the torment!

苦痛受不了

can no longer bear the torment!

但是，新中国已经破晓：But for China, a new day is already dawning;

已经团结起来，have united,

已经团结起来

have united,

誓死同把国土保！pledging their lives to defend this soil!

誓死同把国土保

pledging their lives to defend this soil!

铁蹄：cruel oppression
你听：松花江在呼号，Listen: the Songhua River is calling,
你听松花江在呼号
nǐ tīng sōng huā jiāng zài hū hào

黑龙江在呼号：the Heilong River is calling;
黑龙江在呼号
hēi lóng jiāng zài hū hào

珠江发出了英勇的叫啸：the mighty Pearl River roars its defiance;
珠江发出了英勇的叫啸
zhū jiāng fā chū le yīng yǒng de jiào xiào
dʒu dzjaŋ fa ʧu lә jiŋ joŋ di dzjaʊ sjau

扬子江上，燃遍了抗日的烽火！
all along the Yangtze River, beacon lights are burning!
扬子江上
yáng zǐ jiāng shàng

向着全中国受难的人民，To all of China's suffering people,
向着全中国受难的人民
xiàng zhe quán zhōng guó shòu nàn de rén mín

发出战斗的警号！sound the battle cry!
发出战斗的警号
fā chū zhàn dòu de jǐng hào
fa tʃu dʒan dʒu dʒiŋ hau
向着全世界劳动的人民，To laborers all over the world，

发出战斗的警号！sound the battle cry!

xiàng zhe quán shì jiè láo dòng de rén mín
fā chū zhàn dòu de jǐng hào

发出战斗的警号！sound the battle cry!

fā tū dʒan dòu di dʒiŋ hào
APPENDIX C: HOW THE YELLOW RIVER CANTATA WAS BORN

by Wu Xiling

In November 1938, after the Japanese occupation of Wuhan, our Enemy Resistance Third Drama Troupe\(^1\) under the leadership of Guang Weiran needed to cross to the east of the Yellow River from the vicinity of the Hukou waterfall at Shanxi\(^2\) province’s Yichuan county where it bridged into the southwest region of Jin\(^3\), on our travel to the Japanese Resistance base of operations at Lüliang Mountain.

Hukou is one of the most dangerous gorges on the Yellow River. Here, the gorgechopped the river into two uneven grounds. The rolling waters spanning two to three \(li\)\(^4\) squeezed into the narrow mouth of the gorge that was only a few \(zhang\)\(^5\) wide, thundering powerfully like a massive herd of running cattle. The torrents of the enormous waterfall churned up mud and plunged downwards, creating sprays of waves that were several meters high; its roar shook both heaven and earth. If one stood for a few minutes near the edge of the gorge, the muddy waterfall and its sprays would suddenly appear to resemble the steep slope of a mountain. Your ears would become numb from the deafening roar, only returning to normal until you were five to six \(li\) from the gorge.

Our ferry point, Gezhen shore, was located a few \(li\) downstream from Hukou. Standing on a peak looking north, one could still see the mountainous sprays of waves above the mouth of the gorge. From here, it looked like masses of steam spewing from a pot of boiling water.

The river’s surface at our point of crossing was very wide; its waters, full of reefs, rushed down the steep incline. When the rapids stemming from Hukou reached this point, they broadened to become a front of turbulent waves and swelling waters, these torrents sweeping southwards. Close to the reefs were fast-spinning whirlpools. Towering rocks like islands stood in the middle of the river crossing – this was the most dangerous part of the voyage, the boat must be maneuvered very carefully around it, or else it would be smashed to bits on the rocks with just a slip of the hand. Only past mid-river near the eastern shore did the river become calmer.

At around ten o’clock in the morning, we boarded a boat shaped like a rectangular wooden box with no lid. Even though there was a lot of space inside, we were instructed by the captain to squeeze into the depressed section in the center of the boat, and he forbade us to move to the sides where it seemed much roomier. As we were being puzzled over this, a shout was heard all of sudden, after which about forty strong young

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\(^1\) Or the 3\(^{rd}\) Squad of the Anti-Enemy Troupe
\(^2\) This is Shānxī province. There is also Shānxī / Shaanxi province (see footnote 3). They are separate regions, and the Yellow River marks the border between them.
\(^3\) Shānxī province
\(^4\) 1 \(li\) = 500 meters
\(^5\) 1 \(zhang\) \(\approx\) 3.33 meters
men with bared torsos jumped into the river and pushed the boat into deeper waters. Soon, they were back on the boat in two neat rows along each side. They were agile and alert, orderly and disciplined, like an army ready to engage in battle. Most of them were oarsmen, and some were helmsmen. At the bow stood an athletic and energetic man in his sixties; people looked at this white-bearded man with much respect, and it was then when we realized that he was the one shouting the commands! This chief helmsman held the lives of everyone on this boat in his hands.

Before boarding the boat, many kept telling us, “Crossing the river from this place requires the leadership of a senior and experienced helmsman who is extremely familiar with the passage and extraordinarily courageous. Otherwise, there is no guarantee that you’ll live. There are supposedly only two or three senior helmsmen who are this capable.”

The location where we had planned to alight was southeast of the Gezhen shore, but because of the torrents, the boat needed to press northeast, against the current. The oarsmen and helmsmen yelled their boating cry in a call and response style, synchronized with the rowing rhythms. Approximately ten minutes into our voyage, the boat entered the dangerous mid-river region, and as the waves splashed fiercely into the boat, our hearts became increasingly anxious. Suddenly, the white-bearded man straightened his neck and let out a long and high shout, as piercing as a siren. Immediately following this shout, the boatmen’s cry changed to an unusual tune. The pitch kept getting higher, the volume louder, until it drowned out the roar of the waves. Its rhythmic activity picked up, the shouts became increasingly faster until the time lapse between the original call and response had completely disappeared, and even those of us who were listening felt out of breath. United under the sole command of the senior helmsman, the boatmen with flushed faces and bulging muscles fought the raging waves with their lives, rowing and holding firm the helm.

It was a terrifying life and death battle between man and nature. In the midst of the boatmen’s laboring shouts, unwavering faith, and indomitable fighting spirit, their strong laboring shouts had given us such limitless strength that we had already dispelled every ounce of fear at the most perilous moment.

After passing the danger zone, the waters became peaceful, and the boat cruised in the direction of the river flow. The shore could be seen clearly, and we felt relaxed and calm.

The river crossing experience left an unforgettable impression on us. It is this very experience that inspired the poet, Comrade Guang Weiran, to the idea of writing a Yellow River cantata. I think that it is also precisely because of this experience that he placed the “Song of the Yellow River Boatmen” as the opening number.
In mid-January 1939, we finally arrived at the long anticipated sacred grounds of the revolution – Yan’an – from Lüliang Mountain. As our military entourage made its way there, Comrade Guang Weiran accidentally fell off his horse, broke his arm, and was hospitalized upon reaching Yan’an. From when he crossed the Yellow River to his hospital stay, Comrade Guang Weiran had not stopped mulling over the idea of writing the Yellow River Cantata. Even under enemy pursuit and during night marches, he would still often discuss with us his plans for writing the Yellow River Cantata. However, it was not until after he was hospitalized that he officially began penning the words down.

On Lunar New Year’s Eve that year (February 18), our Third Drama Troupe organized the annual celebratory gathering at Yan’an. It was at this event where Comrade Xian Xinghai joined us in listening attentively to Comrade Guang Weiran recite his new composition with much feeling – the complete text to the *Yellow River Cantata*. After the gathering, Comrade Xinghai left rather excitedly with those lyrics, promising as he was leaving, to set them to music before our departure from Yan’an.

From then on, I visited Comrade Xinghai’s home every three to four days. His home was a small dugout on the hill where the Lu Xun Arts Academy was situated. Besides a brick bed, a little square table, and a stove, there was just slightly more than one square meter of space remaining. Comrade Xian Xinghai’s hardworking and persevering spirit was admirable. Every time I saw him at his home, he was always leaning on the table composing, with his head buried in the papers, in deep concentration. During that period, Xian was spending most of his time writing the *Production Cantata*, and sometimes I would see him working on the *National Liberation Symphony* or making performance copies of the folk songs he had recently jotted down. At every visit, he would hum me his newest compositions and the latest folk songs which he had collected, but was always more interested in having me describe to him the full details of that Yellow River crossing experience we had, and was never tired from hearing about it. In addition, he would often ask numerous questions about specific scenes in my narration. Several times, I tried my best to recall and imitate for Comrade Xian Xinghai the boatmen’s cry that we heard while crossing the Yellow River. One time, he began scribbling some musical notations right after I had hummed the tune, double-checking it with me when he had finished. I remember a portion of it went like this:

One evening, near the end of March, I was again visiting Comrade Xinghai’s home. He was sitting on a small stool with the scores on his knees, working on the “Ode to the Yellow River” in the dim light produced by a vegetable oil lamp. The minute I entered, he stood up excitedly and said, “You came at just the right day, I have already set music to seven of the eight movements.” Picking up a thick stack of manuscript, the full score of the Yellow River Cantata in cipher notation (this manuscript is now displayed at the National Music Research Center), he said, “I composed this very smoothly. Other than Yunling’s (Comrade Xinghai’s wife) help with drawing the bar lines, it only took

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6 The Long March ended in Yan’an, known as the birthplace of the revolution, and the center of Chinese communist life.
7 March 26, according to Xian’s account (see “Composition Notes”).
me four days, including writing and copying. …with the exception of this ‘Ode to the Yellow River’ which has been too hard to set to music; I came up with three versions, but none of them were to my satisfaction. Today, I spent the entire day trying to write this movement, and it is still unfinished. When I see the word ‘Ode’, I immediately associate it with the religious work, Messiah. I am trying hard to rid all influences from religious songs of praise in my writing; I must create a kind of new music that possesses Chinese national characteristics, a praise melody that could also exhibit emotions of this modern age. …there are some melodies in Kunqu\(^8\) that are a bit Ode-like in flavor, but they are unable to demonstrate the Yellow River’s great fighting spirit.”

He sang through everything he had written in that stack of manuscript from beginning to end. Sometimes, the two of us would sing together. After each movement was sung, he would give me an analysis of the emotional content of that piece and an elaboration of his creative map. That night, we sang plenty, talked plenty, and it was past midnight when I returned to my home.

One or two days later, I received the performance copy of the complete Yellow River Cantata. Our entire troupe began rehearsing intensively right away. During our rehearsals, Comrade Xinghai frequently came to give us guidance.

On the night of April 13, twenty years ago, our Third Drama Troupe and the Lu Xun Arts Academy held a music concert at the Shangong Auditorium\(^9\) in Yan’an. It was on this night that the Yellow River Cantata was premiered. Under the assistance and guidance of Comrade Xinghai, I was honored be the conductor of the Yellow River Cantata’s premiere performance.

That day, Comrade Guang Weiran personally recited “Yellow River’s Water from Heaven Descends” on stage, Comrade Tian Chong was the soloist for the “Ode to the Yellow River”, Comrade Jiang Zixia was the soloist for the “Yellow River Lament”; performing the “Dialogue on the River Bank” were Comrade Shi Ping and Comrade Liu Chenxuan.

The chorus had around forty members, all from the Third Drama Troupe. The instrumental group was formed by instructors from the Lu Xun Arts Academy Music Department. Among the instrumentalists then were Comrade Li Huanzhi and Comrade Li Ling. The orchestration was according to Comrade Xinghai’s first edition. With the exception of two to three violins, the group comprised of about twenty Chinese musical instruments. Looking back now, these performance conditions were simple, crude, and incomplete. However, we never heard Comrade Xinghai complain once about this situation; he always had a pleasant attitude at work.

Before the stage curtains were drawn, all of the performers involved were very excited. As a resonating voice recited the opening lines of poetry from the platform,

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8 One of the oldest extant forms of Chinese opera that flourished from the sixteenth to eighteenth century.
9 Shanbei Gongxue Hall
“Friends, have you been to the Yellow River? ...”, the thrilling scene of crossing that river immediately reappeared in the minds of those of us who had just recently experienced what that was like. When we finished singing the “Song of the Yellow River Boatmen” with high spirits, the floor audience responded with a wild and lengthy applause. As a result of the work’s great success and our personal experiences, the premiere performance of the Yellow River Cantata received an enthusiastic welcome from the listeners.

Now, although the great composer Comrade Xian Xinghai has departed from us for almost fourteen years, the Yellow River Cantata and its revolutionary fighting spirit still lives on forever in the hearts of the masses.

Proofread: May 10, 1959 China Youth Paper Record

From “Zhongguo jin xiandai yinyueshi ziliao congkan” – *Xian Xinghai Zhuanji*¹⁰ (4), edited by Qi Yuyi and Li Yan. (Guangzhou: China Arts Research Center Music Research Institute, 1983.), 59-64.

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¹⁰ Special Collection.
APPENDIX D: XIAN’S WRITINGS

How I Composed the “Yellow River Cantata”¹
by Xian Xinghai

Even though there were very limited resources where “Yellow” was composed, it had already established the current period’s new form of the National Salvation Song.

Past National Salvation Songs have been very effective and well received by the masses, but they did not last long and were soon spat upon by the crowds. Hence, the imbalance between “quantity” and “quality” resulted in many pieces being short-lived in their effectiveness and existence.

The libretto of “Yellow” is more refined, though that has not cramped its style. It has a majestic feel, demonstrates technical skill, is passionate, truthful, and especially holds great potential. In addition, the text directly connects with the current state of affairs, pointing out the importance and significance in “defending the Yellow River.” It is filled with beauty, realism, expressions of resentment, stirring one’s emotions to experience similar feelings whether or not one has crossed the Yellow River. Within the libretto, thousands of years of the Yellow River’s history are contained in the narrations.

1. Prelude – Song of the Yellow River Boatmen

If you listen in peace, you will discover a painting that has around a dozen fishermen rowing their boats with their faces radiating the fighting spirit. There are two sentiments in this movement that are notable: the tension in the opening depicts the scene of fishermen as they struggle with the waves to cross the Yellow River, as they sing, “Row forward,… The last part is a bit more relaxed. Before the fishermen crossed the river, they were in a jolly mood. After they have had a hearty laugh [from having gotten past the most turbulent waters of the crossing], their worries dissipated, putting them at ease once again.

2. Ode to the Yellow River

This movement is composed in the form of a laud/anthem. Laudes often carry a bold and unrestrained passion; this one praises the might and strength of the Yellow River. Scored for a tenor solo, it is a moving piece. One can even hear the strong flowing currents of the Yellow River in the accompaniment!

¹ Recorded in Xian Xinghai’s diary on April 8, 1939. Xian Xinghai Quanji, 37-8.
3. Yellow River’s Water from Heaven Descends

The text is recited in this movement. I chose the Sanxian [three-stringed banjo] as the accompanying instrument and not the drum or the typical Beijing opera accompaniment style, to express the content of the spoken words. In Europe, there is a type of solo song with independent vocal and accompaniment parts, advocated by the composer Wolf. However, this is probably the first experiment in China where a Sanxian is employed both as an accompaniment as well as to express the content of the text, in such a way that it can stand independently as a piece. Besides the roll of the waves that can be heard in the Sanxian’s tune, two other melodies have also been incorporated: one is “Man Jiang Hong” and the other is “March of the Volunteers,” but only excerpts from these have been used (this is due to the structuring of the tune).

4. Yellow Water Ballad

This is composed like a folksong and sung in unison. The tune is simple, carrying expressions of pain and moaning. Unlike the usual folksongs that convey decadence, the Yellow River Ballad is full of hope and earnest endeavor!

5. Yellow River Musical Dialogue

Composed in the style of a folksong (using Shaanxi tones), the two voice parts in the final three sections are constructed by combining their earlier melodic material. The accompanying Sanxian and Erhu also share the same relationship as the solo voices in their musical interactions. Also, the introduction is rather relaxed and amusing.

6. Lament of the Yellow River

Voices of oppressed women and sounds of their humiliation are portrayed. The melody is deeply moving and tragic, a lament sung with tears in the eyes. If the soloist does not possess these sentiments when singing, the listeners will certainly not be able to share in those emotions; hence attention should be given to this.

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2 The orchestra for Jingju (Beijing opera) is made up of melodic (two-stringed fiddles, a lute, and the double-reed suona) and percussion (gongs, cymbals, one or two drums, and wooden clappers) instruments. The percussion section is inseparable from all the dramatic elements.
3 The Austrian composer Hugo Wolf (1860-1903) composed hundreds of Lieder. He is noted for his ability to condense expansive musical ideas and his skill in creating form based on his interpretations of the text.
4 The author had reversed the order of the fourth and fifth movements in his haste; this error was corrected in his “Composition Notes.” The correction has been made here.
7. Defend the Yellow River

Written as a round, from two parts, it builds to four. Every entry needs to be sung strongly and confidently. It is composed using only Chinese melodies. After the third and fourth voices enter, the inner parts accompany with “long-a-long, long-a-long,” which should be sung stylistically to create interest. All of it should be strong and grand, rising and falling with endless variations; the melody should be brought out fully at all times.

8. Roar! Yellow River

Scored for a four-part large chorus, this movement uses combinations of two, three, and four different voice parts. The melody is robust and grand, yet full of warmth and encouragement, which is one of the most important themes of the Yellow River Cantata. The last two sentences, “To all of China’s suffering people, sound the battle cry! To laborers all over the world, sound the battle cry!” This must be sung continuously for three, four, five times, etc. until the listeners have identified with those same sentiments, before moving on to the ending. It is best if the bugle plays the main melody, accompanied by war drums, so as to better display the greatness of the Yellow River. Its roar inspires the suffering masses and the laboring people in the entire world.

This method of composing the “Yellow River Cantata” is attempted for the first time in China. I hope that lovers of China’s New Music Movement will give me some pointers to encourage me, so that I will be even more diligent in composing.

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Xian did not mention the unison opening here, as he did in his Composition Notes.
Composition Notes  
by Xian Xinghai

Yellow River Cantata (Opus 7)

This cantata was begun on March 26, 1939 and completed on March 31, at the Shanbei Japanese Resistance Headquarters’ Yan’an 6 Luxun Arts Academy. Coincidentally, the Third Drama Troupe 7 happened to be in Yan’an, and Comrade Guang Weiran handed me the Yellow River libretto he had written to set to music straightaway, to be performed by the drama troupe and conducted by Wu Xiling. The first performance was on April 13 in Yan’an’s Shangong Auditorium 8, followed by two more on May 11 and 12, which celebrated the anniversary of the Luxun Arts Academy; all were given favorable reviews by the Yan’an audience. Since then, whenever Yan’an hosted big events, such as the welcoming of Vice Chairman Zhou Enlai, Commander-in-Chief Zhu De, General Deng Baoshan, Mao Dun and Shen Zhiyuan [authors], representatives from Mongolia, the National government’s investigation teams, encouragement groups, 9 the China Northwest Film Society, etc., the Yellow River Cantata would be the featured presentation.

I wrote the full score as well as the choral parts to the Yellow River Cantata in a grotto (the former grounds of the Luxun Arts Academy) within 5-6 days due to the Third Drama Troupe’s impending departure. Having seen how well the work was received by those participating in the war efforts at numerous locales, I desired from very early on to make improvements to the original score written in cipher notation, by writing it in Western staff notation with the chorus accompaniment rescored for a symphonic orchestra, but because of my busy teaching and composing schedule, I had not found the time to begin. However, in the spring of 1941, I was able to complete this project smoothly. The orchestrated version will enable this piece to be played in Europe, America, and other countries; compared to the former version that used the cipher notation, this is more internationalized, yet at the same time remaining nationalistic in style and possessing progressive techniques.

Yellow River Source Material 10

The Yellow River’s heroic spirit appears on the plains of Asia, symbolizing the greatness of Chinese national feelings. From past to present, many poets have sung praises to the Yellow River.

The Yellow River Cantata seeks to project a similarly stirring and realistic portrait.

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6 Yan’an is a city in the Shanbei region of the Shaanxi province in China.
7 Or the 3rd Squad of the Anti-Enemy Troupe
8 Shanbei Gongxue Hall.
9 These groups traveled to show appreciation to those contributing to the war effort.
10 This section is written by the librettist, Guang Weiran, but included by the composer in his notes.
Under the dark cloudy skies, amidst the huge crashing waves, the Yellow River boatmen battled with all their might against the wild winds and pouring rain to cross over to the opposite shore, reaching the final victory.

Thereupon, on a high mountain peak appeared a singer of this era, representing our homeland’s brave and courageous sons and daughters, singing the praises of the Yellow River and wanting to learn from her example, to be as mighty and strong as she is.

Before Asia’s giant, feelings of reminiscence sprung up in the nation’s poet; he stood facing the Yellow River, lamenting our nation’s suffering. As a result, the giant awakens, surging its waves, letting out its wild cries, sounding over every mountain and plain our homeland’s battle song.

Fertile soil stretches for thousands of li on the Yellow River’s eastern shore; male, female, young and old all lived happily. However, now that the cruel enemy has invaded, bringing mad killings and casualties, families are torn apart, and desolation is all around.

Along the banks of the Yellow River, two exiled villagers had a chance encounter; each of them lamented their fate, and finally resolved to join the resistance forces in battle together.

However, his wife, a typical village woman, having lost her husband, having been taken from her child and ravished by the beasts, secretly went to the shore of the Yellow River in the wailing wind and weeping rain one night. After a burst of tragic lament, she threw herself into the Yellow River’s billowing waves.

At this time, north and east of the river, amidst ten thousand mountain clusters, inside green muslin tents, from all directions, giant waves of revenge roll as the outstanding sons and daughters of the Chinese people defend the Yellow River and their homeland in battle.

“Roar, Yellow River!” To all of China’s oppressed people, to the oppressed people all over the world, sound the battle cry! We represent four hundred million countrymen.

**Yellow River Content**

1. Song of the Yellow River Boatmen (Chorus)

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11 1 li = 500 meters
12 The wife of one of the two exiled men.
Begins with an opening scene of a few dozen Yellow River boatmen battling the perilous waves as they cross the river, full of fighting strength; ends with the boat arriving at shore, boatmen heave a sigh of relief, relaxed and cheerful.

2. Ode to the Yellow River (Male Solo)
   Written in the form of an ode with bold and unrestrained emotion, praises of the Yellow River’s might and strength are sung loudly; the power of the Yellow River’s rushing waters can be heard in the accompaniment.

3. Yellow River’s Waters from Heaven Descends (Recitation)
   New form, not with the big drum or just mere recitation, but a recitation song. The narrator must have a firm grasp of the emotions in this piece, and more importantly, speak with strength and boldness.

4. Yellow Water Ballad (Two-Part Women’s Chorus)
   Simple wording, although must be expressed as painful moans; different from the typical song of melancholy, in that this one conceals hope and fighting spirit.

5. Dialogue on the River Bank (Duet)
   Composed in the form of a folksong employing the registers of Shanbei and Shaanxi, full of local flavor, call and response format, fitted to an accompaniment with Chinese flavor and percussion instruments, relaxing and interesting to hear, but narrative in style.

6. Yellow River Lament (Female Solo)
   This elegy should be sung with tears held back, sounds uttered by a woman after having been defiled. Here, you can imagine what the enemy has been spreading as the “Way of the Emperor” inside their territory was really like.

7. Defend the Yellow River (Unison, Round in two, three, and four parts)
   This piece is a round, growing from one part, to two, three, and then four. Very powerful and grand, rising and falling in waves, like the strong guerilla soldiers, vanishing and reappearing.

8. Roar! Yellow River
   A mix of unison and part singing. Sincere, mighty, strong and stately, containing much enthusiasm and excitement as well. The last two sentences, “To all of China’s suffering people, sound the battle cry! To laborers all over the world, sound the battle cry!” is consecutively repeated five times, accompanied by twelve B-flat trumpets and tubas, and six French horns. During the performance, they are raised, their calls sounding forth like the battle cries across the entire earth. ……

I conducted every performance of this cantata in Yan’an, the choir grew from one hundred to five hundred singers, and the accompanying ensemble had twenty or so players, mostly on Chinese instruments. The big auditorium almost could not hold the audience, and the sound can be heard from far away.
When I was still at Yan’an, people already told me that the local newspapers in Chongqing and other cities all hailed the Yellow River Cantata as a pioneering work in China’s new music during the War of Resistance. When I was at my office in Yan’an the summer of 1940, Siaosan\(^{13}\) informed me that his wife in Moscow had read an article in an English newspaper which mentioned me and the Yellow River Cantata. Also, a famous Russian reporter and photographer named Carmen wrote an article titled “In China One Year” which included a discussion of me and the Yellow River Cantata. That article first appeared in International Literature and then in the 1940 Moscow publication of Ensign. Of course, I should not become complacent as a result of this, especially since Comrade Wu Yuzhang\(^{14}\) complimented me in front of the entire student body at “Lu Xun” for my hard work and the international praise that the Yellow River Cantata had received.

Having heard that, I felt embarrassed, because for all these years, I had hoped to compose music both in quantity as well as quality, so having just one success with the Yellow River Cantata is not much, in my opinion. I still need to double my efforts in offering my contributions of experience, sweat, and toil to the great Chinese people. I felt embarrassed for not composing well enough, and for meeting the quantity requested by the masses!

Hence, I wrote the People’s Liberation Symphony and other works, …… but I still want to write, until my final breath. I have never forgotten what Vincent d’Indy\(^{15}\) said to me before he died at the age of eighty-three, that he still wanted to compose, and still wanted to finish his article on Richard Wagner!\(^{16}\) Romain Rolland,\(^{17}\) at the age of seventy-three, still wanted to learn Russian, because he had discovered treasure in Russian literature. Beethoven\(^{18}\) said before dying, “All I did was write a couple more notes…” What am I? What is so amazing about me? Compared to them I have accomplished much less, should not I work even harder?!

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\(^{13}\) A poet and schoolmate of Chairman Mao Zedong, and one of the leader in the Communist Party. He was very knowledgeable and mastered Russian, English, French, and German. He also translated “L’Internationale” into Chinese.

\(^{14}\) Dean of Lu Xun Arts Academy in Yan’an.

\(^{15}\) Xian’s composition teacher at the Schola Cantorum.

\(^{16}\) Famous German composer, conductor, poet, and writer (1813-1883).

\(^{17}\) French writer, playwright, music scholar, 1915 recipient of the Nobel prize in literature (1866-1944).

\(^{18}\) Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827).
### APPENDIX E: PERFORMANCE HISTORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Date (s)</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Performers</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Moscow, Soviet Union</td>
<td>Welcoming of and Panel Discussion with Xian</td>
<td>Xian Xinghai, piano</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td></td>
<td>at a university in New York, USA</td>
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<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>Zao Feng, conductor</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wu Zhangbin, baritone</td>
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<td>Tao Suoyü, soprano</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Guang Weiran, narrator</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Myanmar Overseas Chinese Army</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Music &amp; Drama Troupe</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Li Ling, troupe director</td>
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<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>Princeton University, USA</td>
<td>First performance in English</td>
<td>Paul Robeson, baritone</td>
<td>Mr. Liu Liangmo brought the score to USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>War Memorial Building, Trenton, New Jersey, USA</td>
<td>New Jersey State Celebration – China Friendship Day</td>
<td>Directed by Dr. John Finley Williamson, accompanied by Lt. John A. David, who completed over 66 missions over Germany William Pheiffer, baritone Eugene Bayless &amp; Lee Fizer, duet Nena Williams, soprano</td>
<td>America Joins with China in Liberty and Democracy; Member National War Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Nov 16</td>
<td>Central Auditorium in Hong Kong</td>
<td>Concert Commemorating Xian Xinghai</td>
<td>Guo Jie, conductor</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Ye Su, baritone</td>
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<td>Ye Shaoyi, soprano</td>
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<td>Jiang Yue, narrator</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Zhonghua Conservatory Orchestra &amp; Chorus with other choirs</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Provincial Taipei Teachers College Hall,</td>
<td>New Year Music Concert</td>
<td>Zhang Shimin, baritone</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>You Huihai, conductor</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Provincial Taipei Teachers College Preparatory School Chorus</td>
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<td>Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Massey Hall in Toronto, Canada</td>
<td>Jia Dena, conductor Around 130 Canadian residents</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951 - 1952</td>
<td>Europe Tour; 3rd World Festival of Youth and Students (East Berlin, East Germany) “For Peace and Friendship – Against Nuclear Weapons”</td>
<td>Cai Shaoxü / Zheng Lücheng, baritone Shu Muo / Liu Pei, duet Zhang Fei, narrator Li Huanzhi, conductor (former student of Xian Xinghai) China Youth Army Music &amp; Drama Troupe</td>
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<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow, Soviet Union</td>
<td>Russian conductor Soviet Union Radio Symphony Orchestra and Chorus Sung in Russian First performance of the cantata’s 2nd version (fully orchestrated)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Tchaikovsky Concert Hall in Moscow, Soviet Union</td>
<td>Guo Shuzhen, soprano Li Delun, conductor Tchaikovsky Conservatory Orchestra &amp; Chorus Sung in Russian except soprano solo</td>
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<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Kobe, Japan</td>
<td>An amateur choir in Kobe Sung in Japanese</td>
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<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>City Hall in Hong Kong</td>
<td>Ling Kehan, conductor 6 Hongkong choirs Ling Kehan Pipe and String Ensemble (Lim Kek Han Philharmonic Orchestra) The second performance was an outdoor concert that was part of the Asian Arts Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Massey Hall in Toronto, Canada</td>
<td>Lai Dewu, conductor Xü Qingqiang, baritone Chen Hailun, soprano Zheng Jianxin, narrator Chorus of overseas Chinese students from Mainland China, Hongkong, and Taiwan</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts in New York, USA</td>
<td>Zhu Chongmao, conductor New York Hai Yun Chorus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Hong Kong Stadium</td>
<td>Yellow River Music Festival Yan Liangkun, conductor Yü Jixing, baritone Wang Yanyan, soprano Tian Yubin &amp; Wang Kaiping, duet Qü Xianhe, narrator Central Music Ensemble Chorus and Month-long Thousand-Voice Choir; Maestro Yan has conducted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Performer/Conductor</td>
<td>Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
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<td>City Hall in Hong Kong</td>
<td>Yellow River Music Festival</td>
<td>28 Hongkong Choirs, Hongkong Symphony Orchestra (Yang Bingshun, 1st violin), Lin Shiming, piano, over 1,000 performances of the cantata</td>
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<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Mar &amp; 7 &amp; 8</td>
<td>Davies Symphony Hall in San Francisco, USA</td>
<td>US-China cultural exchange</td>
<td>Yao Xueyan, conductor (former conductor of the Central Opera House in Beijing), San Francisco Opera Chorus, Performed in Mandarin</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Feb 27</td>
<td>Seneca College Minkler Auditorium in Ontario, Canada</td>
<td>Yellow River Symphonic Concert &amp; US-China Musical Exchange</td>
<td>Li Xincang, baritone, Guo Shuzhen, soprano</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td></td>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td></td>
<td>Jia Dena, conductor, Singapore Symphony Chorus and 9 other choirs</td>
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<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Jun-Jul</td>
<td>Taipei, Taiwan</td>
<td>Concert Commemorating the Anti-Japanese War Victory</td>
<td>Du Hei, conductor, Cai Zhenghua, baritone, Gu Qilan, soprano, Yu Zhangping, narrator, Taipei Philharmonic Chorus, Taiwan Symphony Orchestra &amp; Chorus</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Jul 5 &amp; 6</td>
<td>Taipei Concert Hall</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ren Ce, conductor, Chen Ming, baritone, Fan Yuwen, soprano, Taiwan Philharmonic Chorus, Chen Ming Chorus, Chang Rong Chorus, Accompanied by 2 pianos</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Sep 17</td>
<td>City Hall in Hong Kong</td>
<td>50th Anniversary of the composition</td>
<td>Chen Ming, baritone, Gu Qilan, soprano, Gu Lianbi, accompanist, Philharmonic Orchestra</td>
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<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Jul 7</td>
<td>A school auditorium in Houston, USA</td>
<td>Anti-Japanese War Songs and Yellow River Cantata</td>
<td>Xiao Ji, conductor, Hong Rongxun, baritone, Zhan Yanwen, soprano, Yin Jianren &amp; Yuan Guohong, duet, Song Xiaozhuang, narrator, Huasheng Chorus, Kuangbiao Chorus, Zhonghua Chorus, Organized by the Houston Chinese Culture Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>City Hall in</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yan Liangkun, conductor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Event Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>HK</td>
<td>85th Anniversary of Xian Xinghai’s birth</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Moscow pianist</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>HK</td>
<td>60th Anniversary of Sept 18, commemorative concert</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Yan Liangkun, conductor Lin Kehan Pipe and String Orchestra</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>SGP</td>
<td>Concert of Popular Chinese Songs and Tunes</td>
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<td>Yan Liangkun, conductor Ren Yonglie, baritone Xu Jing, soprano Hong Yuhui, piano</td>
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<td>Central Music Ensemble Chorus Singapore Lihao Chorus</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>SGP</td>
<td>15th Anniversary of Huasheng Chorus</td>
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<td>Guan Dinghang, conductor Zhang Jingbang, baritone Zhang Zehua, soprano Tan Yuwei, narrator</td>
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<td>Huasheng Chorus</td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>SFC</td>
<td>61st Anniversary of Sept 18, commemorative concert</td>
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<td>Ren Ce, conductor Combined Choirs (Shen Lixi, Bucai, Longyin, Beibandao Aiyue, Nanwan Aiyue, Rongrong, etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Selections from the Cantata</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>TPE</td>
<td>Yan Liangkun, conductor Hong Yuhui, piano</td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>SFC</td>
<td>East-West Exchange Symphonic Concert</td>
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<td>Yan Liangkun, conductor He Leiming, baritone Gao Manhua, soprano Ding Guoxun, narrator</td>
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<td>San Francisco Opera Orchestra &amp; Chorus San Francisco Symphony Chorus San Francisco Music Lovers’ Chorus</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>MAL</td>
<td>10 tour performances</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun</td>
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<td>Yan Liangkun, conductor Tian Yubin, baritone Xu Jing, soprano Wu Guangjun, narrator Central Music Ensemble Chorus Local Malaysian Chorus Malaysian Orchestra and Xu Hong from Central Music Ensemble</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Performers</td>
<td>Additional Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Beijing &amp; Xi’an, China</td>
<td>Choir Tour</td>
<td>Yao Xueyan, conductor, United Stars of America Chorus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>Singapore Victoria Concert Hall</td>
<td>50&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Anniversary of Victory over Anti-Fascism</td>
<td>Singaporean conductor, Song Xuewei, baritone, Li Cuitao, soprano, Singapore Symphony Orchestra &amp; Chorus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late Sep – early Oct</td>
<td>Taiwan (Taipei, Taizhong, Gaoxiong)</td>
<td>Taiwan Commemorative Concert of 20&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; century Chinese Music Classics</td>
<td>Yan Liangkun, conductor, Yuan Zhenye, baritone, Wang Xiufen, soprano, Central Music Ensemble Chorus &amp; Local Taiwan Chorus, Central Music Ensemble, Shanghai Youth Symphony &amp; Local instrumental ensembles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 8</td>
<td>Academy of Music, Philadelphia, USA</td>
<td>125&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Anniversary of Philadelphia Chinatown</td>
<td>CACC Chorus of Delaware, Ming De Chorus (Pennsylvania), Chinese Philharmonic Chorus of Pennsylvania, Monmouth Chinese Chorus of New Jersey, Chinese Musical Voices</td>
<td>5 Combined Choirs organized by Chinese Musical Voices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct 21</td>
<td>Chicago, USA</td>
<td>50&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Anniversary of Anti-Japanese Victory</td>
<td>Si Tuhan, conductor, Zhu Yi, baritone, Zao Ling, soprano, Huang Ping &amp; Calland Metts, duet, Dong Cengkong, narrator, Chicago Area Chinese Choirs: Huanghe, Hujin Zhisheng, Liuqin, etc., Du Peijun Youth Symphony</td>
<td>Organized by Yellow River Performing Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 6</td>
<td>Thai-Chinese Chamber of Commerce Auditorium in Bangkok, Thailand</td>
<td>50&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Anniversary of Victory over Anti-Fascism</td>
<td>Wu Lingfen, conductor, Xiao Mingyan, guest Artistic Director, Chen Pengsheng / Cai Guiting, baritone, Qiu Xiuer / Chen Jingfang, soprano, Huang Henan &amp; Wang Zhizhong, duet, Wang Shaoling / Jing Cangguo, narrator, Yue Yunhui Chorus, Hong Yuhi, piano</td>
<td>Proceeds went to the Thai Chinese Cultural Arts Education Fund</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1996 Dec 15</td>
<td>Chulalongkorn University Auditorium in Bangkok, Thailand</td>
<td>50&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Anniversary of Victory over Anti-Fascism</td>
<td>Wu Lingfen, conductor, Xiao Mingyan, guest Artistic Director, Chen Pengsheng / Cai Guiting, baritone, Yang Dingyun, soprano, Wei Anshun &amp; Wang Zhizhong, duet, Jing Cangguo, narrator</td>
<td>Sponsored by the Thai Chinese Cultural Arts Education Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
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<td>Location</td>
<td>Event Details</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>May 17</td>
<td>University of Houston Moores School of Music Concert Hall, USA</td>
<td>Hong Yühui, piano&lt;br&gt;Chinese Music Society’s 39th season Concert: “Jiangshan Wanli Qing” (Sentiments of a Distant Homeland)&lt;br&gt;Xiao Ji, conductor&lt;br&gt;Zhen Haoxian, baritone&lt;br&gt;Li Jia, soprano&lt;br&gt;Liu Lei &amp; Zhang Tianku, duet&lt;br&gt;Song Xiaozhuang, narrator&lt;br&gt;Zhonghua Chorus&lt;br&gt;Minghu Chorus &amp; other music lovers&lt;br&gt;Yellow River Cantata Pipe &amp; String Ensemble (Guanxuan Yuetuan)&lt;br&gt;Yang Bingshun, 1st violin&lt;br&gt;Wu Changlu, pipa&lt;br&gt;Organized by the Houston Zhonghua Chorus</td>
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<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>May 25</td>
<td>National Concert Hall in Taipei, Taiwan</td>
<td>Xiao Ji, conductor&lt;br&gt;Zhen Haoxian, baritone&lt;br&gt;Li Jia, soprano&lt;br&gt;Liu Lei &amp; Zhang Tianku, duet&lt;br&gt;Song Xiaozhuang, narrator&lt;br&gt;Zhonghua Chorus&lt;br&gt;Minghu Chorus &amp; other music lovers&lt;br&gt;Yellow River Cantata Pipe &amp; String Ensemble (Guanxuan Yuetuan)&lt;br&gt;Yang Bingshun, 1st violin&lt;br&gt;Wu Changlu, pipa&lt;br&gt;Organized by the Houston Zhonghua Chorus</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Oct 15</td>
<td>Science Centre Auditorium in Almaty (Alma-Ata), Kazakhstan</td>
<td>Concert Celebrating Friendship &amp; Neighborly Ties; 55th Anniversary of Xian Xinghai’s arrival in Almaty&lt;br&gt;Resident conductor&lt;br&gt;Kazakhstan National Symphony Orchestra</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>May 8-9</td>
<td>Golden Mile Theatre in Singapore</td>
<td>60th Anniversary of the composition of the “Yellow River Cantata”&lt;br&gt;Qiu Li / Fang Songpu, conductor&lt;br&gt;Fan Jinghai / Deng Wenqi, baritone&lt;br&gt;Lü Lianhua, soprano&lt;br&gt;Wang QiFei &amp; Fu Yi, duet&lt;br&gt;Hu Xianting, narrator&lt;br&gt;Cultural Department’s Old Artist Chorus&lt;br&gt;Li Hao Orchestra &amp; Chorus&lt;br&gt;Zao Qixiong / Zheng Feixue, piano</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Oct 15</td>
<td>Grand Auditorium, Macau Cultural Centre</td>
<td>Voices of Friendship Concert&lt;br&gt;Kazakhstan National Symphony Orchestra</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Sep 14</td>
<td>New York, USA</td>
<td>South California Overseas Chinese 50th Anniversary celebration of the establishment of PRC&lt;br&gt;Yang Jie, baritone&lt;br&gt;Wang Yanyan, soprano&lt;br&gt;Liu Naipeng &amp; Ping Xintong, duet&lt;br&gt;Organized by the US-China Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Oct 15</td>
<td>Grand Auditorium, Macau Cultural Centre</td>
<td>14th Macao International Music Festival&lt;br&gt;Yan Liangkun, conductor&lt;br&gt;soloists: Wang Xiufen, Yang Hongii, Ding Yi, Gao Lei&lt;br&gt;Symphony Orchestra &amp; Chorus of the National Opera Theatre of China&lt;br&gt;Shanghai Opera House Chorus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Event Details</td>
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<td>2001</td>
<td>Sep 15-16</td>
<td>Smithwick Theatre, Foothill College, Las Alto Hills &amp; Herbst Theatre, San Francisco, USA</td>
<td>70th Anniversary of the Japanese Invasion of Northeast China (Sept 18, 1931) Timothy Ding, conductor Jenny Lin, piano Silicon Valley Chorus Harmonic Chorus Great Love Chorus Organized by the Chinese American Association of Commerce, San Francisco</td>
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<td>2003</td>
<td>Sep 20</td>
<td>Forbidden City Concert Hall, Beijing, China</td>
<td>The International Festival Chorus Nicholas Smith, conductor</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Jan 16</td>
<td>Arts Esplanade in Singapore</td>
<td>60th Anniversary of the end of WWII and the 100th anniversary of Xian Xinghai’s birth Cao Ding, conductor Yin Zufa, baritone Huang Cailuan, soprano Xie Baochen &amp; Lin Tao, duet Chen Sihong, narrator Ya Ge Chorus Singapore Symphony Orchestra</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jun 10-12</td>
<td>Hukou Waterfall, Shanxi, China</td>
<td>60th Anniversary of China’s victory in its war against Japanese aggression Choir of 300 overseas Chinese from Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Australia, and New Zealand Presented by Yangtze Repertory Theatre of America &amp; Columbia Promotions</td>
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<td>Jun 19</td>
<td>Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center, New York, USA</td>
<td>60th Anniversary WWII Commemoration Concert Pocono Choral Society</td>
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<td>Sep 23</td>
<td>Zhuhai Sports Centre, China</td>
<td>Voice of Xinghai Choral Concert More than 4,000 participants, 60 pianos, 200 violins, 5 orchestras, 16 choirs</td>
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<td>Oct 1</td>
<td>Jordan Hall, Boston, USA</td>
<td>Greater Boston’s Yellow River Ensemble</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Oct</td>
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<td>19th Macao International Music Festival &amp; Centenary of Xian’s birth Perosi Choir &amp; Macao Orchestra Invited by the Cultural Affairs Bureau of Macao</td>
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<td>Nov 5</td>
<td>Woolsey Hall, Yale University, USA</td>
<td>Wanjun Qiao, conductor Organized by the Association of Chinese Students and Scholars at Yale</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nov 11-12</td>
<td>SCO Conference Hall (Singapore Conference Hall)</td>
<td>100th Anniversary of Xian Xinghai’s birth Tsung Yeh, conductor Feng Guo Dong, baritone Ke Lu Wa, soprano Ding Hong Yan &amp; Ma Yi Wei, duet Wang Wen, narrator Yu Jia, pipa Organized by Yangzheng (Yeung Ching, Xian’s alma)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>Performers</td>
<td>Conductors</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>Nov 11</td>
<td>Symphony Hall, Boston, USA</td>
<td>New England Symphony</td>
<td>Jeffrey Rink, conductor</td>
<td>Presented by the Singapore Chinese Orchestra</td>
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<td>Nov 9</td>
<td>John Hancock Hall, Boston</td>
<td>Boston Preview of <em>Nanking</em></td>
<td>NACA (North American Choral Association) choirs</td>
<td>Presented by Yan-Huang Performing Arts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dec 8</td>
<td>Concert Hall, Hong Kong City Hall</td>
<td>30th Anniversary of the Hong Kong China Philharmonic Orchestra</td>
<td>Lim Kek-han, principal conductor</td>
<td>Presented by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jun 23</td>
<td>Beijing Concert Hall &amp; People’s Auditorium (Qingdao), China</td>
<td>2008 Olympic Cultural Festival</td>
<td>Yong Yan Hu, conductor</td>
<td>Invited by the Cultural Ministry of China</td>
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<td>Jul 3</td>
<td>Forbidden City Concert Hall</td>
<td>International Friendship and Goodwill: Perform in Harmony – with Olympic Spirit</td>
<td>452 North American singers from 11 choirs</td>
<td>Produced by Kingsway International</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sep 09</td>
<td>Jiangwan Stadium, Shanghai, China</td>
<td>60th Anniversary celebration of the founding of the PRC</td>
<td>Over 400 choirs across China came together for the performance; more than 20,000 singers participated.</td>
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<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>Esplanade Concert Hall, Singapore</td>
<td>Wu Jie, conductor</td>
<td>6 Combined Choirs</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dec 5-6</td>
<td>Genesis Energy Theatre, TelstraClear Pacific Events Center, New Zealand</td>
<td>Uwe Grodd, conductor</td>
<td>With support from the People’s Republic of China</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>May 08</td>
<td>The Presbyterian Church, Westfield, NJ, USA</td>
<td>Season Finale Concert: We the People</td>
<td>Westfield Symphony Orchestra</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX F: DISCOGRAPHY

The recordings that may be commercially available are listed according to the ease with which they may be obtained. In some cases, the Chinese recordings lack the expected information on the performers and details about the production:

CD / MP3

Xian: Yellow River Cantata and Other Choral Works
Performed by: The Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus
Conductor: Cao Ding
Arranger: Li Huanzhi
Movement 3 omitted.
Label/Series: Marco Polo/Chinese Music, under Naxos
Catalogue No: 8.223613
Barcode: 4891030236134
Physical Release: 01/1993
Individual tracks can be downloaded in MP3 format from
Compact disc has been discontinued by the manufacturer, but copies may still be available at:
- http://www.amazon.com/Yellow-River-Cantata-Pierre-Degeytev/dp/B0005YNB6/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=music&qid=1249918594&sr=1-1

MP3

Xian Xinghai: Yellow River Cantata
Performed by: The Shanghai Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus
Conductor: Cao Ding
Label/Series: Marco Polo/Chinese Music, under Naxos
Catalogue No: 8.223982
Original Release Date: 1994
ASIN: B001MM8KB6
Individual tracks can be downloaded in MP3 format from

MP3

Xian Xinghai: The Yellow River Cantata and Piano Concerto
Performed by: The China National Symphony Orchestra
Release Date: May 5, 2009
Issued by: Unlimited Media
ASIN: B0026M0M1W
Individual tracks can be downloaded in MP3 format from

- http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000S27W60/ref=dm_sp_adp?ie=UTF8&qid=1249973144&sr=8-20

**MP3**

*The Best of the Chinese Chorus* 黄河大合唱
Performed by: The China Philharmonic Orchestra
Release Date: January 1, 2006
Issued by: Pacific Audio and Visual Co.
ASIN: B000S9BWGE
Individual tracks can be downloaded in MP3 format from


**CD**

黄河大合唱 *Yellow River Cantata*
Performers not indicated.
Movement 3 omitted.
Sleeve notes in Chinese, with a short English description of the Yellow River Piano Concerto.
No release date.
ISRC CN-A08-05-374-00/A . J6
Issued by: 北京北影录音录像公司
© Yacht-Master Records Co., Ltd
Phone/Fax: 020-86552771
E-mail: boaterco@sina.com
Compact disc may be purchased at:

- http://www.chinasprout.com/shop/MFM086

**CD**

黄河大合唱 *The Yellow River Cantata*
Performers not indicated.
No sleeve notes.
ISRC CN-F39-99-335-00/A.36
BM-029
Issued by: Yacht-Master
Registered to: 广西民族音像出版社
Phone: 0771-5523201
Fax: 0771-5523277
Compact disc may be purchased at:


**CD**

黄河大合唱 *Chorus of Yellow River*
Performed by: The Central Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus
Conductor: Yan Liangkun
Narrator: Qu Xianhe
Special release commemorating the Chinese people’s war of resistance against Japan, and the 60th Anniversary victory of the anti-facism war.
Special release.
All eight movements recorded (including Movement 3).
Sleeve notes in Chinese, with a short English description of the Yellow River Piano Concerto.
ISRC CN-C21-05-301-00/A.J6
ACD-084
ISBN 7-88319-127-6
Issued by: 北京中唱时代音像出版有限公司
Phone: 010-63429134 / 010-63260840
Fax: 010-63429383
http://www.china-crc.com.cn

CD
黄河大合唱
No English title.
Performed by: The Central Philharmonic Chorus with piano accompaniment
Movement 3 omitted.
No sleeve notes.
No release date.
PCD – 5037
ISRC CA—F12—93—0032—0/ A. J6
Pacific Audio & Video Co.
Guangzhou, China

DVD
黄河大合唱 Chorus “Yellow River”
ISRC CN-I10-2000-236-00/V.J9
MD-02013
Licensed by: Wamer Home Video in Hongkong, Taiwan, and Thailand

DVD
黄河大合唱 Yellow River Cantata
Recorded by: The American Symphonietta, Virginia Youth Symphony Orchestra, and Yellow River Performing Arts
Conductor: Robert Ian Winstin
Live Performance: September 24, 2005 at Pick Staiger Hall, Evanston, Illinois
60th Anniversary of WWII Victory Commemoration
Format: Collector's Edition, English Subtitles
Issued by: ERMMedia (ERM6802)
Release Date: January 15, 2006
Run Time: 81 minutes
ASIN: B000E8M9DE
Compact disc may be purchased at:
  • http://www.numusicdirect.com/
BIBLIOGRAPHY


