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Ho Wai-On

Buddha Song

aka Song of Buddha

for unaccompanied SATB choir
with optional ad lib percussion

何蕙安《佛曲》

四部合唱團清唱

亦可伴以隨意敲擊樂如木魚鐘鼓鈴聲

The music was inspired by what I heard as a child in Hong Kong of Buddhist monks and nuns chanting Buddha i.e. 'nam-mor-or-mi-tor-fo' repeatedly, and a song about a monk that I vaguely remember. Quite often the chanting would be accompanied by percussive hits on wooden fish (sounds like wood block). Instruments used in a Buddhist chant can include wooden fish, cloud-plate (a flat gong), a standing (bowl-shaped) bell, drums, small cymbals... I wrote this for music performance and the piece can be performed by an unaccompanied choir, or if so wished, with ad lib percussion, using percussion of similar sound to those mentioned above. The main rhythmic pattern is that of a regular pulse. For reference, listen to Buddhist chants on YouTube. Since this is music, be inventive with the ad lib percussion.

作曲靈感來自小時在香港聽到僧人誦"南無阿彌陀佛"和唱過目蓮救母。誦佛可以清誦,或邊誦邊敲擊木魚,或再加上鐘鼓磬雲板鈴等,我這曲是音樂作品,演出可以無伴奏清唱,或隨意加上類似上述的敲擊樂,可聽聽一些網上的佛頌作參考,參考而矣,無需跟足,如隨意即興最好。

For music video **Buddha Song** with me playing the wooden fish 亦可一看由我做敲木魚的《佛曲》音樂視頻: <https://youtu.be/6wyX9rAxoLE>

More info 更多相關資料: <https://www.howaion.co.uk/hongkongandme/buddhasong.html>

I wrote **Buddha Song** (called **Song of Buddha** then) when I was a student at the Royal Academy of Music for a competition. The adjudicator was Ruth Gipps. She did not choose my piece but commented disapprovingly on lack of harmony in the 'nam-mor-or-mi-tor-fo' chanting. She liked the song (the 'Ah — ' section) towards the end better as having some sense of harmony, suggesting that's the way I should write composition from then on. I am almost certain she had never heard a Buddhist chant. Whenever I wrote anything using harmony as taught at the RAM, I regarded that as an exercise. I almost never really use "Western harmony" in my compositions.

我在皇家音樂學院做學生時作《佛曲》參加比賽,裁判是英國女作曲家露芙·吉普斯。她沒有選我的作品,批評佛誦(南無阿彌陀佛)缺乏和聲,但後來(唱 '阿— ')歌的部份因有和聲感而較佳,認為這是我可以改進的方向,我想,她是從未聽過佛誦的。我幾乎從來沒有真正地使用“西方和聲”來作曲,每當我用在皇家音樂學院學的西方和聲來寫點什麼時,我覺得我不過是在做習作。

I later came across an article by Ruth Gipps. I vaguely remember she was disapproving of Stravinsky because what he wrote did not quite fit her concept of "from God". I rather worship Stravinsky – so inventive and groundbreaking. I believe that creativity is a gift from God, but it's not for us to judge whether another person's creativity is from God or not. I also believe that I don't write compositions that would do well in competitions.

我看过一篇露芙·吉普斯寫的,她批評作曲家史特拉文斯基,認為他的作品與她認為“音樂來自上帝”的概念不符。我頗崇拜史特拉文斯基,他多麼有創造力和突破性。我相信創作天賦,但不應判斷別人的作品是否來自上帝,而我覺得我的作曲方式是不適宜參加比賽的。

One day, at the Royal Academy, Michael Procter told me he came across my piece in the RAM library, and used it as sight-reading exercise for the RAM choir he conducted. This is the recording I used to make this music video. I was impressed by the choir as it is not easy to sight read this piece – the chanting keeps modulating to unexpected keys and without instrumental support, yet they got everything right.

有一天,在皇家音樂學院,米高·普羅克特和我說,他在圖書館見到我作的《佛曲》,將其用作合唱團的視唱練習,我就是用這個錄音來製作音樂視頻的。合唱團真了不起,此曲佛誦部分是不停地作意想不到的轉調,又沒有樂器支持音準,但合唱團唱得非常準確。

flowing, flexible in rhythm
 Andantino (♩ = 80)

HO WAI-ON

5

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

mp NAM MOR OR - MI TOR - FU - , NAM MOR OR - MI - TOR - FU - , NAM MOR ,

mp NAM MOR OR - MI

mp NAM MOR , OR - MI - TOR

mp NAM MOR OR - MI -

TOR - FU - , NAM MOR OR - MI - TOR - FU - , NAM - MOR ,

- FU - , NAM - MOR - OR - MI - TOR - FU .

OR MI TOR - FU , NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU ,

10

TOR - FU - , NAM - MOR - OR - MI TOR - FU - , NAM MOR OR - MI

OR MI TOR FU , NAM MOR , OR MI - TOR FU . OR MI

NAM MOR OR MI TOR - FU - , NAM MOR OR - MI TOR - FU .

OR - MI TOR FU , NAM - MOR - , OR MI

115

TOR - FU, NAM MOR - OR MI - TOR FU.
 TOR FU, NAM MOR OR MI - TOR FU.
mf NAM MOR, OR MI - TOR - FU, NAM - MOR -
 TOR - FU. *mf* NAM MOR, OR - MI - TOR - FU - , NAM -

20

mf NAM MOR - , OR MI TOR - FU. *mp* NAM MOR OR MI TOR -
mf NAM MOR, OR MI TOR - FU
 OR - MI - TOR - FU. *mp* NAM MOR OR MI TOR - FU,
 MOR, OR MI - TOR FU. *mf* NAM

25

mf FU, NAM MOR, OR MI TOR FU.
mf NAM MOR, OR MI TOR FU, OR MI - TOR - FU.
mf NAM MOR OR - MI - TOR - FU.
 MOR - OR MI TOR FU. *f* OR

30

mp NAM MOR OR MI

NAM - MOR - OR - MI

MI - TOR - FU , , NAM - MOR , OR - MI - TOR FU

35

f TOR FU , NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU , NAM MOR OR - MI - TOR - FU , NAM - MOR ,

mp NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU , NAM MOR OR MI

mp TOR - FU , NAM MOR , OR - MI - TOR - FU . NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU , NAM

40

mp OR MI - TOR FU , NAM MOR , NAM - MOR , NAM - MOR OR MI TOR

TOR FU , NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU .

mf MOR , OR MI

mp NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU , NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU , OR MI TOR FU

45

Musical score for measures 45-48, featuring four staves. The lyrics are: FU. NAM MOR OR MI - TOR FU, NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU. NAM MOR OR MI - TOR FU, NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU. TOR - FU, NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU - , NAM MOR OR MI TOR FU. NAM - MOR OR MI - TOR FU - , NAM - MOR OR MI - TOR FU.

Dynamic markings: *mp*, *mf*, *cresc.*, *p*, *mf*.

Tempo/Performance markings: *mf*, *cresc.*, *p*, *mf*.

moderato ($d=60$)

50

Musical score for measures 50-54, featuring four staves. The lyrics are: AH AH AH AH AH AH AH AH.

Dynamic marking: *f*.

55

Musical score for measures 55-58, featuring four staves. The lyrics are: AH AH AH AH.

Dynamic markings: *dim*, *p*, *f*, *cresc.*, *dim*, *p*, *cresc.*, *dim*, *p*, *cresc.*, *dim*.

Performance markings: *dim*, *p*, *f*, *cresc.*, *dim*, *p*, *cresc.*, *dim*, *p*, *cresc.*, *dim*.

molto *Meno Mosso*

60

p *f poco accel allargando ff*

OR MI TOR - FU , OR - MI - TOR - FU .

p *f poco accel allargando ff*

OR MI TOR - FU , OR MI - TOR FU .

p *f poco accel allargando ff*

OR MI TOR - FU , OR - MI - TOR - FU .

p *f poco accel allargando ff*

OR MI TOR - FU , OR - MI - TOR FU .