

Chinese Mountain Songs

for Treble Chorus, a cappella

Total Duration: c. 8'

1. When Will the Scholartree Blossom?

SICHUAN FOLK SONG

Arranged by Chen Yi

Soprano $\text{♩} = 56$ *f*

Gao gao shan shang yo— a— yi shu o huai yo—

Alto *mp*

yo—

4 *mf* *f*

wei, Shou ba lan gan shie— wang lang lai— yo wei;

yo— yo—

8 *mf* *f* *mf*

Niang wen nu er ya: “Ni wang sha— zi— yo— wei o?”

12 *mf*

shie— Ji shi kai.”— yo wei,

“Wo wang— huai hua shie— Ji shi kai.”— yo wei,

16 *mp* *p*

yo wei, yo.

yo wei, yo.

Unauthorized copying, arranging, adapting, recording, or digital storage or transmission is an infringement of copyright. Infringers are liable under the law.

2. A Ma Lei A Ho

TIBETAN FOLK SONG

Arranged by Chen Yi

f $\text{♩} = 70$

Soprano

f

Alto

A ma lei a ho, la ya la ni, ya la

A ma lei a ho, la ya la ni, ya la

5

ni ye yo, ya la ni ye yo,

mp

ni ye yo, ya la ni ye yo, a ha la ni

9

mp *mf*

a ha la ni ye. A ma lei a ho la ni, ya la ni ya ho

mp *mf*

ye. A ma lei a ho la ni, ya la ni ya ho

13

ya la ni, ya la ni, ya la ni ye, a ha la ni

ya la ni, ya la ni, ya la ni ye, a ha la ni

Commissioned by my favorite women's choir, Kitka, and supported by commissioning grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Rockefeller Foundation, CHINESE MOUNTAIN SONGS is a set of five arrangements, which Kitka premiered June 17, 2001 at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.

These mountain songs are among the many Chinese folk songs I learned when studying composition at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. I selected songs representing provinces in the East, West, North, and South of China, including music of the Han, Zang (from Tibet), Li (from Hainan Island), and Mongolian/Meng (from Inner Mongolia) ethnic groups.

Generally, mountain songs are love songs or work songs, praising beautiful landscapes and sweethearts. This set of mountain songs is arranged in an antiphonal style highlighting the meaning of the text, and also taking best advantage of the venue of the premiere concert.

1. When Will the Scholartree Blossom?

Sichuan Folk Song, from the Han

In the high mountain, there is a scholartree,
The girl leaning against the fence is looking for her boyfriend.
Her mother asks: "What are you looking into?"
"I look forward to the blossom of the scholartree."

高高山上唷啊，一樹哦槐唷喂。
手把欄杆啥，望郎來唷喂；
娘問女兒呀：「你望啥子唷喂哦？」
「我望槐花啥幾時開唷喂。」

2. A Ma Lei A Ho

Tibetan Folk Song, from the Zang

(In this musical setting only nonsense syllables are sung—below is a translation of the traditional words.)

There are many stars in the sky,
Only the Plough is the brightest;
There are many friends and relatives,
Only the parents are the dearest.

阿瑪勒阿俄，啦呀啦尼，呀啦尼也唷，呀啦尼也唷，啊哈啦尼也。
阿瑪勒阿俄啦尼，呀啦尼也俄，呀啦尼，呀啦尼也，啊哈啦尼也。

Cover illustration by Wen Po-jen, 16th century (Ming Dynasty)

English translations by Chen Yi

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE TO PINYIN TRANSLITERATION

This guide can only be considered as approximations; for authentic pronunciation of the Chinese text, it is most helpful to work with a native speaker.

VOWELS

a = as in *car*

except: *yan* as in *banner*

e = similar to *her*

except: *en* as in *men*; *ei* as in *sleigh*

i = as in *pizza*

except: *zhi*, *shi* as in *whirr*

o = as in *more*

u = as in *tuba*

ü = similar to German

CONSONANTS

b, d, f, h, j, p, t, k, l, m, n, s, sh, y, w = similar to English

c = ts

ch = English ch, as in *China*

g = hard g, as in *gong*

q = similar to *ch* sound, but more explosive

r = similar to English r, but with the tongue arched back

x = similar to English s, but with the tongue arched up
(in between English s and sh)

z = English dz sound as in *beds*

zh = similar to *j* sound, but more explosive