Music and Philosophy in Early China

27-28 November 2015
HSS Conference Room, HSS-05-57
School of Humanities and Social Science, Philosophy Program
Nanyang Technological University
Organizer: Dr So Jeong Park
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<td><strong>Alan Chan</strong>, Nanyang Technological University</td>
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- This conference is sponsored by CLASS (Centre for Liberal Arts and Social Sciences), CoHASS, NTU.
- Program Committee: Chenyang Li, Franklin Perkins, So Jeong Park (Philosophy Program, Nanyang Technological University).
Biography

[Session 1: Confucian Musical Discourse]

Chairperson:

Chan Kam Leung Alan

He is Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences at NTU. Previously, he was Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education at the National University of Singapore. He obtained his PhD from the University of Toronto. His research interest includes Chinese Philosophy and Religion, Hermeneutics and Critical Theory and Comparative Philosophy and Religion.

First Presenter:

Michael Puett

He earned his M.A. and PhD from University of Chicago. He is the Walter C. Klein Professor of Chinese History in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. His interests are focused on the inter-relations between anthropology, history, religion, and philosophy. He is the author of The Ambivalence of Creation: Debates Concerning Innovation and Artifice in Early China and To Become a God: Cosmology, Sacrifice, and Self-Divinization in Early China, as well as the co-author, with Adam Seligman, Robert Weller, and Bennett Simon, of Ritual and its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity.

Second Presenter:

Kathleen Higgins

Biography

First Commentator:

**Rina Camus**

She studied Classic Western Philosophy in Rome (Santa Croce). She recently graduated from National Chengchi University, Taiwan, with a doctoral dissertation on Aristotelian and Confucian Ethics. She is currently visiting scholar and lecturer at Nanyang Technological University. Her research interests include Comparative Method, Moral Philosophy, History of Western Thought (Ancient and Medieval), and Phenomenology.

Second Commentator:

**Peter Wong**

He is associated with the School of Historical and Philosophical Studies at the University of Melbourne. He is a Books Reviews Editor with the journal *Sophia*. An itinerant academic, he has taught at University of Melbourne and Deakin University. He is currently working on a manuscript to do with articulating a sense of religiousness in early Confucianism that is non-theistic in nature.
In a number of Warring States and Han texts, music and ritual are often paired together. This paper will be an attempt to explore how and why different texts pair music and ritual and draw distinctions between them. My hope is that an exploration of these pairings will shed light on the contested conceptualizations of both ritual and music in the early period.
Musical Conservatism in Ancient Confucianism

Kathleen Higgins
The University of Texas at Austin, US

Ancient Confucian writings on music display a profound musical conservatism with regard to musical practices and melodies. Confucius complains that the foreign music of the Zheng is licentious and corrupting, and in general he objects to the infiltration of faddish stylistic touches into court music. I will consider the various grounds for this conservatism.

I will argue that given Confucian views about the value of music, there was little room for fashion. One ground for musical conservatism is the belief that music manifests the ontological order of things. Musical relations are understood as analogous to relations in many other dimensions of experience, and thus it is important for musical relationships to be orderly and harmonious in mathematical terms. Another ground for conservatism is that music was believed to have an influence on human relationships and thus to be is vital for the health of the state. As Confucius understood the role of music, it was essential that music have the proper relationship to the tradition in order to serve its ethical and political function.

If we consider the strong association between music and ritual in ancient Chinese thought, however, we can see that the intended result of Confucian musical conservatism was not the ossification of musical structures but instead the continual freshness of music. Music is akin to ritual in having set procedures that are so deeply familiar that one can direct one’s attention to the experiential present. The element of freshness arises through the reiteration of what is established in new circumstances by new generations. According to the Confucian view, to give life to the music by means of musical innovation is to draw attention to the wrong kind of thing; the liveliness should come about through the personal investment of those participating. Perhaps ironically, the Confucian objection to foreign elements in music was aimed at ensuring circumstances in which music would be experienced as maximally alive.
[Session 2: Musical Harmony and Cultivation]

Chairperson:

Winnie Sung

She earned her BA from University of Toronto and PhD from University of New South Wales. For the past few years, her primary research project has been on Confucian thinker Xunzi's thought, focusing in particular on interpreting and working through the implications of Xunzi’s concept of xin (the heart/mind). She is also interested in moral psychology and issues related to self-knowledge and self-consciousness. Some smaller projects she is currently working on include hypocrisy, self-deception, loyalty, and epistemology of belief.

First Presenter:

Scott Cook

He earned his BA in Music in 1986 at the University of Southern California and M.A. and PhD in Chinese in 1995 at the University of Michigan. He previously worked as the Professor of Chinese at Grinnell College (at Grinnell since 1996, Professor since 2009, Cowles-Kruidenier Chair of Chinese Studies since 2012). Now, he is working at Yale-NUS College.

Second Presenter:

Jungeun Jo

She is a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy, Seoul National University. She earned her PhD from the University of London (SOAS) and MA and BA from Seoul National University. Her PhD dissertation is regarding the discourse on music of the Lūshi chunqiu. Her main interest lies in philosophy of music during the Warring States period and the early Han. She is also interested in how the concept of “qi” encouraged philosophical discussions during the late Warring States and the early Han, in a similar way it inspired in-depth discussion on music.
Biography

First Commentator:

**So Jeong Park**

She earned her BA, MA and received her PhD at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea, with a dissertation on Zhuangzi’s philosophy of art. She is currently Lecturer at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Her publications include “Musical Thought in the Zhuangzi: A Criticism of the Confucian Discourse on Ritual and Music”, “Sound, Tone, and Music in Early China: Philosophical Foundation for Chinese Sound Culture”, “A Comparative Study of the Aesthetic Viewpoint in John Dewey and Zhuangzi,” and “Individual and Entirety in Donghak Thought.” She is currently writing a book tentatively entitled *Landscape of Sound: Aesthetic Philosophy in the Musical Theory in Early China*.

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Our knowledge of musical thought in Warring States China comes not only from works associated with its philosophical masters containing texts transmitted directly from that period, but also indirectly from compilations of the (Western) Han dynasty stitched together from a variety of materials, many of which also date from that former period. In terms of musical texts, the most famous of these Han compilations is undoubtedly the *Yue ji* 樂記, or *Record of Music*, which deservedly stands unparalleled among surviving early Chinese musical treatises. There are, however, other invaluable Han-dynasty sources of early musical thought that are no less deserving of our scrutiny. This paper will examine what is perhaps the richest of those other (albeit partially overlapping) sources: the musical portions of the “Xiu wen” 修文 (“Cultivating Refinement”) chapter of Liu Xiang’s 劉向 (77-6 BC) compilation *Shuoyuan* 說苑 (*Garden of Persuasions*). It will explore both how this chapter elucidates the role of music on its own terms and how its passages may relate to associated excerpts from Warring States philosophical literature.
Abstract

Musical Harmony in the Xunzi and the Lüshi chunqiu: Different implications of musical harmony resulting from their dissimilar approaches to the concept of resonance between sound and qi

Jungeun Jo
Seoul National University, Korea

This paper discusses two interpretations of musical harmony around the third century BCE, mainly exploring the Xunzi and the Lüshi chunqiu, and contrasts how the concept of resonance between sound and qi is discussed in each interpretation of musical harmony.

The Xunzi and the Lüshi chunqiu share the same idea of resonance between sound and qi, but their dissimilar philosophical positions cause their views on musical harmony to diverge. The Xunzi, where moral edification guided by ritual is one of the main concerns, supports the moral influence of the sage kings’ music, and ethical resonance between sound and bodily qi serves as firm ground for musical harmony engendering social harmony. In contrast, the Lüshi chunqiu, with its special interest in the cosmic world, advocates the idea of physical resonance between sound and cosmic qi, thereby musical harmony acts as a contributor to cosmic harmony.

In discussing resonance between sound and qi, the Xunzi restricts its scope to the human realm while the Lüshi chunqiu extends it more broadly to the cosmic realm, conveying the idea that humans foster cosmic harmony. I would suggest that this broadened perspective is an adequate reflection of the germinating idea of resonant correlation between the human and cosmic realms during the later Warring States period.
Biography

[Session 3: Music and Emotion]

Chairperson:

Ida Lina Stina Jansson

She earned her BA from University of Oxford and MA from University of Michigan. She achieved her PhD from University of Michigan. Her main teaching and research interests are about the nature of scientific explanations. She has worked on this topic primarily from within the philosophy of physics, but she also has interests in how explanations in other fields, such as metaphysics, are related to scientific ones.

First Presenter:

Franklin Perkins

He earned his BA from Vanderbilt University, and his PhD from Pennsylvania State University. He taught at the DePaul University before joining the faculty of Nanyang Technological University. His main teaching and research interests are in classical Chinese philosophy, early modern European philosophy, and in the challenges of doing philosophy in a comparative or intercultural context.

Second Presenter:

Myeong-seok Kim

He is an assistant professor in the Philosophy Dept. at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea. He has been trained in Chinese philosophy at Seoul National University and the University of Michigan. His PhD dissertation was on the development of the ethical theory of emotions in the Analects and the Mencius, and he is interested in ethics and moral psychology in Chinese philosophy, ancient Greek philosophy, and the early modern British moralists. He has been recently working on the ethical implications of music in ancient Chinese Confucianism.
Biography

First Commentator:

_ida lina stina jansson_,

She earned her BA from University of Oxford and MA from University of Michigan. She achieved her PhD from University of Michigan. Her main teaching and research interests are about the nature of scientific explanations. She has worked on this topic primarily from within the philosophy of physics, but she also has interests in how explanations in other fields, such as metaphysics, are related to scientific ones.

Second Commentator:

Christina Chuang

She is currently assistant professor of Philosophy in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. She received her BA and PhD degree in Philosophy from the University of California, Irvine in 2012. Her research interests include history of ethics, moral psychology and Indian Philosophy. Her main interest is in the nature of moral judgments and the practicality of ethical theories. In particular, she is interested in developing a more holistic account of the nature of moral judgment that incorporates Early Modern Scottish philosophy and empirical psychology.
Abstract

Music and Affect in the Legacy of Xing zi ming chu

Franklin Perkins
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

The Xing zi ming chu (性自命出; Dispositions come from what is Allotted) [XZMC] includes an unusually explicit model for how human affects (qing 情) arise at the intersection of our dispositions (xing 性) and events in the world. The process by which emotions are stimulated is analyzed in terms of the movement of qi 氣, which is stimulated by things in the world. While one can find traces of this account of affect in the Mengzi, its closest application appears to be in discussions of music, particularly the “Yuelun” and “Lilun” chapters of the Xunzi and the “Yueji” chapter of the Liji. The link between this psychological model and music may go back to its origins, as music plays a particularly central role in self-cultivation in the XZMC. In this paper, I will examine the link between discussions of music and the particular psychological model that appears in XZMC, particularly as music relates to self-cultivation. Aside from clarifying the application and development of this psychological model, I hope to address the tensions between the psychological model that appears in the music and ritual chapters of the Xunzi and the explicit discussions of human motivation in other Xunzi chapters.
The Ethical Implications of the Musical Expression of Emotions in Early Confucianism

Myeong-seok Kim
Yonsei University, Korea

The purpose of this essay is to examine what kinds of ethical implications the idea of musical expression of emotions might have in the context of the Analects, the “Yuelun” (Discourse on Music) chapter of the Xunzi, and “Yueji” (Records on Music) in the Liji (Book of the Ritual). Commenting on the first poem of the Poetry that its song and music express joy and sorrow to an appropriate degree, Confucius pointed out that music has the function of expressing human emotions. However, this idea that music can make its listeners have special affective experiences through expressing or arousing emotions has encountered severe criticism since the publication of the On the Musically Beautiful by Eduard Hanslick in the nineteenth century. According to Hanslick, the core of emotion is conceptual representations, and music cannot express emotions because music, unlike language, is incapable of representing concepts or thoughts. In this essay, I show that the ancient Chinese discourse on musical expression of emotions is still meaningful today by presenting Jerrold Levinson's and Jenefer Robinson's counterarguments to Hanslick, which argue that a piece of music could be interpreted to express cognitively higher emotions such as hope when its musical movement is considered in the temporal context of the musical work as a whole. Most importantly, I argue that the phenomenon where a listener feels the same kind of emotions as what music expresses through emotional contagion or empathy is ethically significant because it opens a new interpretive horizon that enables one to view one's own life and others around oneself from a positive perspective.
Biography

[Session 4: Graduate Student Session]

Chairperson:

**Sor-Hoon Tan**

She holds degrees from Oxford University, National University of Singapore, and University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. Her doctoral research was a comparative study of the moral and political philosophy of early Confucianism and John Dewey. She has been teaching at NUS since 2000, and was Head of Philosophy Department (Jul 2007-Jun 2010). Her research interests are John Dewey's Pragmatism, Pre-Qin Confucianism, Twentieth-century political thought in China and New Confucianism, Comparisons of Western and Chinese moral and political philosophy and multiculturalism and intercultural philosophy.

First Presenter:

**Qi Feng Lin**

He earned his BA from National University of Singapore and MA degree from Yale school. Currently, he is pursuing his PhD degree in McGill University. His main research interests are literature and environment, ecological economics, Chinese philosophy, environment ethics and ecological economics.

Second Presenter:

**Shun-Ran Wang**

He earned his BA and MA from Wuhan University. Currently, he is a PhD candidate in philosophy of Chinese University of Hong Kong. His research interests are Confucian thought, Chinese culture and its modern interpretation and music education in Confucianism.
Biography

First Commentator:

**Shun-Ran Wang**

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Second Commentator:

**Qi Feng Lin**

He earned his BA from National University of Singapore and MA degree from Yale school. Currently, he is pursuing his PhD degree in environmental ethics in McGill University. His main research interests are environment ethics, Chinese philosophy, literature and environment, and ecological economics.
Expressing Harmony in the Landscape: Zhuangzi’s tianlai (“panpipes of tian” 天籟) and Aldo Leopold’s Song of the Rio Gavilan

Qi Feng Lin
PhD candidate in Environmental Ethics, McGill University, Canada

Metaphors serve as a rich source of ideas for philosophical thought. However, ancient Chinese thought and modern Western thought employ different strategies of meaning. In this paper, I compare Zhuangzi (c. 375–300 BCE) and Aldo Leopold’s (1887–1948) use of the metaphor of music to articulate harmony in the landscape. This comparison will enrich our understanding of the different modes of thinking between the two worldviews as well as our understanding of our relationship towards the biophysical environment.

Zhuangzi used tianlai (“panpipes of tian” 天籟) to describe how the diversity of myriad things in the landscape gives rise to harmony. According to the commentary by Guo Xiang (c.252–312), tianlai refers to how the myriad things in their diversity share a common characteristic, a unity, of each being spontaneously so of itself (ziran 自然). The implication is that we humans need to enter into a state of ziran while recognizing ziran in the myriad things. Further, we are not superordinate to the myriad things; rather, we are things among things.

The American conservationist and wildlife ecologist Aldo Leopold’s described a figurative song of the Rio Gavilan watershed in northern Chihuahua, Mexico. He described the song as “a vast pulsing harmony—its score inscribed on a thousand hills, its notes the lives and deaths of plants and animals, its rhythms spanning the seconds and the centuries.” Leopold used this song metaphor, which is related to his use of the concept of noumenon, to criticize the disruption of the characteristic functioning of the land by excessive roads and tourists as well as scientists who study the landscape from a reductionistic and disciplinary perspective.

I conclude by discussing the efficacy of the two music metaphors in promoting an ethical sensibility towards the biophysical environment in present-day society.
On Confucian Appreciation of Music: Reading of the Record of Music

Shun-Ran Wang
PhD candidate in philosophy, CUHK, Hong Kong

Music, from the recent Confucian point of view, plays an important role in the Six Arts education (Liu Yi zhi Jiao, 六藝之教) of primordial Confucianism. Music and music education (Yue Jiao, 樂教) are commonly accepted by ancient East Asia Confucianism as an approach to self-cultivation, education and governance. Nowadays, more and more scholars, especially in mainland China, concentrate their efforts on the study of music education and aim to explore the rich cultural and philosophical heritage in Confucian music education. For these scholars, they always want to build up an effective system for people to follow in the process of cultivation. They also published lots of papers from different aspects to proof the real effects happened upon the participants according to the ancient classics. In my view, if they treated the effectiveness as a primary element of music education, they were all missing a very basic problem to explain: “how to appreciate the musical work in the ancient tradition.”

This paper aims to certify the effectiveness of music education in the tradition of Confucianism by clarifying the “right” approach for every listener to appreciate the Musical Work. And in this paper, we only focus on the ideas and cases recorded in Record of Music (Yue Ji, 樂記), as it’s a great and canonical classic in the tradition of music education. Starting with the cases, we try to argue the so-called “right” approach could make the musical education much more effective with separating the approach in different steps, such as how to appreciate the musical instrumentals, how to appreciate the temperature (Yue Lü, 樂律) used in the musical work, how to appreciate the arousing of the emotions (both the process and the results) according to the music, and so on. In each steps, the effectiveness of the music education is directly based on the relationship of mind/heart and music in the aspect of sound (Sheng, 声), voice/melody (Yin, 音) and music/drama (Yue, 樂). On the other hand, as the appreciation of the musical work includes the rational dimension more than the emotional dimension in the Confucian tradition, we should also interpret how to appreciate the musical work with historical background to achieve the goal of self-cultivation and how to reduce the differences between the composers, the players and the listeners in this process of self-cultivation.
[Session 5: Theory and Practice in Music]

Chairperson:

Soon Keong Ong

He received his BA (Hons) from the National University of Singapore, and Master and PhD from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Cornell University. He specializes in the history of modern China and Southeast Asia, with particular research interest in Chinese migration, overseas Chinese communities, and trading ports. Prior to joining NTU, he taught at the University of Missouri-Columbia and the University of North Florida in the United States. He is currently working on a manuscript about Xiamen and its emigrants from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century.

First Presenter:

Joseph S. C. Lam

Joseph Lam is Director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Michigan and Professor of Musicology, the School of Music, Theatre and Dance, the University of Michigan. A musicologist and sinologist, Lam specializes in the musics and cultures of Southern Song (1127-1275), Ming (1368-1644), and modern China (1900 to present). Lam regularly lectures in the US, Mainland China, Asia and Europe. His most recent publications include: Songdai yinyueshi lunwenji: lilun yu miaoshu/Historical Studies on Song Dynasty Music: Theories and Narratives (Shanghai: Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press, 2012), and “Zhongguo yuyue jinyan jinting: xinlilun yu xin shijian di yige ge'an” (Zhongyang yinyue xueyuan xubao, 2014). Currently he is working on a monograph on kunqu and a series of articles on performing Song dynasty Chinese music in 21st century and global contexts.

Second Presenter:

So Jeong Park

She earned her BA, MA and received her PhD at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea, with a dissertation on Zhuangzi’s philosophy of art. She is currently Lecturer at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Her publications include “Musical Thought in the Zhuangzi: A Criticism of the Confucian Discourse on Ritual and Music”, “Sound, Tone, and Music in Early China: Philosophical Foundation for Chinese Sound Culture”, “A Comparative Study of the Aesthetic Viewpoint in John Dewey and Zhuangzi,” and “Individual and Entirety in Donghak Thought.” She is currently writing a book tentatively entitled Landscape of Sound: Aesthetic Philosophy in the Musical Theory in Early China.
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Second Commentator:

Franklin Perkins

He earned his BA from Vanderbilt University, and his PhD from Pennsylvania State University. He taught at the DePaul University before joining the faculty of Nanyang Technological University. His main teaching and research interests are in classical Chinese philosophy, early modern European philosophy, and in the challenges of doing philosophy in a comparative or intercultural context.
Singing Shijing Poems: Historical, Theoretical and Practical Interpretations

Joseph S. C. Lam
University of Michigan, US

Shijing or the Classic of Poems is an anthology of court and commoner songs from ancient China that Confucius (551-479 BCE) compiled. Historically read as a Confucian classic by generations and generations of Chinese scholar-officials, Shijing includes many poems that vividly comment on ancient Chinese musical aesthetics, theories on musical structures and styles, and prescriptions for performance. Since the Northern Song, many Shijing poems were actually sung as ritual or didactic songs by young scholars at academies, generating a tradition of shiyue (music for singing Shijing poems) and a body of theoretical treaties and notated scores. In fact, one of the earliest available and decipherable notation of Chinese music is the score for singing twelve Shijing poems, one that Zhu Xi (1130-1200), the Neoconfucian sage, has preserved for posterity. Recently, as 21st century China strives to reconstruct its classical heritages, singing of Shijing poems has once again become a cultural and musical concern. To contribute to the current reconstruction of shiyue, this paper examines ancient Chinese concepts on musical structure and performance, and explores ways they can be realized in contemporary singing of Shijing poems.
Abstract

**Sound and Notation: Comparative Study on Musical Ontology**

**So Jeong Park**  
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore

Music is said to consist of melody, rhythm, and harmony. Sound is assumed as if something that automatically follows once musical structure is determined. Sound, what actually impinges on our eardrums, has been so long forgotten in the history of musical discourse. It is ironic that we do not talk about music which we really hear every day but rather are exclusively concerned about the abstracted structure behind it. This is a legacy of ancient Greek ideas about music, which contemporary musical discourses are mostly based on. Under this tradition, imperceptible music has priority over perceptible music in reality.

On the contrary, music was explained in the framework of sound, tone, and music in ancient China. Although different thinkers tried to define music in a variety of ways, sound was never completely expelled out of their musical theorizations. On one hand, music was regarded as a continuum of sound and tone, namely, perceptible music and intelligible music in its structure. On the other hand, music was considered as something that cannot be reduced to its notation but associated with much broader contexts.

This paper explores two different traditions in ancient Greece and China in terms of their musical ontology. By answering differently to the question, “How is music as such?” they developed different views on such issues as the relationship of music and emotion, the role of music in society, the symbolization of music and etc.
[Session 6: Dao of Music]

Chairperson:

Hui-Chieh Loy

His primary interest centers around Early Chinese Philosophy and most of his previous and current research are done in this field and in related researches on East Asia (e.g., history of science and technology and contemporary political ideas). Other interests include Ancient Greek Philosophy, Early Modern and Contemporary Ethics and Political Philosophy. He is currently on the editorial board for Chinese Comparative Philosophy for Philosophy Compass.

First Presenter:

David Chai

He earned his Masters (2005-2006) and Doctorate (2006-2012) degrees from the University of Toronto where from 2010-2013 he served as a Sessional Lecturer for the Department of Philosophy and the Department of East Asian Studies. Professor Chai’s principal area of research is Chinese philosophy with a focus on Daoism, specifically Zhuangzi. Secondary areas of research include Modern European philosophy, phenomenology, hermeneutics, and comparative philosophy. Professor Chai endeavors to bring together the philosophical traditions of East and West wherever possible and is currently doing so by way of the doctrine of meontology—the study of nothingness.

Second Presenter:

Meilin Chinn

She earned her PhD from University of Hawai‘i-Manoa. She specializes in Aesthetics and Chinese Philosophy. Other areas of research and teaching include Philosophy of Music, Buddhist Philosophy, Phenomenology, and Philosophy of Nature. Her current work focuses on several areas: musical meaning and the senses, the relationship of music to truth, and the imagination in Chinese Philosophy. She also maintains a long running investigation into the void, emptiness, and nothing. Her publications include essays on music and nature (“Sensing the Wind: The Timely Music of Nature’s Memory,” Journal of Environmental Philosophy) as well as music and the self (“Persona: Resounding Selves and Empty Music,” On the True Sense of Art: A Critical Companion to the Transfigurations of John Sallis).
Biography

First Commentator:

Yuet Keung Lo

Born and educated in Hong Kong, he received his doctorate in Chinese Studies from the University of Michigan and taught in North America for some years before joining the Department of Chinese Studies at the National University of Singapore in August 1999, where he was Assistant Head in 2000-2001. He received a Faculty Excellent Teaching Award in 2007-2008. He was Visiting Fellow at the Department of Philosophy, Beijing University (1986-87); Institute for Research in Humanities, Kyoto University (2001); Department of Chinese Thought and Culture, Tokyo University (2001); Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy, Academia Sinica (2004); Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University (2007); and the Research Centre for Chinese Philosophy and Culture, Chinese University of Hong Kong (2008). Currently, he is serving on the Advisory Board (2012-2015), Singapore Journal of Buddhist Studies, and the Editorial Board of two other academic journals, Asian Culture 亞洲文化 (Singapore) and Xinya luncong 新亞論叢 (Hong Kong and mainland China). He is also the Series Editor of the Book Series on Modern Chinese Thinkers, World Scientific (Singapore).

Second Commentator:

Hui-Chieh Loy

His primary interest centers around Early Chinese Philosophy and most of his previous and current research are done in this field and in related researches on East Asia (e.g., history of science and technology and contemporary political ideas). Other interests include Ancient Greek Philosophy, Early Modern and Contemporary Ethics and Political Philosophy. He is currently on the editorial board for Chinese Comparative Philosophy for Philosophy Compass.
Abstract

The Musical Purity of Daoism

David Chai
Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

When it comes to voicing its objections to the traditional model of music as an emotionally laden, morally transformative experience, Daoism is indubitably the most vociferous of the pre-Qin period. The Zhuangzi constantly chides various music masters for blindly misleading the world as to what lies beyond the five notes. The ritualization of music has turned it into a source of fixation no longer capable of encapsulating the movement of Dao. As Dao’s ability to harmonize the world is rooted in its own stillness, quietude, and emptiness, this paper will argue that music too must embody and convey these qualities to listener and performer alike. Using examples from the Zhuangzi and Liezi, I will further argue that Daoist musical purity is not to be found in the moral or aesthetic symbolism of its notes but in its ability to return people to their true form. In this way, music becomes an apophatic encounter with Dao.
Abstract

**Only Music Cannot Be False**

**Meilin Chinn**  
Santa Clara University, US

My paper examines and develops the provocative idea from the *Yue Ji* (樂記 Record of Music) that, “Only music cannot be false” (唯樂不可以為偽). The sentence occurs in chapter 6, in a section called *Yue Xiang* 樂象 or the Images of Music, wherein music is described as a kind of blossoming of virtue. Yet the passage alone does not do much to explain the assertion that music cannot be false or answer attendant questions, such as: Is it only virtuous music that cannot be false? Is music virtuous because it cannot be false? Or is it incapable of falsehood because it is virtuous? More fundamentally, how could music be either true or false? I will attempt to answer such questions within the context of further understanding why it was commonly believed by many important early Chinese philosophers that music bears and transmits feelings and images, cultures, distant lands and eras, and perhaps most importantly, personal character.
From NEC to Symposium Venue
HSS Conference Room, School of Humanities and Social Sciences
Address: HSS-05-57, 14 Nanyang Drive, Singapore 637332

1. 103 M
Nanyang View: Head west on Nanyang View

2. 4 M
Nanyang View: Slight left to stay on Nanyang View

3. 147 M
Nanyang View: Turn right at Nanyang View

4. 16 M
Nanyang View: Turn right to stay on Nanyang View

5. 188 M
Nanyang Ave: Slight left at Nanyang Ave

6. 3 M
Covered walkway along Nanyang Avenue: Slight left at Covered walkway along Nanyang Avenue
7. 396 M
Covered walkway along Nanyang Avenue: Turn right to stay on Covered walkway along Nanyang Avenue

8. 69 M
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9. 61 M
Covered walkway behind Student Services Centre: Slight right at Covered walkway behind Student Services Centre

10. 43 M
Covered walkway between S3 and Student Services Centre: Slight left at Covered walkway between S3 and Student Services Centre

11. 61 M
Walkway between S3 and HSS: Turn left at Walkway between S3 and HSS

12. 25 M
School of Humanities and Social Science: Turn right at School of Humanities and Social Science

13. END
Conference Room (HSS)
Arrive at Conference Room (HSS), School of Humanities And Social Science (HSS), 14 Nanyang Drive, HSS-05-57.
Participants Email  
(In alphabetical order of surname)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rina CAMUS</td>
<td>National Chengchi University</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rcamus@ntu.edu.sg">rcamus@ntu.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>David CHAI</td>
<td>Chinese University of Hong Kong</td>
<td><a href="mailto:davidchai@cuhk.edu.hk">davidchai@cuhk.edu.hk</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Alan CHAN</td>
<td>Nanyang Technological University</td>
<td><a href="mailto:alanchan@ntu.edu.sg">alanchan@ntu.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Meilin CHINN</td>
<td>Santa Clara University</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Mchinn@scu.edu">Mchinn@scu.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Christina CHUANG</td>
<td>Nanyang Technological University</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cchuang@ntu.edu.sg">cchuang@ntu.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Scott COOK</td>
<td>Yale-NUS, Singapore</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Scott.cook@yale-nus.edu.sg">Scott.cook@yale-nus.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kenneth DEAN</td>
<td>National University of Singapore</td>
<td><a href="mailto:chsdek@nus.edu.sg">chsdek@nus.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kathleen HIGGINS</td>
<td>The University of Texas at Austin</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kmhiggins@austin.utexas.edu">kmhiggins@austin.utexas.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lina JANSSON</td>
<td>Nanyang Technological University</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Idajansson@ntu.edu.sg">Idajansson@ntu.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Jungeun JO</td>
<td>Seoul National University</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jungeunjo@gmail.com">jungeunjo@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Myeong-seok KIM</td>
<td>Yonsei University</td>
<td><a href="mailto:geomungo@yonsei.ac.kr">geomungo@yonsei.ac.kr</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Joseph LAM</td>
<td>University of Michigan</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jsclam@umich.edu">jsclam@umich.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Chenyang LI</td>
<td>Nanyang Technological University</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cyli@ntu.edu.sg">cyli@ntu.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Qi Feng LIN</td>
<td>McGill University</td>
<td><a href="mailto:qi.lin@mail.mcgill.ca">qi.lin@mail.mcgill.ca</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Yuet Keung LO</td>
<td>National University of Singapore</td>
<td><a href="mailto:chsloyk@nus.edu.sg">chsloyk@nus.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Hui-chieh LOY</td>
<td>National University of Singapore</td>
<td><a href="mailto:philoyhc@nus.edu.sg">philoyhc@nus.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Soon Keong ONG</td>
<td>Nanyang Technological University</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Ongsk@ntu.edu.sg">Ongsk@ntu.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>So Jeong PARK</td>
<td>Nanyang Technological University</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sipark@ntu.edu.sg">sipark@ntu.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Franklin PERKINS</td>
<td>Nanyang Technological University</td>
<td><a href="mailto:FPerkins@ntu.edu.sg">FPerkins@ntu.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Michael PUETT</td>
<td>Harvard University</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Puett@fas.harvard.edu">Puett@fas.harvard.edu</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Winnie SUNG</td>
<td>Nanyang Technological University</td>
<td><a href="mailto:whcsung@ntu.edu.sg">whcsung@ntu.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Sor-Hoon TAN</td>
<td>National University of Singapore</td>
<td><a href="mailto:phitansh@nus.edu.sg">phitansh@nus.edu.sg</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Shun-Ran WANG</td>
<td>Chinese University of Hong Kong</td>
<td><a href="mailto:shaunwong@whu.edu.cn">shaunwong@whu.edu.cn</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Peter WONG</td>
<td>University of Melbourne</td>
<td><a href="mailto:peter.wong@unimelb.edu.au">peter.wong@unimelb.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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