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"Music in the Service of Cultural Diplomacy: the Youth Orchestra Tours"¹

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With this essay, I take state-sponsored overseas performance tours by Taiwanese youth orchestras as a means of engaging with the conference theme of "Taiwan's Cultural Diplomacy." I offer a historical perspective by training my focus on a tour by a 54-member youth symphony orchestra to Manila in September 1969 where they performed as part of the opening festivities for the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

The 1969 youth orchestra trip to the Philippines invites us to question what motivated the ROC government to underwrite and organize this operation. As I will describe, the venture was impeccably curated. No detail of the group's presentation was left to happenstance. The tour was an example of cultural diplomacy, that is, it essentially represented an "interest-driven governmental practice" (Ang, Isar and Mar 2015: 365). Cultural diplomacy was an important vehicle employed by the Nationalist regime as it struggled to assert its standing as the legitimate government of China, particularly from the mid 1960s through the 1970s.

¹ This essay is part of a large-scale research project that is in the early stages of research and discovery. The broad scope of the project is the institutionalization of Western art music in Taiwan in the 1960s and 1970s with an emphasis on the education of child prodigies, particularly those hailing from the studio of Lee Shu-teh, the so called "Mother of Violin Education in Taiwan."

The Republic of China Discovers Cultural Diplomacy

Before detailing the circumstances out of which the CSO's 1969 tour took shape, a brief look at the early history of the performing arts in cultural diplomacy in the Republic of China is useful. The Nationalist government first developed the notion of using music as a tool for cultural diplomacy in the early 20th century on the Chinese mainland. This practice congealed around Peking opera and Mei Lanfang (1894-1961), the legendary male actor of female roles. One of the first notable events took place in 1915 when Mei performed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs's banquet hall at a meeting of the American College Club in Beijing. This performance served to spark the foreign community's interest in Peking opera, and, more importantly, it encouraged government officials to further explore the art form's potential diplomatic uses.

Peking opera's ambassadorial role reached its pre-1949 height with Mei's tour in 1930 to five major American cities. Though privately funded, this tour represented an opportunity to bring glory to the entire Chinese nation. Foreign appreciation for this uniquely Chinese art was extremely meaningful in the climate of national self-doubt that followed over a century of unequal treaties and widespread feelings of humiliation and cultural inferiority. Literatus Qi Rushan, who was a personal friend of and playwright for Mei, was instrumental in meticulously curating Mei's art for the American gaze. Writing of the upcoming tour, Qi expressed: "I believe that Americans will welcome Chinese drama, moreover, the art can take its position in the world. At the same time, I also believe Americans and Europeans are capable of appreciating Mei Lanfang's art. With these two points being tenable, then if Mei performs in America, it will

certainly be a success. This success will greatly benefit Mr. Mei, Chinese opera, and the feelings between the people of China and America" (cited in Guy 2005:50). Mei's six month American tour "took the hearts of American theater lovers by storm . . . and was hailed as a triumph of cultural exchange" in both China and the United States (Goldstein 1999:377).²

In the post-1949 world in which two Chinese regimes vied for legitimacy and recognition, both "Free China" and "New China" dispatched Peking opera troupes to Europe and the United States.³ As anthropologist Virginia Dominguez observed, over the twentieth century, nations increasingly invoked cultural arguments to "justify (rationalize? legitimate?) their claims to statehood" (2000: 29). As both regimes based their claims to legitimacy at least partly on cultural grounds, the touring of quintessentially (and flamboyantly) Chinese performing art forms served this function well.

Other performing art forms also served as tools for diplomatic exchange, including *nanguan* (a type of chamber music and opera that has enjoyed high social status among Hokkien people in China and the diaspora), whose frequent exchanges between Taiwan and the Philippines inform the cultural and political landscape surrounding the CSO's 1969 Manila tour. *Nanguan* originated in southern Fujian province. However, after 1949, the center of *nanguan* dissemination shifted to Taiwan and other areas with substantial Hokkien

² Mei Lanfang had already performed in Japan in 1919 and 1924. He also toured Moscow and Berlin in 1935, where he inspired German playwright Bertold Brecht's concept of the alienation affect in performance. Mei's last overseas tour was to Japan in 1956. Other significant early tours by Peking opera performers include Cheng Yanqiu's extended stay in Europe from January 1932 to April 1933.

³ For more on the dispatching of competing Peking opera troupes from the ROC and PRC, see Guy 2005:43-61 and Thorpe 2016:137-159.

communities, such as the Philippines, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Of the traditional musical genres thriving in Taiwan at mid century, *nanguan* was unique in that it had deep roots in Taiwan, but was also from the Chinese "homeland" (unlike Peking opera, for example, which was distinctly "not-of-Taiwan"). As musicologist Wang Ying-fen has argued, "*nanguan*'s multiple roles as the music of local Taiwanese, music of the homeland of southern Fujianese and overseas Hokkiens, and a regional genre of Chinese music made it a perfect choice for the KMT to use as an anti-communist propaganda tool" (2016:72). *Nanguan* became a viable vehicle for proving the "ROC's legitimacy as the holder of Chinese national culture to the overseas Chinese and moreover the world" (ibid). The KMT viewed overseas Chinese communities as vital to its political struggle due to their potential influence with foreign governments and the possibility of gaining their financial support. Therefore, the KMT actively engaged in outreach. This meant sending entertainment troupes to the Philippines, among other venues, such as with a two-month long tour to the Philippines in late 1959 by a Ministry of Defense supported entertainment troupe that presented *nanguan* and Taiwanese opera (*gezaixi*), as well as showing propaganda films (Wang 2016:73). The KMT also sponsored several *nanguan* clubs in Manila who occasionally travelled to Taiwan to play for local *nanguan* enthusiasts. Notable large-scale tours by Philippine-based *nanguan* groups to Taiwan took place in 1959, 1960, and in May 1969, just months before the Republic of China Children's Symphony Orchestra landed in Manila. In true cultural exchange, Taiwan-based *nanguan* groups also visited the Philippines, including a fifty-nine day tour in late 1961 and early 1962 (ibid.). *Nanguan* activities provide a window onto the ROC state-supported interaction between

Taiwan and the Philippines through various musical exchanges in the years around the time of the CSO's Manila visit.

The First Youth Symphony Orchestra Tour

Both Peking opera and *nanguan* were key musical components in "Chinese national culture" as constructed and propagated by the KMT, and upon which the regime's legitimacy claims partially rested.⁴ As a complement to traditional music, the KMT also embraced Western classical music as it represented modernity and advancement. In fact, when it came to establishing music education in public schools, the curricula focused almost entirely on Western music (Chen 1998). The state established several symphony orchestras with the earliest, the Taiwan Provincial Garrison Headquarters Symphony Orchestra 台灣省警備總司令部交響團, being founded on 1 December 1945.⁵ It was, in fact, many years before a professional symphony orchestra in Taiwan reached a respectable international standard. However, the Republic of China Children's Symphony Orchestra 中華民國兒童交響樂團 (CSO, hereafter), which was formed expressly for the purpose of travelling to the Philippines, was quite impressive by youth symphony orchestra standards at the time. Sending this orchestra abroad, underscored the ROC's image as a progressive and modern nation.

⁴ Wang Ying-fen asserts "that *nanguan* was arguably the only local Taiwanese music endorsed by Chinese music circles" on Taiwan and "by the KMT as part of Chinese national culture" (2016:72).

⁵ While this ensemble's name and administration has changed many times over the years, the contemporary Taiwan National Symphony Orchestra claims its history as its own.

The CSO flew to Manila on 15 September 1969 and returned to Taiwan ten days later on 24 September. While in Manila they gave six public concerts, performed at the birthday celebration of the Marcos's nine-year old daughter, and did some sightseeing. The ROC Ministry of Education's Cultural Affairs Office covered all of the expenses, save a few meals treated by the orchestra's local hosts. This governmental support not only included paying the travel expenses for the children as well twelve accompanying adults, but also the hiring of Helen Quach, who would rehearse and conduct the ensemble. Quach was born in Vietnam and trained in Australia. At the time of the tour, she was arguably one of the world's most prominent orchestra conductors of Chinese descent, and she was also one of only a tiny number of female conductors anywhere in the world to achieve international standing. Two years prior to the Manila tour, Quach had won an international conducting competition that came with the honor of acting as an assistant to the New York Philharmonic's legendary conductor Leonard Bernstein.

The three years prior to the tour witnessed a good deal of various forms of exchange between Taiwan and the Philippines beginning with the declaration of a "Sino-Philippine Friendship Year" on 25 March 1966. In addition to the nanguan exchanges mentioned above, the Taipei Symphony invited Filipino conductor Ramon Tapales to lead its 9th concert in 1967. The concert was organized in celebration of the friendship year and was attended by Taipei Mayor Henry Kao and the Philippine Ambassador to the R.O.C. Raul T. Leuterio, both of whom gave speeches before the concert. *The Free China Review* noted that Tapales "helped several promising young violinists" during his two-week long stay in Taiwan (Jan. 1968, 58). In February 1968, the world-famous Bayanihan

Philippine Folk Dance Company presented a performance for the Pacific Area Travel Association meeting in Taipei. Ambassador Leuterio arranged this performance, which was attended by "government dignitaries and members of the diplomatic corps" (*Free China Review*, March 1968, 58). Incidentally, the founder of the Bayanihan Company, Helena Benitez, was elected to the Senate of the Philippines in 1967; Benitez was in the audience at the concert held at in Taipei's Zhong Shan Auditorium when the CYO previewed its program two days prior to their departure for Manila. Below, I return to this event and Benitez's comments on the orchestra's presentation.

It appears that conductor Helen Quach's earlier success performing in the Philippines was an important factor leading to the ROC receiving an invitation to send a youth orchestra to perform for the opening of the CCP. Quach had conducted five concerts in Manila to great acclaim in June 1969, the last of which took place before an audience of 8,000. When Quach landed in Taiwan on 24 June, she came bearing a letter from Imelda Marcos, the First Lady of the Philippines, inviting Quach to bring a youth symphony orchestra from Taiwan to Manila to perform as part of the festival (Dai 1969a).

According Liu Changbo, who was then the Director of the Second Division of the MOE's Cultural Affairs Office and the key official responsible for the administration of the tour, a good deal of the impetus for the orchestra's trip to the Philippines came from the support of eminent writer and philosopher Lin Yutang, who happened to be spending the summer of 1969 in Taiwan. Lin was acquainted with Helen Quach who invited him to come south and hear her conduct Tainan's San-B Children's String Orchestra. He was deeply impressed with the ensemble of young musicians and immediately supported the idea of

Quach bringing together the nation's most gifted young musicians to form a youth symphony orchestra to perform in the Philippines.⁶ Lin hoped that she might "prepare for international consumption a musical version of the so-called 'Manchu Han Imperial Feast' 滿漢全席. Such a display of talent would surely surprise and shake up the international music world!" (Liu 2004:6) With this statement we see Lin expressing a feeling of patriotism—though more a pride of ethnicity than of loyalty to a particular nation-state—and kinship with this gifted ensemble of ethnically Chinese children. The expression of pride over the mastery by Chinese youth of this European-derived music runs throughout the writings on the successes of musical prodigies during the 1960s and 1970s. Indeed, the rapid expansion and institutionalization of Western art music training and performance in the days before Taiwan's so-called "economic miracle" took off begs the question of why Taiwanese families invested rather daunting sums of money—not to mention time—on their children's education in Western art music? Also, what motivated the Nationalist government to support the education in and performance of this high-art tradition? Part of the answer to these questions surely lies in the association of Western art music with forward-looking progress, as Taiwan moved towards modernization and development.

Once Lin Yutang returned to Taipei, he immediately contacted the MOE's Cultural Affairs Office and put forth a proposal that was approved and forwarded to the Legislative Yuan where it received the enthusiastic approval of both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Overseas Community Affairs

⁶ The children had to pass a rigorous audition to join the orchestra. Most of the string players came from Tainan's San B childrens string orchestra. Most of the wind players were students at the Kuang Jen Catholic School in Taipei.

Office.⁷ Soon, the Legislative Yuan approved the project and ordered the MOE Cultural Affairs Office to quickly make preparations for the Philippine tour. Why did the government undertake such a project? Liu Changbo offered the following explanation:

At that time, the circumstances surrounding our nation's diplomatic relations witnessed the increasing threat of isolation.⁸ The Chinese Communists were using "ping-pong diplomacy" in the United States and sport diplomacy. There was no harm in our nation trying "musical foreign diplomacy" to counter and stage a surprise attack. This would certainly make international audiences recognize our nation's potential and marvel at our progress (2004:6).

The orchestra was invited to perform during the second week of the three-month long festival. The creation of the arts center was the pet project of Imelda Marcos, who first announced her intentions to see such an institution established during her husband's 1965 presidential campaign (Espiritu 2015:145). The early history of the CCP is in itself a story of the arts being put to work in the arena of international diplomacy. Within the first few months of opening, the CCP hosted performances by the London Philharmonic, the Grand Ballet Classique from

⁷ According to Liu Changbo's account, in an effort to promote his proposal, Lin Yutang personally contacted the Director of the Ministry of Education Yan Zhengxing and the Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Zhou Shukai.

⁸ The potential loss of the ROC's diplomatic relations with the Philippines began to look like a distinct possibility when President Marcos announced in January 1969 that "We in Asia must strive toward a modus vivendi with Red China . . . Before long, Communist China will have increased its striking power a thousand-fold with . . . nuclear weapons . . . We must prepare to co-exist peaceably with Communist China" (cited in Haberer 2009:80).

France (which was accompanied by the Philippine Symphony Orchestra), an opera company performing Western opera from Japan, traditional dance from India, a South Vietnamese marionette puppet group, and classical piano virtuosi from Germany, Israel, and the United States, among other performing artists (Dai 1969a and Castro 2011). Interestingly, the ROC Ministry of Defense's Luguang Peking opera troupe also performed in the CCP about a month after the center's grand opening on 3 and 4 October 1969.

The appearance at the gala for the opening of the Center (8 September 1969) by Ronald Reagan, then Governor of California, who attended as a representative of President Nixon, and the US Ambassador Henry Byroade, among other officials, further illustrates that an important function of the CCP was to serve as a site for the promotion of foreign relations between the Philippines and other nations (Castro 2011, 120).⁹ There was a strong American connection to the Center as the US Government had made a large financial contribution towards its construction. Imelda Marcos had apparently gained the favor of US President Lyndon Johnson on an official state visit to the US in 1966 where she managed to procure \$3.5 million in funding for the CCP's construction (ibid., 111). While it is beyond the scope of this essay to discuss the diplomatic relations, or colonial histories, between all of the players involved in the CCP, it is worth noting that the Center's construction and the pageantry surrounding its

⁹ The show that opened the CCP was a production titled the *Dularawan* whose story was based on a mythical-historical event in Philippine history. The music was written by Filipino composer Lucrecia Kasilag and was performed on an orchestra of bamboo instruments and gongs from the Philippines and other Southeast Asian musical cultures (Castro 2011, 123-124).

opening were very much a display of anti-Communist alliances—underwritten in part by the United States.

Preparing to Represent the Republic of China

The orchestra members would serve as representatives of the Republic of China while in Manila. Before they headed on their important overseas mission, tour organizers curated the children's appearance as well as their comportment. One of the orchestra's trumpeters, T.C. Chao, with whom I've been in contact, shared with me some of the details.¹⁰ Chao explained that the uniforms the children wore were tailor-made at Taipei's top tailor shop, MGM Tailor. The boys were provided with a suit, a white shirt, and a bow tie. The girls were fitted with suits and round-neck shirts. All of the children were given shoes and socks to go with their custom-made uniforms. Chao commented, "During those years, people couldn't afford to have tailor-made suits, they were for the rich and famous people. So, you can realize how much money the government spent on this project" (e-mail correspondence, 13 March 2019). The kids were even taken to the Grand Hotel—surely the most exclusive venue in Taiwan at the time—and taught how to dine western style. They were instructed on the use of knives and forks, and had lessons in proper table manners. As further evidence that the government spared no expense in preparing the children for their trip, Chao noted that when the orchestra rehearsed in Tainan, a month before they left Taiwan, it was very hot. The tour organizers had the rehearsal space air

¹⁰ My sincere thanks are due to National Taiwan Normal University music professor Apo Hsu (Hsu Ching-hsin) for connecting me with T.C. Chao, who now lives in Shanghai. Chao and I have corresponded via e-mail and international courier.

conditioned, which he noted was very expensive at the time. As he observed, "only rich people could afford to have it. The Cultural Affairs Office sent people to take care of all of the day-to-day affairs. They even brought us to the park for fun on Sunday. That period was quite pleasant" (ibid.).

Two weeks before the ensemble left for Manila Dr. Lin Yutang and Wang Hongjun, Director of the MOE's Cultural Affairs Office, travelled to Tainan to hear the orchestra's progress for themselves. Following the rehearsal, Director Wang remarked that "it really is fantastic; the children's display fully expresses our next generation's vitality and dynamism" (Cai 2005: 46).

Photos of Dr. Lin Yutang and Wang Hongjun, Director of the MOE's Cultural Affairs Office, observing an orchestra rehearsal in Tainan with Helen Quach conducting. Wang and Lin's visit took place on 30 August 1969 (Cai 2005: 46).

Two nights before flying to Manila, the orchestra performed their program at the Zhongshan Auditorium in central Taipei. Even though it was a rainy evening, the house was packed with more than 2,000 attendees. Reports of the event described a scene of near pandemonium as eager listeners arrived only to discover that there had been a few glitches in how the tickets had been issued. In some cases, several people held tickets for the same seat. In a few instances, arguments between those seeking entrance nearly turned into physical brawls. Numerous officials and some of the island's most well regarded classical musicians were in attendance that night. The officials included Vice President Yen Chia-kan 嚴家淦, Secretary General to the President Chang Ch'un 張群, and

Director of the Ministry of Education Chung Chiao-kuang 鍾皎光, among others. The *China Daily* reported that Philippine Senator Helena Zoila Benitez 本尼德茲 was present, too. She was cited as saying, "the performance of these young Chinese children is wonderful" adding that "the orchestra will certainly surprise their Filipino audiences since, while there are youth orchestras in the Philippines, their members are older than those of the CSO. Therefore, this group led by Helen Quach will be the first true youth symphony to perform in the Philippines" (中華日報, 15 September 1969).

Photos of seated officials, the audience, and the orchestra (from Hsin Ming Feng's family scrapbook).

Once the audience was settled, the concert began with a program of 18th and 19th century European pieces, including Mozart's *Third Violin Concerto in G major*, Mendelsohn's *Violin Concerto in E minor*, and Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* (with a different young violin virtuoso playing the solo parts for each of the four movements). As an encore, they played a patriotic Chinese song "Su Wu the Shepherd."¹¹

The *China Times* reported that the packed audience went crazy 瘋狂 over the orchestra's wonderful playing (中國時報, 15 Sept. 1969). Their applause displayed enthusiastic gratitude for the fine performance; they simply would not

¹¹ I have yet to find a copy of the program for the concert. I have cobbled together the titles of the pieces from various sources. Whether or not they played "Su Wu the Shepherd" as an encore has not been confirmed in all sources: further investigation is needed.

stop clapping until the orchestra played an encore, and even then, Quach made seven curtain calls before the audience finally dispersed.

What accounts for the audience's eagerness to hear this young orchestra and to see them off on their overseas trip? Was it simply an eagerness to hear an orchestra play Western art music (and if so, what was driving this interest?), or did the crowd's enthusiasm stem from a sense of national pride? These questions are tied up with the larger issue of the expanding institutionalization of Western art music (in terms of education, performance venues and ensembles, etc.) in mid-20th century Taiwan.

The night before they flew to Manila, the orchestra gave one more concert. This time they performed before an exclusive audience, including Chiang Kai-shek and Soong Mei-ling, as well as the wives of the former and current Vice Presidents, among others. This event, which took place in the auditorium of the Hua Hsing Children's Home on Mt. Yangming, was marked by much pomp and circumstance, all of which demonstrated a subject-ruler hierarchy with Chiang Kai Shek in the role of the supreme, yet benevolent dictator. Newspapers detailing the gathering including a description of Chiang Kai-shek's corn-yellow Zhongshan suit (yellow, of course, being the color long associated with Chinese emperors) and the first lady's blue and white qipao. Before the event started, three orchestra members presented the reigning couple with two gold-embossed concert programs and a tape recording of the orchestra's performance housed in a carved wooden box.

Chiang and Soong smiled and applauded for two minutes at the performance's end. Quach and the children bowed and paid tribute in return 鞠

躬致敬。At the end of the evening, the President was cited as saying, "[they] played very well" while the first lady commented, "the kids were very cute, and Helen Quach conducted very well." The *United Daily* news reported that all of the children felt that the President and the First Lady were benevolent, and they expressed their desire to work hard and make them proud while on their trip to the Philippines. (聯合報, 15 Sept. 1969).

The pageantry continued the next day at the Songshan airport as the group processed across the tarmac on their way to board their China Airlines flight to Manila. Proudly donning their custom-made uniforms, the kids were lead by two older members of the group, one carrying a large ROC flag and the other carrying a flag especially designed for the tour. They were surrounded by government officials, military officers, and journalists who were eager to get a good shot for the next day's newspaper.

Photos from Hsin Ming Feng's family scrapbook and Nanette Chen's family scrapbook. Video from interview with Ming Feng.

Nine Days and Many Appearances in Manila

Within 8 or so hours of leaving Taipei on the morning of September 15th, the CSO arrived at the Malacañang Presidential Palace where they played at the birthday party for the Marco's nine year old daughter Irene. Both President Ferdinand Marcos and Imelda were in attendance along with a gaggle of children and representatives from the overseas Chinese community. Even though there were language barriers between the kids from the orchestra and the

local children, they shared gifts, snacks, and laughter (中華日報, 17 September 1969). At the party, eight year old Hsin Ming Feng—who quickly became one of the tour's featured stars—sang two patriotic songs in excellent intonation and with a bright voice: "The Youth of Free China"自由中國的少年們 and "Allow the Nation's Flag to Wave in the Sky" 讓國旗在空中飄揚. "As soon as he started to sing, the listeners were moved; some of the overseas Chinese had tears in their eyes" (Hsin 2008:31).

The next day centered around the orchestra's dress rehearsal in the CCP. On the evening of the 17th, they gave the performance around which the entire tour was organized. The 2000-seat auditorium was filled to capacity. Of political significance, the performance (like all the others on their tour) opened with the "Philippine National Anthem" which was followed by the "Republic of China National Anthem." The concert received excellent reviews in the local newspapers. At the program's end, all attention turned to Imelda Marcos, who was seated in a box in the hall's first ring. Drawing on the cuteness factor of Hsin Ming Feng and Chen Chinn-horng, Quach dispatched the diminutive eight and seven year old violinists to the second floor to present Imelda with gifts: the ensemble's flag and the CSO's cassette tape. The *United Daily News* reported the details of this exchange.

First Lady Marcos clasped the hand of one of the kids, and took about seven minutes as she led them down from the second floor to the stage. She shook the hand of conductor Helen Quach, and then, that of every one of the players; she praised them lavishly. At Mrs. Marcos's suggestion, seven-year old [sic.] Hsin Ming Feng sang "Free China Youth" 自由中國的

少年。¹² The event didn't conclude until 10 PM, after which everyone attended a cocktail party. Mrs. Marcos personally served every child a helping of roasted pork. The party continued until 12:20 (Dai 1969b). The next night, they gave a second performance at the CCP. Again, every seat in the auditorium was filled. The CCP staff even added three extra rows of temporary seating near the stage. Like the first night, two of the Marcos's children presented the group with flowers. Following the thunderous applause at the program's end, the orchestra played, as a musical thanks to Imelda Marcos "Dahil Sa Iyo" (Because of You). She was well-known for singing this, her "signature love song," at her husband's campaign rallies (Castro 2011:110). Incidentally, she sang the song directly to President Lyndon Johnson on the Marcos's 1966 state visit the evening when she procured US \$3.5 million in support of CCP's construction (ibid.).

It is beyond the scope of this essay to document all of the events surrounding the CSO's other concerts and activities during their final three days before heading back to Taiwan. Suffice to say that the media in Taiwan continued to report on the CSO's reception, especially details of diplomatic or perceived political significance. Of particular importance, it seems, was a performance for an audience of overseas Chinese.¹³ Quach brought this performance to a close with "Su Wu the Shepherd," which is significant since the orchestra appears to only have played this patriotic song before Chinese

¹² Hsin Ming Feng told me that he was eight, not seven. He believes that his age was intentionally misrepresented by the media to make him appear even cuter and more talented (interview with author, Taipei, Taiwan, 3 January 2019).

¹³ The three other performances were at the University of the Philippines, University of Santo Tomas, and a Catholic middle school for Overseas Chinese students.

audiences, such as with their two Taipei concerts on the eve of their departure for Manila. This piece, which narrates the plight of a Han dynasty diplomat who was captured while on a mission to a foreign land and detained under harsh conditions for nineteen years, provided an apt metaphor for the Nationalist government in exile on Taiwan, and perhaps also for the overseas Chinese living in Manila. The "Qiaobao" (overseas Chinese) were deeply moved, reported the *United Daily News*, and swarmed Quach and the children after the performance seeking autographs to memorialize the event (Dai 1969b). They even composed a thank you poem for Quach in which they begged her to have the children play for them one more time before they returned to Taiwan. The last line read: "Please for us Filipino-Qiaobao, perform one more time; allow us to hear again the sounds of our fatherland" 請為旅菲僑胞再作一次演奏，讓我們一聽祖國之音吧！ (Dai 1969b). The children's school schedules made it impossible to grant their wish. Nevertheless, the Qiaobao gifted all of the children with a new outfit: the boys got a Filipino style shirt and western-style pants and the girls received beautiful flowery dresses.

Victorious Return to Taiwan

The CSO returned to Taiwan on the morning of 24 September. Yet, they still had a few appearances to make. At 8 AM on the 25th, they were invited to a Western-style breakfast by the China Youth Anti-Communist National Salvation Corps 救國團, and they were each awarded a memorial certificate. Afterwards, the Taipei City government treated the kids to a trip to the Zhongshan Children's Park. In the late afternoon, the Cultural Affairs Office hosted a welcoming party cum

media event and award ceremony at the Ambassador Hotel in downtown Taipei. Headlining the event was the presentation by Soong Mei-ling of gifts to Helen Quach, the staff, and the children. To Quach, Soong gifted a signed photograph of her and Quach which was mounted in a jade-inlaid frame. Soong presented each of the twelve staff members who accompanied the group to Manila with a gold coin commemorating Chiang Kai-shek's 80th birthday. The children received silver coins. The Director of the Ministry of Education, Chung Chiao-kuang, also presented gifts. Helen Quach was given a golden baton, the staff members were each awarded medals, and all of the orchestra members gained another memorial certificate to add to their collection. Director Chung was cited in the *United Daily News* (26 September 1969) as saying that he felt that the success of the group in Manila completely represented the intelligence of Chinese children. He expressed his hope that the children would continue their hard work and continue to win honor for the nation.

Photos of the event, including one of Hsin Ming Feng, who was asked to sing one last time.

Conclusion

The "Republic of China Children's Symphony Orchestra" took off from Taipei's Songshan Airport for the Philippines nine days after the Jinlong team landed to a heroes' welcome as the Little League Baseball World Champions. The notion that these young musicians, like the Jinlong players, would represent the best of the nation on the international stage was fresh in the minds of the kids and government officials alike. A couple of days before they went abroad, a reporter

for the *United Daily News* asked the kids how they felt about their upcoming trip. Lin Cho-liang, a violinist who—like a number of the orchestra players—went on to enjoy a career as world-renowned musician said, "Our Chinese baseball team won first place; when we go the Manila, we must also perform wonderfully."¹⁴ An article about Helen Quach published two days after their return, and titled, "Patriotic and Dedicated to Her Work," begins: "The tour by the Republic of China Children's Symphony Orchestra concluded to perfection. This is another good tiding following on the heels of the Jinlong baseball team's world championship, and it furthers our belief that the phrase, "heroes emerge from youth" 英雄出少年, is not without meaning" (*United Daily News*, 27 September 1969). Even Chiang Kai-shek compared the orchestra and the baseball team saying that "both evidence the high intelligence of the Chinese people; particularly, they embody the spirit of cooperation and moral integrity" (*United Daily News*, 31 October 1969).

There were obvious parallels in the ways in which the ROC government employed these gifted young performers (i.e., the musicians and the baseball players) to support their ideological purposes. First, the most obvious of these was simply the value it placed in having outstanding ROC citizens appear in foreign venues—all the better if they were children since their talent and youth signaled the promise of a bright future. Simply put, this forwarded the claim that the ROC was the better of the two Chinas (or, more appropriate to the times, the

¹⁴Making a play on the "bang," which is the first syllable in the word "baseball" and sounds like a word meaning "excellent," Lin Cho-liang was quoted as saying, "Our Zhonghua softball team won first place, when we go to Manila, we must perform well 人家中華棒球隊得第一名，這回我們去馬尼拉，非表演得很『棒』不可." *United Daily News*, 14 September 1969.

KMT was the legitimate Chinese administration—proof of which was that their citizens were prospering). Second, on the domestic front, the success of these young citizens provided something around which the nation could rally. This enthusiasm was evidenced by the sell-out crowd at the Zhongshang Auditorium on the eve of the orchestra's departure for the Philippines, and by local media's heavy and detailed coverage of the ensemble's activities. Similarly, the mania surrounding the ROC's participation in the Little League Baseball World Series is legendary (see Yu and Bairner 2008, for specific examples). Third, the government took full advantage of both the baseball team's presence in the US and the orchestra's presence in the Philippines to garner support from the respective overseas Chinese communities. For the struggling KMT regime, the overseas Chinese communities were potentially important in terms of both the local connections that "could aid brokerage with foreign governments" and in terms of finances (ibid., 229). Later, overseas Chinese came to represent an important voting block in Taiwan elections. Like the events staged for the orchestra with overseas Chinese in the Philippines, the ROC ambassador to the United States organized similar events whenever the Taiwan's little league players arrived (Yu and Bairner 2008:224).¹⁵

In an extended report published in the *United Daily News* the day that the CSO returned to Taiwan, Liu Chang-bo (the Director of the Second Division of the MOE's Cultural Affairs Office during the time of the tour) reflected on the

¹⁵ The ROC embassy staff in the US arranged dinners for the overseas Chinese, and prepared "patriotic signs, flags, and slogans" . . . every national team needed to consult with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs over where to go, what overseas Chinese and other people to meet, and how many national flags to carry" (Yu and Bairner 2008:224).

meaning and the rewards of the CSO's trip to the Philippines. He commented that while in Manila, he heard some of the overseas Chinese say that they had always believed that Chinese people were only good at business; but now, after seeing the high level of accomplishments of these children, they understood that Chinese also are well cultivated in music. "Everyone agreed that Chinese are great! This added a bright smile to the faces of the overseas Chinese" (Dai 1969b). According to Liu's understanding, the Chinese community in Manila was generally divided into two main factions; but on the occasion of the CSO's visit, they joined forces and worked together to create welcoming activities. "With the great power of music and the ability of a musical atmosphere to bring people together, the community was united" (ibid.) Moreover, he felt that since Mrs. Marcos placed a good deal of importance on this event, diplomatic relations between the Republic of China and the Philippines would surely be enhanced.

While the CSO was the first orchestra of gifted young musicians to be sent on a diplomatic tour, it was certainly not the last. The next high profile tour was dispatched in 1976 to the United States where the "Hwa-Mei Orchestra" 中華管線樂團 (also lead by Helen Quach) performed in more than 25 venues around the country as part of the USA's bicentennial celebrations. A review of Hwa-Mei's performance at Lincoln Center in New York City published in *Musical America* (a trade magazine of national distribution), opened: "With so much attention being paid to Communist China during the last few years, Americans may be forgetting the treasures that Nationalist China has to offer" (Goldsmith 1977:25). Peking opera troupes, other musical groups, and, of course, baseball teams, all

played a role in the Republic of China's strategy for remaining present in the international arena, and for providing its citizens a focus for their national pride.

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