

A talk on Jiang Wenye by Professor CC Liu
Sunday 5 December 2010 14:30-16:30

Jiang Wenye's Life and Work

Jiang Wenye (1910-1983), a native of Taibei County in Taiwan, went to Japan when he was 13, to further his secondary school and tertiary education in electrical engineering. During his three years at an advanced technological institute in Tokyo, he also took up vocal training in the evening at the extramural department of an academy of arts which is now the Music Faculty of the National Tokyo University of Arts. After graduating from his electrical engineering studies, Jiang gave up his engineering profession and embarked onto a musical career.

Jiang Wenye was a gifted baritone, won prizes at two Japanese National vocal competitions, one in 1932 and one in 1933. However, Jiang was not satisfied with his vocal achievements and switched to composing. He studied with Japanese composers and analysed the works of Hungarian composer Bartok and Russian composer Stravinsky. He was also overwhelmed by the concerts in Tokyo. Jiang was totally absorbed into his creative musical writing. From 1934 to 1937, Jiang won prizes in four National competitions in composition in Japan. His orchestral piece *Taiwan Dance* won a special award at the 11th Olympic in 1936 in Berlin. In 1938, his piano work *Duanzhang Xiaopin* (Individual pieces of piano works) won a award in composition at the Fourth International Musical Festival in Venice, Italy. Jiang was the only composer during that period in both Japan and China to have won so many prizes.

Jiang Wenye returned to Beiping from Japan in 1938 and taught at Beiping Normal University. He stayed in China ever since. During the turbulent years of the 1950s and the Proletarian Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, Jiang suffered one after another humiliations and inhuman treatments which had for a period of time seriously

endangered his health. However, Jiang was a born composer and persisted in his composing activities through out his entire life, despite the fact that his works were unable to get performed and published during his life time.

Jiang Wenye's compositions cover almost all musical forms and are in large quantity, including orchestral works, chamber music, piano pieces, dance music, operas, choral and solo vocal works, religious songs, etc. Many of them have now been published and recorded. There will be conferences and publication of his complete works this year as 2010 is his centennial birthday.

This talk, which will be illustrated by power-points and recordings of selected works of the composer, will cover the life and work of Jiamg Wenye.

References

Since all the references are written in Chinese, readers are advised to refer to the Chinese version of this synopsis for the titles of the reference publications.

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Prepared by CC Liu