

Music in State Order and Cosmic Rulership

Afterwards, the House of Zhou deteriorated and became decadent; the rites collapsed and music went bad; the various feudal lords acted according to their whims and competed in the enjoyment of local practices. The tunes of Sang Jian on the upper banks of the Pu River,¹ as well as those from the states of Zheng, Wei, Song, and Zhao, filled the air and traveled far. Plugging and clogging up one's heart and ears, so that one forgot all sense of harmony and balance, throwing government into disorder, and causing harm to the people, these tunes caused extreme illness and docked years off of one's life.²

Music in early China was especially valued for its intimate connection to ritual and the state. As one of the Six Classics of the pre-imperial period, music was officially revered as a critical part of Central States and Zhou cultural identity.³ Even prior to the rise of the Six Classics as an intellectual genre and course of study, music in the Zhou period was linked to ritual and the royal court in a variety of ways. First, it constituted an integral part of ritual services to ancestors and other spirits, whether in the form of sacrificial rites, divination, or worship. Second, it could be expressed in the form of the Odes (詩),—a select musical repertoire of the Zhou royal court—that garnered value for its lyrical insights into the everyday life and moral, emotional strivings of aristocrats and, possibly, commoners.⁴ Third, it was considered to be one of the Six Arts in which a man of higher status in Zhou society would be educated.⁵ As a critical part of Zhou education and the rites, music developed and was cherished in conjunction with them, often promoted most publicly by Confucians (more precisely: the

Ru) and other members of society invested in helping construct and maintain a sense of cultural heritage and social coherence.

The following brief summary of various ritual uses of music at court prior to the Warring States revolution in cosmological thought—ca. the fourth century BCE—should situate the reader within a context of public, and often political, musical performances that were part and parcel of Zhou court ritual. These public contexts provide the backdrop for most early Chinese discussions of music and the state. Audiences usually consisted of rulers, elites, and noblemen, rather than lower classes. As Ingrid Furniss has demonstrated in her recent book on instrumental arrangements in tombs, when Eastern Zhou ensembles of instruments appeared with bell and chime stone sets (often, in the central compartment of a tomb), this usually signified the use of music in formal ritual ceremonies.⁶ Wooden instruments, when they appeared without bells and chime stones, were generally separated from ritual vessels and placed in a side compartment. Such an arrangement seems to signify their use in warfare or more private forms of entertainment and chamber music.⁷

Since Shang and Zhou times, it had been a long-standing practice in ancient China to use music to conduct religious ceremonies to appease and glorify one's ancestors and heroes. Certain forms of Zhou music, such as the "Elegantiae" (*ya* 雅) and "Lauds" (*song* 頌),⁸ which later constituted parts of the *Canon of Odes*, were known to have been the musical standards at the Western Zhou court and were integral to various rituals involving human connection to the spirit world.⁹ Through ritual procedure and proper performance of the Odes, humans could establish ties with particular deities or ancestors. They could make requests, give thanks, celebrate victories and glorious powers, and honor an array of willful and cognizant deities. For instance, in the *Canon of Odes*, Mao version, Ode number 274 ("Mao 274," for short), singers proclaim how they seek blessings from Zhou ancestors such as the illustrious King Wu, King Cheng, and King Kang, using the expressive potential of an imposing array of bells, drums, stone-chimes, and pipes.¹⁰ We see here that humans, with the help of music and other ritual behaviors, could link together the social and spiritual realms, communing and communicating in a lasting way with the spirit realm.

This same function for music can be observed in the *Zhou yi* (*Book of Changes*) under the hexagram for *Yu* 豫: "The 'Commentary on Images' states: 'Thunder issuing forth and Earth being aroused. (These are the trigrams that make up) *Yu*. The former kings thereby composed their music to honor virtue, presenting it grandly to Shangdi, the high god of the Shang and Zhou peoples, and matching it up with that for their oldest ancestor 象傳: 雷出地奮, 豫。先王以作樂崇德, 殷荐之上帝, 以配祖考。'"¹¹ In this hexagram passage, music was thought to have been an explicit creation of

rulers to commemorate virtue and thereby please their various gods and ancestors. It was therefore a tool for ritual communion that likewise served the selfsame function as the sacrificial object presented to the spirits for their pleasure and appeasement.

The Zhou state also sanctioned official musical performances to promote harmony and continuity, not just with respect to the ancestral and spiritual realms but with respect to dynastic and cultural longevity as well. As Martin Kern states: “Its sacrificial hymns not only constitute the ritual situation and celebrate the core ideology of lineage continuity, they also, by their very linguistic structure, represent ritual coherence and continuity as such.”¹² Many of the Odes found in the *Canon of Odes* mention how music might be used to express social order as well as the power and prestige of the royal court. Mao 242 emphasizes the organization and ritual layout of musical performances prepared for the purpose of appeasing the dynastic ancestors. At the same time, it impresses upon its audience the majesty and organization of the Zhou ruling house:

虞業維樅，賁鼓維鏞。於論鼓鍾！於樂辟靡！於論鼓鍾！於樂辟靡！鼙鼓逢逢，矇瞍奏公。

On the upright posts and cross-beams with their spikes; Hang the big drums and large *yong*-bells. Oh, well-ranged are the drums and bells, And merry is the Moated Mound. Oh, well-ranged are the drums and bells! And merry is the Moated Mound. Bang, bang go the fish-skin drums; The sightless and the eyeless (musicians) ply their skill.¹³

This jubilant passage glorifies the ritual arrangement of King Wen’s famed “Moated Mound,” named Bi Yong 辟靡. Since King Wen had set up a prosperous, continuous dynasty, it is fitting that his musical instruments would be properly arranged in ritual readiness to celebrate and express the glory of the Zhou social sphere. Not only does the name, Bi Yong, connote harmony, but the spatial layout of musical instruments signifies dynastic and far-reaching social order by pointing to an organized and impressive arrangement of resources and men.¹⁴

The commemorative tradition of dynastic musical performance continued in a similar vein during the Spring and Autumn (722–481 BCE) and Warring States (481–221 BCE) periods, even as more variegated stories of legendary sages and heroes began to emerge in the literature and lore of the period. In texts dating from the Warring States, we gain a sense of the state regularization and codification of certain dances and musical styles. Music gained meaning not only as a medium of specific spiritual and dynastic goals but as it became defined by stylistic repertoires with moral

implications as well. In the “Canon of Emperor Shun,” a chapter of the *Canon of Documents* (*Shu jing* 書經) that likely dates from the later Warring States period, the author describes state music as a highly organized institution, requiring an official functionary, who is both specialized master as well as innovative sage-leader:

帝曰：「夔！命汝典樂，教胄子。直而溫，寬而栗，剛而無虐，簡而無傲。詩言志，歌永言，聲依永，律和聲。八音克諧，無相奪倫，神人以和。」夔曰：「於！予擊石拊石，百獸率舞。」

Emperor Shun says: “Kui, I command you to codify the music and instruct the noble sons in it. . . . Let them use poems to verbalize their intents; songs to chant their speech; sounds to support their chants, and pitch-standards to harmonize their sounds. The eight [instrumental] timbres in tune with one another, none usurping another’s position—thus may humans join with the spirits in harmony.” Kui responded: “Yes, indeed! For when I strike the stones and tap the chimes, the hundred beasts are compelled to dance.”¹⁵

This intriguing passage highlights the various aspects of a royal musical performance, which, it states, spans a continuum from the recitation of poetry and speech to the harmonization of the eight instrumental timbres with each other, ultimately resulting in dancing among all humans and beasts. The overall effect is a harmonious and coordinated chorus of action that joins earthly beings with spirits. Indeed, such a performance could symbolize the state’s ability to bring all beings together in organized, patterned harmony.

The role of the royal Music Master in the passage above is pivotal in enabling the entire ritual communion to take place. Kui, as commanded by Emperor Shun, is not only a teacher to the noble sons leading the performance. He is the mastermind who “codifies (*dian* 典),” or regulates and systematizes, musical ritual so that harmony and beneficial communication with the spirits might occur in a consistent fashion throughout the ages. This reference to the codification of music represents an attempt to give justification to what was already by the time of this writing an emergent cultural repertoire of music, including a vast array of song lyrics so admired by members of the aristocratic and *shi* classes, including Confucius and his followers. The reference points not just to ritual music, but to the phenomenon of officially sanctioned music that is the organized possession of the state, as well as to the official sage-bureaucrat, or the royal Music Master, who enables such music to be spiritually efficacious in the first place.

The *Zuo zhuan* depicts ritual contexts that reveal not only the various uses of music in society, but also its use as a tool for proper diplomatic communication. The Odes were a part of ritual performances sung at court not only to entertain and impress guests, but to convey from one state authority to another diplomatic intents and meanings in a poetic and thinly veiled manner. The following excerpt from *Zuo zhuan* 6.3.6 depicts how the ritualized interactions of two heads of state convey meaning. In it, the performance of an Ode clearly takes a prominent place alongside ceremonial behavior and speeches:

莊叔以公降、拜。曰：「小國受命於大國，敢不慎儀？君賜之以大禮，何樂如之？抑小國之樂，大國之惠也。」晉侯降，辭。登，成拜。公賦《嘉樂》

Zhuangshu [Shusun Dechen; advisor to the young Duke Wen of Lu] allowed our lord to descend and bow to the Duke of Jin and say: “When [our] small state receives the Decree from [your] large state, can we afford not to pay heed to the rules of etiquette? You, my Sir, grace us with the great ritual; is there happiness greater than this?¹⁶ Oh, but it is the generosity of your great state that really makes our small state happy!”¹⁷ The Duke of Jin descended, declining to accept [the polite treatment by the Duke of Lu].¹⁸ Both then ascended the steps to the dais, bowed to each other, and sang the Ode “Jia Le [Superb Happiness].”¹⁹

The singing of this Ode, which confers blessings to a noble lord of upright conduct, helps consolidate the intent behind a series of ritualized interactions between the two dukes described above. The Ode extols a lord who is embraced by the common people, Son of Heaven, and Heaven alike. Such a lord is a model ruler who follows the rules and does not venture past his rank and role in society.²⁰ Not only does the meaning of the Ode normalize relations by highlighting the goal of fair play and ritual conformity, but the act of performing it between noblemen of different states serves the purpose of exposing one’s certain, publicly acceptable desires and intentions in a conventionalized and predictable way. As a politico-religious Hymnal, the Odes offered a set and delimited form for expressing sentiment and intent—a rare commodity at the diplomatic level—so that a sense of trust between parties could be secured in a controlled fashion.

Through these select examples, we see that music, as a key element of state rituals in Zhou China, served as a vital tool in state government, interstate diplomacy, and the maintenance of court power and prestige. Musical performance and lyrics were valued for their role as ceremonial tools that helped facilitate interactions and establish trust between different political

parties. Similarly, music served as an accompaniment to the ritual act of celebrating or transferring power and favor, and was performed at various religious sacrifices and rites as well. Given the aforementioned roles of music in state ritual, its meteoric rise as a form of its own that sometimes transcended the meaning and significance of ritual will seem surprising. Yet, as cosmologies of resonance became increasingly prominent in the political rhetoric and religious mindset of the day, music at court changed subtly from a celebratory, communicative ritual device to a means by which the state could verify its authenticity as legitimate heir to cosmic powers and processes. In its expanded capacity as a symbol for cosmic authority, music acquired new valences of meaning that had repercussions for how courts and their rulers should relate to it.

THE ROLE OF MUSIC IN ORDERING STATE AND COSMOS

Displacing older visions of spiritual ancestors and natural deities interacting with humans according to anthropomorphic types of interactions, a newer, more systematic cosmology sprang up sometime by the fourth century BCE.²¹ According to this new type of religious vision, the world was broken down into *qi*—the life-force of the universe—which could manifest itself according to a plethora of qualities, most of which were sometimes reduced to the basic pair of *yin* (shady, dark) and *yang* (sunny, bright) traits and functions. Most importantly, *qi* behaved in the world not like human beings with arbitrary wills and different personalities, but according to causal principles that were both intelligible and somewhat predictable.²²

The addition of *qi*-related types of cosmologies had profound impacts on almost every aspect of life. In terms of music, the impact was sensational, as music came to be considered a key ingredient allowing rulers to harness the proper configuration of *qi* necessary for bringing about cosmic and state order in the world. Below, we examine changes in the status of music at court from a cultural tool that could help insure and symbolize state order and health to a spiritual technique, the control over which would allow rulers to position oneself at the critical node between cosmic functioning and state order.

Most likely influenced by a genre of medico-religious and political writings that concern themselves with the health and well-being of the ruler's body, many early writings on music sought regulation of an individual's, and especially, a ruler's personal attitudes, habits, and psycho-physical routines in order to promote state order and cosmic harmony.²³ Such texts regarded the ruler's body as the site of potential balance in political and cosmic arenas, so that effort put into the careful, physiological maintenance of the body might translate into a ruler's control of the cosmos, not to mention the

proper, worldly acceptance of his position as the central link between cosmic patterns and human affairs.²⁴ Indeed, as Nathan Sivin puts it: “Intellectuals bound the structure of heaven and earth, and that of the human body, to that of the state. This was not unprecedented in China, but now the links were made systematic and tight. In every instance their creators were preoccupied with political authority and its effective use. As a result, macrocosm and microcosms became a single manifold, a set of mutually resonant systems of which the emperor was indispensable mediator.”²⁵

Below, I will elaborate on discussions of the dual relationships between proper music and an ordered, peaceful state and cosmos on the one hand, and excessive music and a chaotic, “doomed,” or “perished” state (*wang guo* 亡國) on the other. I pay special attention to the mediating role of the ruler’s body as a site of virtue or debauchery and an augury of state order. In particular, I show how music was seen as affecting and indicating the health of a state and the cosmos—as seen through the physiological and psychological health of its ruler. Following Nathan Sivin’s lead, I end by showing how the “single manifold” of macrocosm and microcosm that developed during the fourth century BCE allowed for a ruler, through attention to his physical body, to claim control of or access to cosmic processes as well as bureaucratic, human ones.

First, let us examine standard roles for music that link state order to the ruler’s person in some way. In texts such as the *Zuo zhuan* (~fourth century BCE), the health of a state is generally viewed largely as a function of a ruler’s moral awareness, which could be expressed through the music he sanctioned. Consider the following statement:

夫樂以安德，義以處之，禮以行之，信以守之，仁以厲之，而後可以殿邦國、同福祿、來遠人，所謂樂也...

Now, one uses music to repose in virtue. Righteousness is used to reside in it, ritual to carry it out, trustworthiness to hold onto it, and benevolence to sharpen it. Only after [a ruler] has these qualities may he be assume his place at the palatial throne of the country, share in all blessings and emoluments, and attract people from a distance. This is what is meant by music.²⁶

Here, music is one of five common, Ru components of moral rule (including righteousness, ritual, trustworthiness, and benevolence). Though clearly all five components are deemed necessary to successful governance, the specific object under discussion in this passage is music. As a means of defining correct, moral government, music serves as a legitimate means of gauging and aiding in a ruler’s moral cultivation and degree of enlightened

rulership. Thus, the act of performing music or having it be performed during ritual is not only of importance to the state. In passages such as the one above, music is discussed in more abstract terms—as both an educational tool for and indicator of moral virtue, which in turn is a prerequisite for state order.

In the same text, activities associated with music, such as entertainment and feasting, are depicted as rites that teach the virtues of reverence and economy. Such virtues are in turn directly related to the tasks of governing a state:

於是乎有享、宴之禮。享以訓共儉，宴以示慈惠。共儉以行禮，而慈惠以布政。政以禮成，民是以息。百官承事，朝而不夕，此公侯之所以扞城其民也。

Thus there are the rituals of entertainment and feasting. Entertainment serves to instruct one in reverence and economy; feasting to demonstrate kindness and generosity. Reverence and economy are used to carry out the rites; kindness and generosity are used to set up a government.²⁷ When one uses ritual to fulfill one's government, the people will therefore enjoy rest. The "hundred offices" are duly given their official business in the morning and not in the evening. This is the means by which dukes and lords might protect and defend their people.²⁸

Here, the reason why musical types of entertainment are morally exalting is that they express—and therefore instruct one in—simple virtues such as reverence and economy. Musical entertainments bring welfare and protection to the state because the virtues they reinforce help insure the organization and efficient operation of government functions and the people.

The *Guanzi* also reiterates this message linking the ruler and the health of a state in an anecdote concerning Duke Huan of Qi and his minister, Guan Zhong. In "Conditions for Lord Protector," which likely dates to the early second century BCE, the author demonstrates that only after the duke "cut down the lines for hanging the bells and musical stones, relinquished the pleasure of singing and dancing, and emptied the palace of people 於是伐鍾磬之縣，併歌舞之樂。宮中虛無人，" did his state begin to be revitalized and orderly.²⁹ While the story continues to narrate how the duke undertook many other governmental reforms as well, it intriguingly ends by returning to the issue of the bells and musical stones, which had since been repaired and reestablished in all their grandeur. Guan Zhong is given the last remark, saying "This is what I call real pleasure," which points to the pleasure of music specifically, relying on the double-entendre implied by the homograph *yue* 樂, which could be translated as "pleasure"

or “music” depending on the context.³⁰ The implication of this statement is that only if the ruler embarked on the right policies would his music bring pleasure. “Correct” or “real” music in this example does not depend on the type or style of music performed; rather, it is wholly subservient to the capabilities and actions of the ruler. It is as though such instruments, along with the music to which they refer, symbolically encapsulated the general state of affairs in the duke’s regime. When the state was run improperly, the instruments represented empty, morally pernicious pleasures. On the contrary, when the ruler correctly governed his state, all the instruments of his music chamber could rightfully take on meaning as objects of true pleasure: the pleasure derived from state order.

In third century BCE texts such as the *Xunzi* and *Lüshi chunqiu*, authors present a complicated relationship between music and the ruler’s moral and physiological conditions, as well as between music and the state of the cosmos. Music begins to garner even more power not just as a vehicle for or indication of a ruler’s capabilities or moral cultivation, but as an actual agent in and of itself for social change. Consider the following passage from Xunzi’s “Discourse on Music” (“Yue lun” 樂論):³¹

故樂行而志清，禮脩而行成，耳目聰明，血氣和平，移風易俗，天下皆寧，
美善相樂

Therefore, when [proper] music is played, one’s will becomes clear, and when rites are cultivated, one’s conduct is brought to fruition. The ears and eyes are discerning and bright; material energy are harmonious and balanced. [It] changes customs and alters manners, [so that] all under heaven is tranquil, and the beautiful and good each in turn [give rise to] joy.³²

Here, Xunzi speaks not only of aspects of a person’s body; he also clearly shows how music will naturally regulate the customs of a state and bring peace to the world. This is different from the *Zuo* passage above, which depicts music as something that guides a ruler to virtue, who then goes on to order the world. Xunzi attributes a much larger power to music, which, he claims, is itself responsible for bringing peace and aesthetic/moral satisfaction to the people. Hence, the actual role of the ruler’s virtue is diminished, and music gains the power to affect the masses directly instead of solely through the ruler’s moral body, actions, and volition.

The author of the music chapters of the *Lüshi chunqiu* highlights the ruler-cosmos relationship in government. Unlike Xunzi, who speaks of music in terms of the socio-political world around him, this author goes further to link music to the larger sphere of a cosmic Dao:

成樂有具，必節嗜慾。嗜慾不辟，樂乃可務。務樂有術，必由平出。平出於公，公出於道。

There are tools for completing Music: one must regulate one's appetites and desires. When appetites and desires are not debauched, music may then be worked at. Working at music has its methods: one must have it emerge from balance. Balance emerges from impartiality, and impartiality emerges from the Dao.³³

Intriguingly, the Dao described by this author is conceived of as both the original source of proper music as well as harmony, equilibrium, and balance (*ping* 平) in the world: "When buds and sprouts were first stimulated, they coagulated into shapes; shapes and bodies had their places, and nothing was without sound. Sound emerged from harmony; harmony emerged from equilibrium 萌芽始震，凝墮以形。形體有處，莫不有聲。聲出於和，和出於適。"³⁴ According to this vision, then, the ruler's psyche can be synchronized with the Dao by "working at music,"³⁵ which allows him to emulate the harmony, equilibrium, impartiality, and balance of the Dao. Ruler, music, and Dao thus come together into Nathan Sivin's "single manifold"—and harmony and equilibrium are the threads that hold them together.

Cosmic rulership such as that described in the *Lüshi chungiu* chapters on music is leadership based in the harmonious patterns of the Dao, also referred to as the "One."³⁶ Such rulership can bring about results that not only "bring joy to ruler and minister and harmonizing those distant and near 樂君臣和遠近," but that also help bring order to the natural, cosmic world by "making cold and heat appropriate, and wind and rain timely 樂君臣，和遠近."³⁷ Thus, the type of leadership exerted by the cosmic ruler represents control over an expanded arena of things and processes including seasons and weather patterns, not to mention everyday administration and government of the people. It is leadership brought about through a ruler's realignment of himself with the underlying harmonies of the cosmos.

Such realignment with the Dao is not passive conformity with its ultimate laws and processes.³⁸ Rather, it is characterized by the ruler's embodiment of an agency of the Dao (harmony and balance) that allows him to insure that the "great transformations 大化" (of the Dao) might be secured in the human world.³⁹ So, while the author favors the notion that the cosmic ruler is a mediator of the Dao on Earth, he is careful to depict him as a mediator that harnesses control in the world through the effective embodiment of the Dao. Intriguingly, in the chapters on music under discussion here, the cosmic ruler uses "Great music" to embody the Dao, thereby realigning himself with the harmonies inherent in the cosmos.

In early China, just as music could bring about and signal the health and well-being of the state and, in somewhat later texts, the cosmos as well, it could also engender the opposite. In third to second century BCE texts, one of the main concerns about music was the degree to which it might elicit and promote a ruler's unchecked desires such as lust and a greed for luxury. Rulers who let their desires get the better of them were often associated with doomed or perished states (亡國). Rather than attribute doomed states to wasted state resources or bureaucratic mismanagement, authors increasingly discussed the phenomenon in terms of the health and morality embodied by the ruler alone. In such a way, authors adopted the trope of excessive music, which served to signify and symbolize the decline in a ruler's virtue and/or health, as well as the downfall of states at large.

A close relationship between the sounds of a doomed state and the moral depravity of its ruler clearly emerged as a prominent motif during the Warring States. Authors warned against the music or sounds of a doomed state by presuming upon the unspoken linkages between musical style, the moral degeneracy of a state's ruler, and his state's chaos and ultimate downfall. Since discussion of doomed states could serve a didactic function for profligate rulers and leaders alike, the number of passages in the extant record discussing excessive music and doomed states seems to far outweigh the number of passages describing the opposite, positive scenario of proper music and idealized states. This focus on bad or "excessive" types of music indicates that authors saw writing as a sort of prophylactic—a vehicle by which one might duly warn rulers of the dangerous consequences of their actions.

In the *Guo yu*, for example, excessive music causes personal depravity and political distress. In one case, Music Master Shi Kuang shows how the mere knowledge of someone's musical taste allows one to predict the downfall of an entire ruling lineage. Music here takes on a role as "cultural omen," forecasting doom and despair based on its perceived moral content: "Duke Ping of Jin took pleasure in 'new tunes.' Music Master Shi Kuang said, 'Alas! The ducal house will be debased! The ruler possesses a clear omen of downfall! 平公說新聲，師曠曰：「公室其將卑乎！君之明兆於衰矣。」"⁴⁰ This passage goes on to explain the linkage between music and a ruler's downfall in terms of the natural phenomenon of wind, which has the power to spread one's embodied virtue far and wide.⁴¹ For just as the winds of a region might be analyzed as divinatory augurs or omens, the sounds of one's music might also relay such precious predictive information about the state of a ruler's personal virtue, and thus, the ultimate fate of his regime.

A couple of negative comments about music in the *Zuo zhuan* impart a clear sense of not just a symbolic link between the depravity of a ruler and the downfall of his state, but a causal one as well.⁴² In a famous and quite

phenomenal narrative that features the music of the Odes, Gongzi Jizha 公子季扎 of Wu travels with an embassy to Lu in 544 BCE, taking the opportunity to listen to and provide commentary on a variety of ancient Odes. Based on his perception of the music, Jizha predicts and measures the success of a state and the virtue of its rulers.⁴³ Most of Jizha's remarks are positive, giving praise to certain Odes that help balance powerful emotions and provide one with a model for temperance and moderation. However, it is the negative comments about the music of certain regions that reveal what is really at stake for rulers and their governments.

Of the "Airs of Zheng 鄭風," Jizha states: "Simply beautiful! Yet there are excessive elaborations, and the people will not be able to take it. Does this not [show that] it (i.e., the state of Zheng) will be the first to perish? 「美哉!其細已甚,民弗堪也。是其先亡乎!」"⁴⁴ It is worth noting that the "tunes of Zheng 鄭 and Wei 衛," referred to styles and types of music denounced by many writers, especially the Ru, by around the middle of the fourth century BCE. Intriguingly, there is no indication in this *Zuo* passage that the Airs of Wei are to be shunned, and there is only a mild criticism of the objectionable qualities of the Airs of Zheng. The very fact that Jizha primarily considers these Airs to be "simply beautiful" contrasts sharply with comments in other texts from early China that outright condemn the "tunes of Zheng" as depraved and dangerously enticing.⁴⁵ Though Jizha criticizes the Airs of Zheng and predicts the downfall of the state of Zheng because of them, he does not seem to think these tunes depraved as such—only overly detailed, and perhaps frivolous. I think this moderately critical stance towards the Airs of Zheng attests to the fact that certain condemnations of musical styles were far from universal in the early years of the fourth century BCE, and that the canonization of music was a loose and ever-evolving process.

Nonetheless, it is clear that Jizha does not think favorably of the Airs of Zheng. His statement: "the people will not be able to take it," suggests the causal connection between musical style—in this case, the predominance of an elaborate, ornate style—and state disorder and downfall. The Airs of Zheng will bring about the downfall of the state because they fail to balance weighty and serious sounds and rhythms with light, detailed ones. Such a combination of sounds adversely affects those listening to such an extent that they actually feel ill at ease. Ostensibly, the people's sense of disturbance from the Airs of Zheng will translate directly into disturbances in the kingdom in general.

Following upon his evaluation of the Airs of Zheng, Jizha refuses to comment on those Airs associated with other particular states: "They played the songs of the state of Chen for him, and he said, 'When a state does not have a ruler, is it able to last for long? From the Airs of Kuai on,

he made no observations 為之歌《陳》，曰：「國無主，其能久乎！」自《鄭》以下無譏焉。⁴⁶ Most commentators believe the statement, “From the Airs of Kuai on,” refers specifically to the only remaining Airs listed in the current Mao version, the Airs of Cao. It is possible, however, that there were more Airs representing small regions that did not make it into the Mao version of the text, and indeed, the phrasing, “From the Airs of Kuai on,” would certainly seem to hint at more than just one set of Airs.⁴⁷

Regardless of which specific Airs Jizha is referring to, we see that the music of a region was thought not only to demonstrate the status of a state’s ruler and its fate—whether it would prosper or perish—but also the people’s responses to it. Music that leads to a ruined state is music whose qualities place the people and its ruler off-balance, as in the above-mentioned example from Zheng. Similarly, music of a perished state is music that demonstrates the utter lack of a core, or a central leader, as in the example here from the state of Chen.⁴⁸ The value of music here lies precisely in its ability to affect people’s inner sense of balance, which is correlated to an outer state of orderly behaviors and ultimately, an orderly state. The subtext of such a discussion, therefore, reveals Jizha’s faith in the powers of the emotional and bodily balance of both ruler and people alike in creating state order.

Note that this interpretation differs from that of Li Wai-ye, who has claimed that “musical qualities and attitudes per se do not directly ‘cause’ the rise or decline of persons and states; rather, it is their presumed direct link to the essence of person and polity that turns them into readable signs laden with moral, political, and cosmic meaning.”⁴⁹ In my reading of these passages, the relationship of music to the order in a state or person is not just a matter of the symbolic power of music as musical signs or symptoms that allow one to predict outcomes and give a diagnosis of state health.⁵⁰ Rather, there is a clear, causal relationship between musical style, content, form, and rhythm on the one hand, and bodily and state health on the other. This latter understanding of music underscores how early authors readily discussed the physiological effects of music on humans, societies, and states. According to this view, musical qualities as harmony and balance are taken as crucial components in the therapeutic powers of music to bring about order in the body and state polity as well. Harmonious music not only augurs harmonious body and state; it engenders it too.

Other examples of the role of music in state disorder and downfall abound in the *Zuo zhuan*. In 12.7.4, the sound of bells is reason for a leader’s overwrought distraction in face of impending disaster, much to the chagrin of remonstrating officers.⁵¹ Similarly, *Zuo zhuan* 3.20.1 features a certain Earl of Zheng who had the following to say about Wangzi Tui’s reaction to music:

「哀樂失時，殃咎必至。今王子頹〔頹〕歌舞不倦，樂禍也夫。 . . . 臨禍忘憂，憂必及之。盍納王乎！」

When sadness and happiness are inappropriately timed, then harmful calamity [to the state] is sure to come. Now, Wangzi Tui sings and dances as though he were never to tire of it—this is being happy in the face of disaster . . . When one faces disaster yet forgets to be sorrowful, then [true] sorrow is sure to arrive. Wouldn't it be better to restore the king?⁵²

Note that this passage does not differentiate good music from bad: blame lies in a ruler's reactions to music, not in the music itself. Nonetheless, one can easily infer—given the widely understood power of music to influence emotional states—that unbalanced music would certainly not bring about a balanced emotional state in the ruler who listens to it. Here, an improper reaction to music is defined according to an imbalance in one's expression of the opposing sentiments of happiness and sadness. Thus, as in Jizha's critique of excessive music, a ruler's moral awareness is considered tantamount to his level of emotional balance, influenced by music. The well-being of the entire state lies, so to speak, “in the balance” of a ruler's emotional-moral state, which is deeply affected by music.

Another way in which music helps bring about an individual's—especially, a ruler's—moral turpitude and, consequently, a doomed state is by drawing rulers away from their government duties. In the “Ten Excesses” chapter of the *Han Feizi*, for example, we find a story in which Duke Ling of Wei (r. 534–493 BCE) commands his Music Master (named Jūan 涓) to learn some “new tunes (新聲)” he has heard being played on the banks of the Pu River. When the duke arrives in the state of Jin, he has it performed for Duke Ping, whereupon the latter's Music Master—the famous Shi Kuang—proclaims it to be unfit for anyone to hear. Shi Kuang states: “These are the tunes of a doomed state! You must not continue [with it] 此亡國之聲，不可遂也.”⁵³ When asked further, the Music Master explains that the music was composed by Yan (延), Music Master to the evil King Zhou of the Shang. After King Wu's attack upon King Zhou, Music Master Yan fled east and threw himself into the Pu River. For this reason, “As for he who first hears these tunes, his state is sure to be destroyed 先聞此聲者，其國必削.”⁵⁴ With rich associative logic, this story hints at the malicious influences of depraved music, which easily preys upon humans blind to virtue and open to excessive tones (notably, one of the “ten excesses” listed in this chapter of the *Han Feizi*). Such tunes and tones transcend time: their pernicious effects can be felt by former kings such as King Zhou of the Shang—who brought his dynasty to ruin—as well as by royalty of the contemporary age, such as Dukes Ping of Jin and Ling of Wei. They

also encapsulate the greedy, lustful characteristics of those who choose to listen, so that anyone who chooses to listen to depraved music necessarily lacks virtue, just as anyone who lacks virtue would choose to listen to depraved music. Thus, a ruler's music and his personal lack of virtue are both at once symptoms and causes of the downfall of his state.

So far, most of the texts that we have examined speak of the specific, parallel relationship among the ruler, the type of music that he enjoys, and the fate of his state. Such texts have paid relatively little attention to the notion of cosmic rulership as described in the *Lüshi chunqiu* passages above. Let us now turn our attention back to *Lüshi chunqiu*, which more clearly aims to position the ruler within a larger, cosmic schema of patterns. To be sure, the connection of music to the cosmos is explicitly stated in the following passage: "As for music, it is the harmonizing of Heaven and Earth and the attunement of Yin and Yang to each other 凡樂，天地之和，陰陽之調也。"⁵⁵ Given this significant status for music, how was it thought to affect the fate of states?

We begin with a simple description of "extravagant" music found in the *Lüshi chunqiu* chapters on music:

夏桀、殷紂作為侈樂，大鼓鐘磬管簫之音，以鉅為美，以眾為觀，俶詭殊瑰，耳所未嘗聞，目所未嘗見，務以相過，不用度量。宋之衰也，作為千鍾。齊之衰也，作為大呂。楚之衰也，作為巫音。

Jie of the Xia and Zhou Xin of the Yin created extravagant music. As for the sounds of large drums, bells, chimes, flutes and pipes, they considered the large to be beautiful and the many to be wonderful. They first created strange and exotic things that ears had never before heard and eyes never before seen. They set about the task of always outdoing [what came before], employing neither rule nor measure. When Song was in decline, the Thousand Bell set was cast; when Qi was in decline, the Great Regulator Bell was cast; when Chu was in decline, the Shaman Tones Bell was created.⁵⁶

This critique of extravagant music is unique in that the author specifically targets both musical styles and the size of one's instruments. Not intent upon singling out the tunes of any particular state as singularly depraved in character, he inveighs against the extravagant and injurious music of decadent rulers such as Jie of the Xia and Zhou Xin of the Yin of the past. In more recent history, he criticizes the nefarious tones and overly grand instruments of the states of Song, Qi, and Chu. At the core of his criticism, however, is the notion that political downfall, corruption, and decay are linked with bad, extravagant music. Upon what is this notion based?

According to the text, extravagance lies in desiring too much, too many, and that which is too strange. Though vague, this way of discussing music and its instruments appears to be connected to the notion of balance and harmony described above as attributes of the cosmic Dao. Music must produce joy 樂 and reflect “the true nature of music 樂之情.”⁵⁷ In other words, there is something inherent about proper music that brings not just balance in the sense of a balancing of conflicting emotions, as in the *Zuo* passage discussing the Odes above. Proper music brings about the ultimate sentiment of joy, which seems to transcend any particular emotion to express an overall sense of satisfaction. According to this line of reasoning, then, extravagant music is bad because it fails to allow its audience to feel fully synchronized with the harmonious Dao of the cosmos.

The *Lüshi chunqiu* author discusses bad music in terms of a general philosophy on sagely alignment (or realignment) with the Dao.⁵⁸ His formula for bad music includes any performance involving sound that has derived from improper sagely cultivation and disorderly conduct in the social sphere. This latter condition, he notes, is signaled by a lack of joy and contentment:

亡國戮民，非無樂也，（不樂其樂）〔其樂不樂〕。溺者非不笑也，罪人非不歌也，狂者非不武也，亂世之樂，有似於此。君臣失位，父子失處，夫婦失宜，民人呻吟，其以為樂也，若之何哉？

It is not that doomed states and disgraced peoples lack music, but rather that their music does not bring joy. It is not that “a drowning man does not laugh,” “a condemned man does not sing,” or “a crazy man does not dance.” The music of a chaotic age is similar to these [situations]. When ruler and minister fail to keep their proper places, father and son fail in their proper duties, and husband and wife fail to maintain their proper relationship, the people groan and sigh—but how can this be considered to be music?⁵⁹

Bad music should not even be considered to be music because it does not fulfill its basic purpose: to produce true feelings of joy and contentment in the people.⁶⁰ Such music reigns during periods of social chaos, when human relations lose their grounding in the normative patterns of the cosmos.

In these third century BCE chapters on music from the *Lüshi chunqiu*, we see an expanded scope for the influence of music in the world. States and their rulers are not the only entities at risk here; whole dynasties, eras, indeed, nothing less than human relationship to the cosmos is at stake. Chaotic music is associated with chaotic ages, just as it is associated with chaotic states. Clearly, though this writing is similar to earlier discussions of music in that it characterizes music in terms of its relationship to balance

and the emotions, the status of music has been upgraded in a critical way. Not only does music now represent the harmonization of cosmic components in the world, it also acts as a crucial tool in facilitating relations between human and cosmos. In the coming chapters, as we examine more texts dating from the third century BCE on, we will see that this change is not anomalous; rather, it reflects an increasingly prevalent view of music and its role in human life.

CONCLUSION

As a key part of Zhou ritual, music was used by early Chinese states for commemorative, religious, and diplomatic purposes. The Odes, which were sung and performed, became a mainstay of expression not just for statesmen on diplomatic tour, but also for the elite within each state to communicate in a civilized way with each other. We first looked at the ways in which music was used according to the Zhou ritualistic tradition. Then, we turned our attention to texts that drew a specific link between a state's level of order or chaos and the particular styles and types of music that were being performed there. Through such a discussion, we outlined the ways in which music was thought to affect and represent state order.

As early as the fourth century BCE, discussions of music continued to be intertwined with the moral logic of personal and political order. Associations were drawn among music, a ruler's unchecked desires, and socio-political chaos on the one hand, and music, a ruler's regulated heart-mind, and socio-political order on the other. Such a manner of thinking about music became common in discussions about the rise and fall of states. To be sure, state order and health hinged upon the performance and maintenance of proper music, and the ruler's body served as a potential site of virtue and source or signal of such order.

By the third century BCE, when the state of Qin had already begun to entertain notions of creating a unified imperial sphere under centralized control, music emerged as a tool not just of ceremonial and government affairs, but as a tool of cosmic rulership according to newly developing, unified systems of resonances and harmonious interrelationships. The link between music and state order, which was prominent in texts such as the *Zuo zhuan* dating to the fourth century BCE, appears to have been expanded to include the cosmos and its orderly patterns. Music, now linked to ideal cosmic operations, could provide humans—especially rulers—a critical means of plugging oneself into the complicated yet balanced rhythms of the entire natural realm.

The connection that obtained between music and cosmos would serve to justify a state's particular use of music, as centralizing states and imperial

leaders increasingly sought not just after full dominion of their lands but—at the very least—claims of supremacy over everything in the cosmos. Cosmic rulership implied not necessarily control *over* the cosmos and all of its natural patterns, but one's full control *from within* a vast web of cosmic forces. The cosmic ruler hoped to sit at the helm of cosmic-human interactions and navigate properly the tricky interface between the two realms, serving as a key agent of cosmic change as well.

In the next chapters, we will continue to explore the role of music, and even sound itself, as both an agent and indicator of moral, orderly, and cosmically balanced rule. We will examine the ways in which music was thought to lend legitimacy to state leaders, and we will try to determine the extent to which music could be used as a political tool for cosmic control: for unifying cultural mores and civilizing the "other," and for establishing one's authority as the guarantor and central agent of cosmic functionality.