

More About A LITTLE CHINESE SUITE

I spent the 1985-86 academic year teaching conversational English in China and collecting Chinese Folk Music, some of which I later used in my own work. Here is an example, which I wrote as a contest selection for a middle school band in Austin, TX. The following description is quoted from the preface to the score:

A LITTLE CHINESE SUITE is comprised of settings for band of three folk songs from national minority groups living in far north and northwest China, far from the crowded population centers of the eastern part of the country. Coming from these sparsely populated provinces where the people are of Central Asian, rather than Chinese ancestry, these songs are quite unlike the typical Western notion of what Chinese music sounds like. Each of the three songs is about a legendary character, whose name provides the song's title.

1. **ALAMUHAN** Uygur folk song, Xinjiang Autonomous Region. This is a light-hearted song in which a young man describes the beauty of his bride-to-be, Alamuhan.
2. **GADAMAYLIN** Mongol folk song, Nei Mongol Autonomous Region. Gadamaylin is a legendary folk hero who fought against an invasion by one of the early Chinese Empires, in the days before Inner Mongolia was part of China.
3. **MAYEELA** Kazak folk song, Xinjiang Autonomous Region. This is another rather light-hearted song in which the principal character Mayeela, a singer and dancer, rather unmodestly sings of her own talents and virtues.