The Gift of Song: Courtesans and Patrons in Late Ming and Early Qing Cultural Production

Judith T. Zeitlin 蔡九迪
University of Chicago

In recent years, scholars interested in recouping Ming-Qing courtesans as significant cultural agents have explored their poetry, and to some extent their painting, to find traces of genuine self-expression rather than mere signs of professional expertise.[1] While none would deny the centrality of song to the courtesan's arts, this aspect of the courtesan's cultural production has tended to drop out of the equation.[2] The lack of scholarly attention to music in the courtesan world has several deep-seated reasons. The history of performance is always hard to reconstruct, but in the Chinese case, this is especially true because music relied primarily on oral transmission, and vocal scores with full musical notation were not published until the eighteenth century.[3]

A more serious obstacle, perhaps, has been discomfort with the extent to which music and sex were intertwined in the courtesan world. The elevating and idealizing impulse evident in much of the contemporary scholarship extends a cultural bias in the historical sources themselves. To prove that a courtesan was truly cultured, her gifts as a poet rather than a musical performer were most important. Because of the supreme valuation of the written word and the exaltation of literary authorship in China, the most celebrated courtesans through the ages have therefore tended to be those skilled in writing verse, whose poetic output has at least in part been preserved on paper.

This essay likewise attempts to re-evaluate the courtesan's role in cultural production, but it addresses the relation of top courtesans to music-making and versification in a way that takes into account both the creative dimensions *and* the professional business of pleasure integral to male patronage of their careers as musicians and poets**.**

Music-making, especially song, was indispensable to the social and sexual activities of the late-Ming entertainment quarter, as it had been since the Tang dynasty, when a distinct urban courtesan culture first coalesced.

Classical Chinese has an extensive lexicon designating women with skill in the arts whose services could include sex, including *chang* 娼 and *genü* 歌女but the most frequent term is *ji* 妓.[4] Although in modern Chinese this character simply means "prostitute," etymologically *ji* combines the graph for woman (女) and the graph for entertainer (伎), and the function of a *ji* as a performer remained vital into the twentieth century. In her study of Song dynasty courtesans, Beverly Bossler notes that the word *ji* generally referred to the upper range of "the class of female entertainers;" even so, the term covered a multiplicity of roles and hierarchies. Part of what a *ji* could offer, at least during the Song period, Bossler argues, was sexual companionship, yet a *ji* "was first and foremost a performing artist." Even a low-class *ji* therefore "was not one who exclusively sold her sexual favors, but one who approached the banquet table and began to sing without having been invited."[5]

By the late Ming, the compound *mingji* 名妓 (literally "renowned *ji*") had come into common currency to distinguish the uppermost stratum of the profession, but the boundaries and terminology between echelons of courtesans were always slippery, mutable, and subjective. For instance, the 1616 preface to *Stylish Verses from the Green Bower (Qinglou yunyu* 青樓韻語), a book of poetry by courtesans, reserves the term *ji* for "those celestial creatures of innate seductive beauty and penetrating intelligence" 其天姿媚澤，機慧靈通人也，distinguishing them from common prostitutes—"those women who lean in doorways, proffering smiles at all comers indiscriminately" 依市門不擇人而獻笑.[6] Yet the collection also incorporates large chunks from a work labeled *The Classic of Whoring (Piao jing* 嫖經), juxtaposing cynical and idealized views of courtesans on the same page.[7]

Crucial in navigating the contested arena of what qualified someone as a *mingji* is the idea of composition and performance as gifts. James Davidson's discussion of the ancient Greek hetaera emphasizes the importance of a courtesan receiving "gifts" rather than payments from her clients because this shadowy and easily manipulated distinction implies that she, in turn, bestows her favors voluntarily as a return gift, rather than fulfilling a set payment for service.[8] In the Chinese case, the gift economy was likewise all-important in constituting the relations between a courtesan and her literati clients, but it was also expected that some of the gifts she received be of a literary (or artistic) nature—a poem, a painting, the lyrics to an aria—and that the courtesan be able to reciprocate in kind—by matching the poem, adding to the painting, or singing the song. All of this contributed to the fantasy of parity between a courtesan and her lover, of favors freely exchanged, and was the *sine qua non* for romance in the Chinese tradition.

The ability to participate in this gift-giving also determined the status of a courtesan because such literary exchanges were fundamental to the status and social life of her literati patrons. Despite (or because of) the increasing commercialization of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, direct payment for service or objects accorded high cultural value was considered déclassé or even degrading and had to be disguised. This is why, for instance, it is so difficult to ascertain the prices customers paid for paintings by famous artists in this period—the paintings are invariably couched as "gifts" bestowed by "amateur" artists on "friends," even when art historians think that cash actually changed hands.[9] For a courtesan and her client, the illusion of the disinterested gift was naturally even more critical. As the commentator to *Stylish Verses from the Green Bower* put it: "Even a single word or a single object received from a beautiful woman is precious—how could a man not respond in kind?" 一字一物, 出自麗人, 便覺珍重, 敢不圖報也. This exalted sentiment, however, is neatly punctured by a quotation on the same page from *The Classic of Whoring*: "When she sends a letter, it's like issuing a summons for money; when she sends a handkerchief or fan, it's like hurling a brick to extract precious jade" 寄信寄書, 乃發催錢之檄, 贈巾贈扇, 真拋引玉之磚.[10] In the same cynical vein, a song simply titled "Courtesan" (*ji* 妓) from *Hanging Branches* (*Guazhier*掛枝兒), a collection of popular songs published circa 1608-1617 by Feng Menglong 馮夢龍, warns the would-be libertine: "Tiny writing on a handkerchief is a promissory note to snatch away your soul" 汗巾兒上小字兒是個勾魂票.[11]

A gift of verse or handkerchief might be dangerous, but the primary means to ensnare a man's passion was through song. In this essay I will begin with an exploration of the erotic connotations of the female voice in China to explain in part why courtesans specialized in singing before sketching the dominant genres and performance style of the courtesan's vocal repertory in the late Ming and early Qing. I then turn to printed collections of songs to consider what editorial decisions about the notation of authorship and transmission may reveal about improvisational and collaborative performing practices in the pleasure quarter. The conclusion of the paper explores the courtesan's vocal training and the complex value invested in her songs through a close reading of the singing lesson scene dramatized in Kong Shangren's famous play, *Peach Blossom Fan* (*Taohua shan* 桃花扇).

Music and Eroticism

Music and eroticism have long been linked in the Chinese calculus of pleasure. The terms *sheng* 聲 (sound, denoting music) and *se* 色 (visual allure, denoting beautiful women) had been paired from antiquity as a

metonym for the sensual overindulgence of rulers at court that could topple their kingdoms. As Joseph Lam asserts: "Music made by women is singled out by Confucian scholars as particularly corruptive because it seduces not only with sound but also with the physical presence of female performers." [12] The cover illustration of an entertainment miscellany published in 1610 offers the perfect witty correlative for music as foreplay (fig. 1). A courtesan is seated on the lap of her lover, who is dressed in the cap and robe of a man of letters, his two legs straddling hers. They are playing a "duet:" a *pipa* is stretched across her lap, a vertical flute at her lips. At first glance, it seems as though it is the man who is plucking the *pipa* and the woman who is playing the flute, but a closer look reveals that each of them is simultaneously playing both instruments. Only one hand on the *pipa* belongs to the man: his other hand fingers the flute as his arm encircles her; the woman, in turn, is touching the flute with one hand as she presses down on the *pipa* strings with the other. Adding to the piquancy of the picture are the double entendres involved: "blowing the vertical flute" is a flowery term for fellatio, while "zither strings" is a poetic locution for the clitoris. [13] Another piquant detail: the couple engaged in this act of mutual musical arousal is seated on a large ornamental garden rock that seems to billow up behind them. In the symbolic code of this period, the garden is a principal site for the arousal and fulfillment of desire, both romantic and sexual; any number of dramatic works and woodblock illustrations imagines the ingenious functions to which a garden rock could be put by the amorously inclined. [14] In the context of the image on the cover, then, even the miscellany's title suggests the titillating interplay of sex and music: it is entitled *Tempering the Reed Pipe in the Jade Valley* (*Yugu tiaohuang* 玉谷調簧). [15]

Some singing ability and a repertory of songs were minimal requirements for a courtesan. In a comic opera of 1618, *Dongguo ji* 東郭記, two courtesans on the make, who have "mastered dancing but not yet singing," complain: "We've got the "looks" (*se*) but not the "sounds" (*sheng*) . . . For girls like us, singing is number one: only then can we entice men and turn them on" 未歌先會舞, 有色卻無聲 . . . . 我每姐妹家, 第一會唱, 才勾引得人心動. [16] Their solution is to seek out a fashionable singing master, who agrees to teach them some popular songs. Strumming on a *pipa*, he instructs his new pupils in the fundamentals of their trade: "Gain some accomplishment at singing/ and those notes that 'wind sinuously 'round the rafters' will boost your reputation and price./ At banquets they'll love you to death/ and wherever you go, you'll steal all the men" 唱將來有幾個到得家, 遶梁音會的添聲價, 當筵真愛殺, 到處盡偷他. [17]

Singing was fundamental to the courtesan's arts in China, not only because song was a social and sexual lubricant and the lyrics appreciated for their literary and sentimental value, but because singing itself, when offered

Figure 1. Cover page of *Yugu tiaohuang*.

as entertainment at banquets or other settings, was culturally gendered as feminine. To perform a song was to submit oneself to the gaze as well as the ears of another, and there was a perpetual tendency for the audience to conflate the physical beauty of the singer with the acoustic beauty of the song. Hence another important group of singers, particularly in the late Ming, were "singing boys" (*getong* 歌童), who, like their counterpart "singing girls," were valued for their youth and looks as well as their voice and who could be purchased as private entertainers by the master of a wealthy household to provide musical and sexual diversion.

Already in the late twelfth century, Wang Zhuo 王灼 had complained that, although in the past excellent singers of renown could be found among both sexes, "nowadays people only prize the female voice" 古人善歌得名, 不擇男女. . .今人獨重女音. In fact, lists of famous singers from earlier times attest that a preference for female singers had probably predominated in the past as well.[18] Wang associated this preference for female singers in his own time with the "lovely and seductive" (*wanmei* 婉媚)—hence feminine—lyrics that his fellow literati liked to write. He cites the story of one fellow who refused to listen to an aged male singer, despite his reputed excellence: "A singer must be a person lovely as jade, with rosy lips, white teeth, and a complexion like ice. In communicating the private meaning of the lyrics, the words must sound charming with a waver in the voice, the syllables as round and lustrous as a string of pearls. This old man may understand the art of singing but what can be done about his snowy whiskers?" 唱歌須是玉人, 檀口皓齒冰膚, 意傳心事, 語嬌聲顫, 字如貫珠; 老翁雖是解歌, 無奈雪鬢霜鬚.[19] Although Wang's point is to disparage the "vulgarity" of this attitude, the frequent appearance of stock phrases, like "rosy lips, white teeth" and "a string of pearls" in poetic descriptions of singers at parties, reminds us that Wang's would have been the minority view.

Certain conceptions of the voice may have strengthened the sense of singing as an integral part of the body that produced the sound. "Voice" in English (and its equivalent in European languages) is, in fact, a curiously disembodied term. Although the Chinese words *yin* 音 (tone) or *sheng-yin* 聲音 (sound) can be used to denote the human voice, a common idiom for a singing voice in Chinese, both classical and vernacular, is "throat." The poetic equivalent of "good voice" in Classical Chinese, especially in descriptions of women, is "a throat for singing" (*gehou* 歌喉).

Even more striking is the metonymic appellation of the voice as an instrument of "flesh" (*rou* 肉). An eight-fold classification of musical instruments based on the material they were fashioned of had developed in early antiquity. In this system, bells are "metal," flutes are "bamboo," while lutes are "silk" (the material used for the strings), and so on. The human

voice did not figure in the original eight categories, but in the fifth-century collection *A New Account of Tales of the World* (*Shishuo xinyu* 世說新語), the term "flesh" was coined in a dialogue between a general and his aide on the superiority of the human voice over other instruments. The general inquires: "When I'm listening to performers, stringed instruments don't sound as good as bamboo, bamboo instruments don't sound as good as flesh. Why would that be?" Replies his aide: "Because you're getting closer with each one to what is natural" 又問: 聽伎, 絲不如竹, 竹不如肉, 何也? 答曰: 漸近自然.[20]

From the ninth century on, the aphorism, "String is inferior to bamboo, bamboo is inferior to flesh" 絲不如竹, 竹不如肉, is ubiquitous in disquisitions on singing.[21] Pan Zhiheng 潘之恒, one of our best sources for late Ming entertainment culture, even coins the term "notes of flesh" (*rouyin* 肉音) for singing to match "notes of bamboo" (*zhuyin* 竹音) to denote the flute accompaniment. Pan links the "naturalness" of the voice to its affective power, placing his lyrical discussion on song within the discourse on emotion or love (*qing* 情) so fashionable in this period. "At their most subtle, 'notes of flesh' will make the soul melt and make one perish from emotion. If 'notes of flesh' are performed and the listener doesn't perish, then the heights of emotion that flesh is capable of have not been scaled" 肉音微者可以魂銷, 可以情死. 肉奏而情不死者, 未足以盡肉之情.[22]

But it is Li Yu 李漁, professional playwright, novelist, publisher, and impresario, who, in his 1671 discussion on how to train female singers and dancers, explicitly linked this aphorism to a gendered discourse on the "natural" qualities of the female voice and the physical attractions of the female body and face:

> I further say that in terms of a male voice's being flesh, even if it reaches the most exquisite places, it can only stand shoulder to shoulder with string and bamboo; it still remains "string of flesh," "bamboo of flesh." How do I know this? Observe that when someone praises the beauty of a male voice, if they don't say: "It's as fine as a stringed instrument," then they'll say: "It's as clear as a bamboo instrument." But when it comes to a woman's voice, then it is praised purely because it is flesh. The saying goes: "A song-lyric must come from a beauty's mouth." I say: "She doesn't *have* to be a beauty." It doesn't matter whether she's pretty or ugly. Any girl who's gifted at singing will produce a sound that is extremely different from that of a man. There are instances in which a woman is not known for her looks, but is known for her sound [i.e. singing]. But there's never been a case of a good-looking woman

> whose voice is not worth listening to. You just need to teach her some method and direct her in artistry. She simply needs to develop her innate talent: just don't let her go against her own nature. [23]
>
> 予又謂男音之爲肉, 造到極精處, 止可與絲竹比肩, 猶是肉中之絲. 肉中之竹也, 何以知之? 但觀人贊男音之美者, 非曰其細如絲, 則曰其清如竹. 是可概見. 至若婦人之音, 則純乎其爲肉矣. 語曰詞出佳人口. 予曰不必佳人, 凡女子之善歌者, 無論妍媸美惡, 其聲音比迥別男人, 貌不揚而聲揚者有之, 未有面目可觀而聲音不足聽者也. 但須教之有方, 導之有術, 因材而施, 無拂其天然之性而已矣.

Although at one point Li Yu notes that "the program of study for music is the same for men and women" 然教習聲樂者, 不論男女, he emphasizes throughout the essay that a chief point of studying music for women is to enhance their appearance and deportment. As he puts it bluntly: "What's important for a man in playing an instrument is the sound; for a woman it's her looks" 男子所重在聲, 婦人所重在容.[24]

Li Yu's instructions on how to train women in the performing arts were aimed at a middlebrow audience of men wanting to educate their concubines or train household entertainers. He recommended that women first be taught to read and write, then to play an instrument, and lastly to sing or dance.[25] In terms of composition, the ideal strategy was to start them off on the short lyric (*ci*) before moving on to the longer and more difficult aria (*qu)* form. "Nothing in the past thousand years beats the incomparable charm of listening to a woman sing a song she herself has composed, uniting scholar and beauty in one person" 聽其自制自歌, 則是名士佳人合而爲一, 千古來韻事韻人, 未有出於此者.[26] Dorothy Ko has suggested that Li Yu's "program for training concubines can be taken as an ideal representation of education for women in the various grades of establishments in the entertainment world." [27] What may be most informative about Li Yu's prescriptions, however, are the assumptions that he makes about his male readers, whom we may take as emblematic of wealthy social-climbing patrons of the pleasure quarter. This parvenu clientele grasps the underlying sociological lesson that both music and women are primarily purchased for display as markers of taste and status but lacks the panache to carry it off. Li Yu therefore cautions that there is no point in having concubines or household entertainers learn forms of music a man does not enjoy or understand simply because the literati regard them as more elegant and he wants to show off at the banquets he holds. Thus, unless, a man himself is versed in the *qin*, the most exalted instrument in the

scholar's world and the most difficult to play and appreciate, there is no point in training his concubine in this art. "Then what about singing and dancing?'" an interlocutor interjects. "Does this mean that a man must also be skilled at singing and dancing before his women can be taught these arts? How many full-blooded bearded males are there who are any good at these?" Not to worry, assures Li Yu. "Singing and dancing are hard to perfect but easy to understand. You don't need to be a connoisseur of music to listen to the undulations in a woman's voice or watch the lightness and grace of her movements!" 人問: 然則教歌舞者, 亦必主人善歌善舞而後教乎? 鬚眉丈夫之工此者, 有幾人乎? 曰不然. 歌舞難精而易曉, 聞其聲音之婉轉, 睹見體態之輕盈, 不必知音始能領略.[28]

The Performing Repertory and Vocal Style of Courtesans

The courtesan's performing repertory in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was closely linked to the dominance of operatic forms of entertainment in this period. During the late Ming and early Qing, the passion for opera was at its height among the elite. Literary men, some from the highest echelons of officialdom, turned their hands to libretto-writing, and the richer ones even maintained household troupes to stage their works and those of their friends. Salon performances of operas (sometimes full plays but more often excerpted scenes) were ubiquitous fare at banquets in private homes and at court. For such performances, although permanent stages were not unheard of, all that was necessary to demarcate a stage was a rug, with an area to the back or the side to serve as a combination backstage/greenroom from which the actors could make their entrances and exits. The easily improvised and versatile nature of performance space, along with the absence of elaborate scenery, meant that, in principle, almost any location could double as a stage. It is not surprising therefore that operas were sometimes staged in courtesan houses, too, during the late Ming, though serving as a theater was never their primary function. The question is whether courtesans generally participated as actresses in these productions or whether they made up the audience along with their clients instead.

Historically, the line between courtesan and actress was blurred. Our main source for top Yuan dynasty (1264-1368) courtesans, for example, *The Green Bower Collection* (*Qinglou ji* 青樓記), mainly involves actresses connected with the stage. By the late sixteenth century, however, the two professions had essentially bifurcated, although there was still some back and forth. As theater historian Wang Anqi 王安祈 argues: "Even though Ming courtesans still counted dramatic singing and play-acting among their skills, these were only auxiliary arts for them, and in this respect they differed from professional actresses whose occupation was acting on stage."

明代妓女雖然也多擅唱曲演劇, 但演戲終究是附帶的才藝之一, 與專門以演劇爲職業的女優不同.[29] To this we may add: even though actresses were still expected to sell their sexual favors as part of their profession, this was only a sideline for them. *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou* (*Wuji baimei* 吳姬百媚), an early seventeenth-century collection that I will discuss later, also confirms this occupational division between courtesans and actresses; only one of the forty-one or so biographies in this book involves a courtesan once famed as an actress, and even here she became a courtesan only *after* she had abandoned her acting career.[30]

There were exceptions, of course. The famous sixteenth-century Nanjing courtesan Ma Xianglan 馬湘蘭, who even authored a now lost opera libretto, was said "to have trained her maids on the model of an acting troupe, and often had them perform to entertain guests" 教諸小鬟學梨園子弟, 日供張燕客.[31] This information is provided in Xianglan's biography as something worthy of note, rather than as something typical, however, and the wording of the entry acknowledges a tacit difference between the courtesan imitation and its acting troupe model. Zhang Dai 張岱, elite chronicler and wealthy connoisseur of the late Ming entertainment world, recalled attending a matinee performance that an opera troupe gave in the Nanjing pleasure quarter; that very evening he watched the courtesans, who had been in the afternoon audience, perform scenes from the same opera in emulation. Zhang asserts that "Nanjing courtesans considered putting on plays to be a stylish activity, and they took it very seriously," and he was pleased to be enlisted as their coach. 南曲中, 妓以串戲爲韻事, 性命以之.[32] In my view, Zhang Dai's recollection may most suggest an enthusiasm on the part of courtesans to mount amateur theatricals, echoing the vogue for such pastimes in certain late Ming literati circles.[33]

This hypothesis that sees top courtesans as theatrical amateurs, who did put on plays sometimes in their establishments but mainly left full-scale theatrical productions to professional acting troupes as their literati clients did, may be one way to reconcile the contradiction between Zhang Dai's account and Yu Huai's 余懷 1693 memoir of the Nanjing pleasure quarter, another of our best sources for late Ming courtesan culture. In his *Miscellaneous Records of the Wooden Bridge* (*Banqiao zaji* 板橋雜記), Yu Huai says that acting troupes frequently gave performances in the quarter at night,[34] but that a top courtesan considered performing plays on stage deeply humiliating. What she preferred was an intimate party with a few clients who were knowledgeable about music, and even then she had to be strenuously coaxed before she would sing. Those privileged to be present would be overwhelmed by the beauty of her voice and the movements of her fan and willingly paid "ten times the price" for this exclusive pleasure.[35]

He describes only one courtesan who was also celebrated as an actress for her skill at performing plays on stage; she is the only one, too, who is mentioned in conjunction with theatrical role types. In her case, she is doubly impressive because she performed both leading female and leading male roles.[36] Most of the information he provides about stage performers instead concerns male actors, who were also regular participants at parties in the quarter.

Instead of acting on stage, then, courtesans specialized in the performing practice known as "pure singing" (*qingchang* 清唱).[37] This entailed singing dramatic arias without the lines of dialogue interspersed in full playtexts, without theatrical make-up or costume, with minimal props (such as a fan) and minimal instrumental accompaniment (such as a set of clappers, a flute, or a stringed instrument), and with none of the elaborate dance steps customarily performed on stage. Another equally important segment of the courtesan's repertory, "independent" or "free-standing" arias (*sanqu* 散曲), which were composed apart from opera and never intended to be acted out, were only ever performed as pure singing.[38] Independent arias were largely on sentimental themes and were closely associated with the activities of the pleasure quarter. The independent aria is sometimes translated as "art song" to distinguish it from the more colloquial "popular song" (*suqu* 俗曲 or *xiaoqu* 小曲, literally "minor *qu*"), the third indispensable segment of the courtesan's singing repertory.

The term "pure singing" and the elegant vocal style it implies were closely associated with *kunqu* 昆曲. With its emphasis on vocal refinement and elaborate ornamentation, *kun qu* was particularly suited to intimate salon performances because it avoided the noisy percussion of competing opera styles and favored the plaintive and soft sounds of the flute as its leading instrumental accompaniment. The pure singing of arias by a coterie of professional male music masters, literati, and courtesans during the 1560s and 70s is the matrix out of which the musical system of *kunqu* had originally coalesced, but it quickly spread to the performance of full-fledged opera.[39] By the early seventeenth century, *kunqu* had become the reigning operatic mode for elites across the country, who extolled the elegance of *kunqu* and disparaged the vulgarity of competing styles. Top courtesans, keenly sensitive to the status differential of the music they performed, naturally specialized in *kunqu*, and pure singing—always considered a more refined and prestigious activity than acting on stage—remained a favored pastime in literati/courtesan circles.

Realizing the Tune

The salient compositional feature of *qu* is that of writing new words to a pre-existing melody identified by a tune title. This mode of versification,

like that of *ci*, required the poet to observe the individual rules governing rhyme, meter, and word tone prescribed for each tune pattern, which were codified in manuals that could be consulted for "filling in" new lyrics. Popular songs composed to tune formulas, much fewer in number, also became known by certain titles, but they had freer prosodic structure. The melodies were mainly transmitted orally and understood to be highly mutable over time. As Wang Jide 王冀德, author of *Rules for Qu* (*Qulü*曲律), an important seventeenth-century treatise on opera, says flatly: "The tunes of an age change every thirty years" 世之腔調, 每三十年一變.[40] The verses, on the other hand, were easily preserved through publication and could continue to be read or rewritten to new melodies long after the original music had disappeared.

The model of filling in new aria lyrics to pre-existing, abstract melodic patterns sounds straightforward, but it took considerable skill and effort to make such verses work in actual performance. From what we know about the composition of full-length operas for the late seventeenth-century stage, for instance, a literati playwright had to work extensively with a musical advisor to adjust his aria lyrics to conform fully to the melodies. Isabel Wong observes that the process of creating a *kun qu* opera typically required the "collective efforts of several groups of specialists:" 1) a poet-playwright to compose the verse, 2) a "music master" who was also a singer and one familiar with all the tunes in the repertory to ensure that words and melody fit properly, a process she terms "tune accommodation," and 3) a singer-actor skilled in *kun qu* singing techniques and ornamentation to realize the song in performance.[41] In the case of independent arias in the *kun qu* style, a similar, if much more streamlined process must have been required.

One of the most common paradigms in the literature on courtesans is that of literary men composing verses and courtesans singing them. "Such women were most valued as the performing voice of scholars' own poems," is how Stephen West describes the portrayal of the Yuan dynasty courtesan-actresses in *The Green Bower Collection*. "Yet," he adds, such women "were often extremely talented in their own right," and he notes their "prodigious memory" for arias and their ability to extemporize witty verse as repartee.[42]

West notes that the Yuan dynasty courtesans were for the most part illiterate, but by the late sixteenth century, in keeping with the greater emphasis on education for upper-class women, to be celebrated as a top courtesan required literacy. What are omitted in accounts of the courtesan singing her client's verse are precisely the kinds of adjustments of words and melody necessary to make lyrics and music fit together. The technical

Chinese musical term for this kind of activity is *duqu* 度曲, which may be imperfectly translated into English as "realizing the tune."

The phrase *duqu* means either "to perform a song" (in which case it is pronounced *duqu*) or "to fashion a song by fitting new words to a pre-existing tune" (in which case it is pronounced *duoqu*).[43] Both ways of "realizing the tune" required serious skill and understanding of music to execute, and both activities had one of the other in it. To perform a new song from written lyrics inevitably meant making prosodic and musical adjustments, part of which, in *kunqu*, were handled in performance through vocal ornamentation. Fashioning a song by fitting new words to an existing tune pattern demanded even more effort. Particularly challenging was the method of *jiqu* 集曲 (developing a "composite tune"), which involved piecing together individual lines from separate tune patterns in the same mode to create a patchwork melody with a new title.[44]

Isabel Wong notes that the music masters charged with the task of "tune accommodation" "usually came from the ranks of singing teachers, professional actors, or flute (*dizi* 笛子) players. . . and . . . generally came from a lower stratum of society than the playwright-poet."[45] I suspect that courtesans, who were also trained as professional musicians and also came from a lower stratum of society than poets, must have frequently assumed responsibility for tune accommodation in addition to that of singer-performer, especially with independent arias written for courtesans by their clients. To be sure, courtesan-singers must have sometimes relied on the intermediary services of music masters, who might also have doubled as their accompanists in performance. But a good deal of the fun and prowess in the courtesan's world came from displays of extemporaneous improvisation and repartee from participation in games and contests invented on the spot. A top courtesan singer would have been expected to render an impromptu performance of her lover's verses, and for that she would have had to have been capable of modifying the words and the tune on her own.

There are parallels with courtesans of the Italian Renaissance, as seen in the chapters in *The Courtesan's Arts* by Martha Feldman, Dawn De Rycke, and Drew Davies. A crucial resource at the disposal of the sixteenth-century Venetian courtesan were *arie* or *modi*—untexted compositions with unadorned melodies designed according to poetic meters for spontaneous adaptation to poetry. Davies suspects that "courtesans could have utilized the titled *aria* to extemporize musical settings of their clients' poetry on the spot, and because their musical phrase lengths correspond to conventional poetic meters most of them could also have been used as vehicles for semi-improvisation."[46]

But there are also crucial differences between the artistic processes and cultural emphases of the Italian "arie" and the Chinese *qu*. In the main sixteenth- and seventeenth-century manuals on the vocal techniques for *kun qu*, such as Wei Liangfu's 魏良輔 *Rules for Qu* (*Qulü* 曲律), Wang Jide's work of the same title, and Shen Pangsui 沈寵綏, *What You Should Know to Realize the Song (Duqu xuzhi* 度曲須知), the emphasis is consistently on how to fit the words to the music.[47] The techniques they teach therefore are equally important for writing new lyrics for arias as for performing them. Still, the extent to which they focus on seemingly linguistic criteria is not simply a literary bias of their authors. It lies at the heart of Chinese operatic music, especially *kunqu,* which emphasized musical strategies designed to preserve word tones in singing to enhance both the euphony and intelligibility of the lyrics in performance. Liang Mingyue observes that "frequently the final product—the composition—is a result of mutual compromise, and an alternative word may be substituted to match the existing melody better," which is one reason why "a beginning *kunqu* singer often makes the comment that the tune is easy, but correlating it with the words is never easy enough."[48]

Since one of the highly sought after talents for a courtesan was not only the ability to sing arias from famous plays but new arias by her clients—often extemporaneously—we gain a greater appreciation of the degree of musical and linguistic skill she was required to master, which may have approached something akin to composition in performance. "Realizing the tune" in the late Ming and early Qing therefore required literary skill and musical knowledge of the *qu* verse form, then, not only a good voice and a good memory.

Some courtesans who excelled both at versification and singing were able to craft their own lyrics to arias, although relatively few of these survive. Wang Duanshu's 王端淑 enormous anthology, *Classic Verse by Renowned Women (Mingyuan shiwei* 名媛詩緯), published around 1667, is our best source for independent aria lyrics by courtesans. Wang, a well-known writer in her own right, was the daughter of a famous literatus and a respectable married woman, but her omnivorous interest in women's writing extended to the literary efforts of courtesans as well. Her anthology focused on mainstream genres of poetry, *shi* 詩 and *ci* 詞, which constituted the bulk of women's literary output, but she did include two chapters of aria lyrics, one of which is entirely by courtesans. Wang was sufficiently broadminded to include a salacious aria credited to an unnamed "Courtesan from Chu" ("Chu ji" 楚妓) and subtitled "Sent to a Friend" ("Ji you" 寄友). This famous courtesan was renowned for her calligraphy, painting, music, and beauty, Wang tells us, and her arias were "especially amusing" 其曲見最爲娛. The aria involves a set of ribald double entendres about a common

mode of transporting heavy loads, in which bundles were tied on either side of a pole placed across the shoulders:

[Yellow Oriole]	[黃鶯兒]
When tying on the load of love,	風月擔兒拴
The moment it's lifted onto the shoulders is the hardest of all.	上肩時難上難
Even if the porter is a man of iron,	挑得的便是真鐵漢
it will crush the thighs and make them sore,	壓得人腿酸
It will make one pant till the mouth is parched.	喘得人口乾
And still one worries that the rope will snap mid-route.	半塗中又恐怕繩索斷
Have patience to toil through one more bout—	耐些煩一場辛苦
No matter then if you drop your load.	脫卻了沒相干

In her comment, Wang marvels that this piece had become famous in the Hunan-Hubei region and earned the praise of literati there, since, "the aria is certainly witty enough in a minor way, but it presents a great impediment to public morals." Yet she could still condone compositions of this sort as part of their author's profession: "Women in the quarter need arias like this, or they'll be unable to arouse the erotic thoughts of men" 總之, 小聰明則有餘, 于風化則大有礙也. 然教坊中人非此又不能動人艷思也.[49]

Less blatant in its wit but still well-suited for "arousing the erotic thoughts of men" is the following aria subtitled "Presented to a Friend" ("Zeng you" 贈友), which Wang Duanshu attributes to the famous late Ming courtesan Jing Pianpian 景翩翩:

[A Southern Xianlü mode modulating into Shuangdiao mode]: River Water with Two Variations	[南仙呂入雙調]二犯江兒水
My heart fluttering as I face you,	心旌相向
I remember in those days my heart fluttering as I faced you,	想當日心旌相向
When the first ripples of desire	情調初蕩漾
Held onto the falling of illusory flowers.[50]	把空花落相
As the bright moon rose,	青鳥廻翔
A bluebird soaring and circling sent tidings of my amorous heart.	寄春心明月上

Powdered butterflies rushed around for you,	粉蝶爲伊忙
As roving bees still hummed to themselves.	遊蜂還自嚷
Our love in the queen's palace,[51]	恩愛昭陽
Our dreaming souls like king and nymph at Gaotang lodge[52]—	魂夢高唐
It was just like a vast expanse of waves holding a black pearl.	恰便是含驪珠子千頃浪
Our past experience at the temple—	蕭寺行藏
but why speak of our past experience at the temple?	說什麽蕭寺行藏
To elope to the wineshop like Xiangru and Wenjun,[53]	臨邛情況
I'll meet you, seeker of immortal bliss, in the Tiantai peaks.[54]	向天台遇阮郎.

Generally speaking, Wang's evaluations in this chapter reinforce the truism that the independent aria was considered principally a performance genre. Her comments on Pianpian's arias seem deliberately to blur the boundary between composition and performance:

> Experts at 'realizing the tune' always lower their voice to make it more bewitching. True mastery lies not in forcing and interrupting but in passing smoothly from tune pattern to tune pattern in accord with the rhythm. Pianpian's first aria, "A Red Candle on a Silver Stand," is like a stringed instrument played without a single string broken;[55] the feeling is sad and calm. Her second aria, "My Heart Fluttering as I Face You," is like a duet in which "bamboo" and "flesh" exquisitely follow each other and the mood is never shattered. Raising a wine cup and turning your head to look at her, what more would you need? [56]
>
> 度曲家每低聲以媚之. 不在勉強湊插, 而在過腔合節乃爲當行. 翩翩 "銀臺絳蠟" 絃索一絲不斷而神情慘澹. "心旌相向" 竹肉縹緲相隨而意緒纏綿. 舉盞移顧, 何必在多?

Living some decades after Pianpian, Wang could never have heard her sing, so her evocation of the courtesan is purely imaginary, conjured up through reading the lyrics and the tune titles. The implication is that the words are incomplete on their own: the successful aria text must be able to invoke in the reader the compensatory *sensation* of witnessing a

performance—hence the emphasis on *looking* as well as listening. Wang cunningly describes the two arias in terms of voice and instruments to give the impression of how they would sound in concert, but the description is in fact metaphorical, meant to convey the musicality and expressiveness of Pianpian's skill as a writer. At the beginning of the passage, "realizing the tune" seems unequivocally to refer to "performing a song," but by the end it is clear that the other sense of "fashioning a song" is equally intended.

Authorship, Publication, and Transmission

One reason for the spread of southern forms of courtesan culture across the empire during the late Ming was that the cities of Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Suzhou, the locale of the most famous pleasure districts, were also centers of the publishing industry. Books about the courtesan world geared to the contemporary market were produced in rapid succession from the 1610s to the 1640s by literati editors capitalizing on their familiarity with the quarters. Although the format, stated aims, and content of such publications varied, they all include a large selection of lyrics to independent arias or popular songs and are important sources for understanding how flexible notions of authorship may be related to collaborative performance practices in a courtesan context.

Two such publications are *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou* (1617), compiled by Zhou Zhibiao 周之標 (under the pseudonym Wanyuzi 宛瑜子) and a sequel, *Seductive Courtesans of Nanjing* (*Jinling baimei* 金陵百媚 [1618]), compiled by Li Yunxiang 李雲翔 (under the pseudonym Weilinzi 爲霖子).[57] Both collections were printed in Suzhou and are examples of the parodic "flower registers" (*huabang* 花榜 or *hua'an* 花案) in which courtesans were ranked according to the grading system for successful examination candidates and then paired with a specific flower.[58]

Zhou Zhibiao had previously had a hand in compiling two anthologies of arias and drama excerpts, and he later published two collections of women's poetry.[59] A native of Suzhou, he was not only a habitué of the pleasure quarters and a self-avowed "slave to love" (*qing zhi nu* 情之奴) but an accomplished amateur singer himself. The entry for his girlfriend Wang Jiaoru王嬌如—ranked "Optimus" (*zhuangyuan* 狀元) in *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou*—confesses that the two of them frequently "realized the music together" until her madame, concerned about the lover's oath Jiaoru had sworn with a poor fellow of his ilk, abducted her.[60] His entry on the young courtesan Jin Jingluo 金驚洛 (ranked eighth in the top register) describes being cajoled by their friends into a singing contest with her at their first meeting. He lost the first two bouts but won the third.[61]

The Suzhou collection singles out three other courtesans (one per register) as top singers, one of whom, Liang (Yi) Xiaopian 梁(乙) 小翩, is

portrayed in the act of "realizing a tune" (fig. 2).[62] In the illustration, Xiaopian is draped elegantly, but casually against a chair, in a relaxed sensuous pose that no respectable woman would ever be pictured in. An exposed arm dangles across the back of the chair; the hand of the other is raised, propped up against her thigh, as though she were beating time to the music. On a stool facing her is another woman, a maid or perhaps a fellow courtesan, who is accompanying her, a flat drum on her lap and a drumstick in one hand, a clapper in the other. She may be setting the tempo before starting to sing or perhaps even beating out a tricky rhythm in the midst of fitting new words to a tune. It seems to be a rehearsal since no audience is present in the illustration, and Xiaopian's mouth is not even open, although the small rosebud mouth preferred for female beauty meant that women singing are not always portrayed with open mouths.[63] *A Ranking of Flowers* (*Pinhua jian* 品花箋), a huge late-Ming compendium on courtesans, flowers, musical instruments and other entertainments, includes a similar picture of a courtesan "realizing the tune," but here she is performing for an intimate drinking party of literati clients, who are watching her avidly as servant-boys heat and pour out the wine (fig. 3).[64]

The entry for Xiaopian includes a quatrain, the lyrics to an aria, and the words to a popular song. Both the quatrain and the aria pay tribute to her singing. The aria is uttered in the voice of a man propositioning a courtesan: its formulaic quality and trite allusions may be signposts of impromptu oral composition and performance, where seduction was clearly the point:

Heptasyllabic quatrain: A Glimpse in a Skiff	七言絕句: 舟中瞥見
A flash of her beating out a song against the side of a skiff—was it a dream, or was it real?	叩船一見夢耶真
The skiff pulls away, but the enchanting notes linger still.	船去盈盈別有聲
It's not simply her sublime song's power to move my soul –	不是曲高能動魄
How many true connoisseurs of singing have there ever been?	從來顧曲幾何人
Aria: To the tune *"Perfume of Hanging Branches"*	曲: 挂枝香
Her figure is charmingly slender.	態兒清瘦
She always magically understands a lover's heart.[65]	靈犀常透
Her singing has the elegance of "White Snow."[66]	度詞兒白雪堪稱

Figure 2. "Realizing the Music." From Zhou Zhibiao, *Wuji baimei.*

Figure 3. Courtesan singing at a party as one servant boy heats wine and another pours it. From *Pinhua jian*. Photo by Zhou Yuan.

It's no lie to say the notes "wind sinuously 'round the rafters."	聲嬝嬝繞梁非謬
In the Green Bower, it's rare to find her match.	青樓罕儔
I'm seeking a partner on the "Terrace of Love" [67]	陽臺尋偶
and have long heard of her fame.	芳名已久
Her smiling face bids me to stay.	笑相留
If we can get the light clouds to depart,	若得輕雲去
the bright moon's sickle will still be there.	依然明月鉤

The popular song, conversely, is a proposition from a woman to a man. It is an example of a dialect "mountain song" (*shan'ge* 山歌), an unaccompanied type of folksong originating in the rural areas around Suzhou that became fashionable among the urban populace during the late Ming. As is common in this kind of song, the speaker refers to herself as "Jie" 姐, and her lover as "Lang" 郎. The freshness and directness of the language, the reliance on double entendres and build-up to a punch line are also typical of the genre:

Huzhou Mountain Song: a fashionable tune	湖州山歌: 時腔
Jie has these feelings of hers,	姐有子個心來
and *Lang* has these feelings of his.	郎有子個心
Now take those feelings of yours	那你拿個那個心來
and come touch these feelings of mine.	著子姐個心
I'm not afraid that one set of feelings is soft,	弗怕一心硬來
and one set of feelings is hard.	一心軟
I'm just afraid that what's hard are your intentions,	只怕硬個是肚腸
and what's soft are your feelings.	軟個是個心

The interplay between "hard" and "soft" in the song implies a double entendre, especially because the images are more physical in the original: the word I translate as "feelings" is literally "heart" (*xin* 心), while "intentions" is "gut" (*duchang* 肚腸). The difficulty is figuring out precisely what is meant, especially because no personal pronouns are used in the last four lines in the original. "Heart of the flower" (*huaxin* 花心) is a bawdy term for the female genitals. Though no comparable usage can be definitively traced for "gut," it might, as the proverbial bodily seat of nefarious intentions, connote the male genitals. A popular song from Feng Menglong's *Hanging Branches* offers an instructive parallel. Entitled "Courtesan" (妓), it is addressed to "My loverboy" (*you qingge* 有情哥) in

a woman's voice, who complains that while his mouth expresses words of love, his lack of feelings is concealed inside his "belly" (*duli* 肚裏).[68]

Neither of the *Seductive Courtesans* collections provides authorial attribution for the verses in the courtesan entries, contrary to the fixation on authorship in most anthologies, which tend to resort to place keepers like "Anonymous" when the author is truly unknown. In this respect, the two *Seductive Courtesans* collections differ from *Stylish Verses from the Green Bower*, in which the authorship of each piece of courtesan's verse is clearly marked.[69] The *Seductive Courtesans* collections also differ from the many anecdotal or individual literary collections that included verse to or about specific courtesans by male literati, which likewise identify the authorship of each individual piece. Even within the entries in the *Seductive Courtesans* collections, in contrast to the unassigned authorship and polyphony of the verse selections, general comments are clearly labeled with the compiler's pseudonym.

From the content of the verse included in the two *Seductive Courtesans* collections, as the entry for the singer Liang Xiaopian suggests, many poems and arias appear to have been written in tribute to a courtesan by a male admirer; others, particularly the popular songs, are written in a female voice, often addressing a male lover. Some of the verse is purposefully vague—the sentiments it espouses could be voiced by either sex in a love affair. Kathryn Lowry has noted that most popular songs are couched in a woman's voice, and one major difference between independent aria and popular song is that the former tend to be written in the third person, the latter in the first person.[70] Since there is a long tradition of men writing in a woman's voice in China, however, a first-person feminine voice is by no means a definitive sign of female authorship. Conversely, since women writers were accustomed to depicting the beauty of other women, and perhaps even their own, in the poetry and songs they composed, adulatory description of a feminine body or face need not be a definitive sign of male authorship either.[71]

In his biography of the Nanjing courtesan Fu Lingxiu 傅靈修, who was the daughter of a famous actor and performed on stage with her brother, Pan Zhiheng appends two tributary *yuefu* 樂府 poems about her physical charms and musical talents: one that he composed and one composed by her good friend, the Nanjing courtesan Zhu Wuxia 朱無瑕, who had a reputation as a poet.[72] The poems may have been composed on the same occasion, at one of the parties at the "House of Twin Enchantments" (Shuangyan lou 雙艷樓) that the three of them attended in 1610. The poems are similar in style, and without the authorial attributions Pan provides, it would be impossible to determine that one was written by a man and the other by a woman.[73]

My hypothesis is that this very promiscuity of provenance in the *Seductive Courtesans* collections may be a key to the kinds of loose collaborative and improvisational types of music-making and versifying that went on in early seventeenth-century courtesan houses.[74] The collections provide no information as to the authors of the verses in each entry or the specific circumstances under which such verses were composed. *Love Lyrics of Stylistic Brilliance* (*Caibi qingci* 彩筆情辭), an anthology compiled by Zhang Xu 張栩 in the 1620's, which showcased arias by literati written to courtesans, includes one song-suite from *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou,* which it attributes to Wanyuzi, the pseudonym under which Zhou Zhibiao published the book.[75] In their eagerness to find an author, the modern editors of *The Complete Ming Arias* (*Quan Ming sanqu* 全明散曲) follow suit and attribute all the arias in the Suzhou volume to Zhou Zhibiao.[76] But there is no evidence to suggest a single authorship for the arias in either *Seductive Courtesan* volume, let alone the popular songs. Lowry's early suggestion that the collections included compositions both written to and by courtesans is plausible.[77] But in my opinion, authorship is not actually what is at stake here. If top courtesans excelled at performing their lovers' verse to music, and sometimes their own, and were also instrumental in transmitting and generating popular songs and arias, then at least a portion of the pieces clustered under the entry of a particular courtesan should be understood as characteristic of her *performing* repertory and certainly of her performing cohort and milieu. The courtesan's singing is a frequent topic of the poems and arias, which helps to keep the performance context of these offerings constantly in the foreground.

Important to my argument is the high density of arias and popular songs in these collections, since other verse forms, while chanted aloud, were not actually sung in this period. Furthermore, unlike more prestigious genres of poetry, which carried clear expectations of having an "author," arias, especially arias presented in a courtesan context, were more likely to remain anonymous or to have false attributions. When it came to popular song, the concept of authorship was not even really applicable.

Lowry has argued that the boundaries between arias and popular songs were quite permeable during the late Ming and that tune types were very flexible. Her research shows that at least in the case of popular songs, verses with very different prosodic forms shared the same tune title, while popular songs could sometimes even share the same tune titles as arias.[78] I interpret her findings to indicate that tunes and lyrics were continually mutating in performance through improvisation. Crucial to bringing about such mutations were courtesans who functioned as a principal "artery" for absorbing folk tunes into urban culture through popular song and disseminating them across the country.[79]

The anthologies of Feng Menglong help shed some light on contemporary attitudes toward the "authorship" of arias and popular songs arising from a pleasure quarter milieu. Playwright, editor, and publisher, Feng was a crucial figure in the early seventeenth-century publication of arias and popular songs as part of a movement championing such vernacular entertainment as more natural, authentic and full of feeling than classical verse forms. A native of Suzhou, he can be linked with both the *Seductive Courtesans* collections. In the Suzhou collection, Zhou Zhibiao calls him "a friend" and details Feng's liaison with the courtesan Liu Hanxiang 劉含香 (ranked sixth in the first register). Feng was directly involved in the compilation of the Nanjing collection, for which he wrote a preface and where his comments are appended to many entries.[80]

In 1627 or so, Feng published an anthology of arias mainly written to or about courtesans, *The Celestial Air Played Anew* (*Taixia xinzou* 太霞新奏), which included many of his own compositions. In it, he notes that "older generations did not wish to be known as the authors of arias, and although many of their arias were in wide circulation, we don't know from whose hand they came" 前輩不欲以詞曲知名. 往往有詞盛傳而不知出於誰手.[81] He scoffs at the 1616 anthology of arias associated with Zhou Zhibiao, *An Elegant Collection of Kun-Style Songs* (*Wuyu cuiya* 吳歈萃雅), which did provide names of authors for the arias, but often "recklessly mismatched them" 悉取文人姓字，妄配諸曲.[82] The problem of unknown or faulty attributions for arias, especially those of earlier periods, is also raised by Zhang Xu in his preface to *Love Lyrics of Stylistic Brilliance*.[83] Both Feng and Zhang's anthologies present themselves as novel endeavors to apply the rigorous standards of authorial attribution demanded of prestigious collections of verse to compilations of arias composed and performed in the courtesan world. At the same time, both men directed their anthologies to an audience of "reader-singers" *gelanzhe* 歌覽者 and adopted various organizational and typographical strategies meant to facilitate singing so that the literary value they were championing for the arias did not entirely eclipse their performance value.

The absence of authorial attribution in the *Seductive Courtesans* collections is consistent with the editorial practice of anthologies of popular songs from the 1610s or 1620s, notably *Hanging Branches* and *Mountain Songs* (*Shange* 山歌), both compiled by Feng Menglong. Only in a handful of cases are authors given for literary imitations inspired by a certain song, but courtesans are occasionally noted as the sources from whom Feng learned a song. The most extensive account in *Hanging Branches* concerns two songs that he got from his "good friend" Feng Xi 馮喜 (no relation), whom *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou* ranked as "Secondus" (*bangyan* 榜眼). On the night before she was to be married, she invited him to come bid

her farewell. The hour grew late. As he was about to leave, he asked whether there was anything she had left unsaid. She replied that she remembered two popular songs she had never divulged to him. And then she sang them for him. Feng Menglong prints the texts of the two songs, which are quite witty, and then waxes melancholy that he never saw her again: "Ah, this face as pink and lovely as a peach flower has long vanished, becoming the stuff of dreams. But whenever I read the lyrics of these songs, I faintly hear her voice 'winding sinuously round the rafters'" 嗚呼! 人面桃花, 已成夢境. 每閱二詞, 依稀遶梁聲在耳畔也.[84]

The songs are a parting gift that Feng Xi bestows on her friend Feng Menglong, whose interest in collecting and publishing popular songs would have been common knowledge in the pleasure quarter.[85] As befits a popular song, she uses the language of "remembering" (*ji* 記) rather than composing, though this would not rule out her having shaped or modified the words and music, and he credits her as the person who "passed on" (*chuan* 傳) the songs to him, not as their author. But even when all he has before him are the written texts, presumably that one of them had transcribed, the songs are indelibly stamped with her performing presence and his memory of the occasion upon which he heard them. This instance suggests how easy it was for writers on courtesans to slip into nostalgia, but Feng Menglong quickly follows this emotional outburst with clever imitations of Feng Xi's first song written by himself and his literati friends, which are among the few songs in the collection presented as the work of named "authors."[86] Still, their efforts pale in comparison with Feng Xi's, where the written text of her songs serves as a reminder of a whole sensory past, which lingers in the memory like an elusive scent or color.

The example of Feng Xi's parting gift to Feng Menglong and the memories it inspires suggest some of the subtleties possible in exchanges of song in the pleasure quarters. Feng Xi's songs that last night are bestowed as a privileged mark of friendship between equals rather than as a "mere" transaction between courtesan and client. On the eve of her marriage, which will make her the property of one man and take her person permanently out of the public eye, she sends forth her songs to circulate in her stead. Feng Menglong publishes her songs, which, framed between the anecdote on one side and the literary imitations on the other, succeed to some extent in preserving the aura she is about to forfeit. In so doing, Feng Menglong was following standard practice in the courtesan world where men of letters provided written endorsements of a courtesan's talents and charms to make or boost her reputation.

In this vein, both *The Celestial Air Played Anew* and *Love Lyrics of Stylistic Brilliance* include a suite of five arias written by one such patron, Yu Wanlun 俞琬綸, for the previously mentioned courtesan and actress Fu

Lingxiu 傅靈修, whose vocal talent was so praised by Pan Zhiheng and the courtesan Zhu Wuxia.[87] Yu, a top-degree holder, explains that Lingxiu had approached him for a written evaluation (*pinti* 品題) of her.

> I replied: "You enjoy singing, so I will present you with a set of songs." So I swiftly penned five tunes and showed them to her. Leaping to her feet, she cried: "In my whole life, I have never found anyone who truly understood me. Now these songs show true understanding!"

The first aria goes:

(To the tune *"Erlang shen"*)	[南商調二郎神]
In springtime,	春時候
watch how the contest of red flowers fills the yard.	看滿院繁紅爭鬥
Is the winner here?	第一當場人在否
Her childhood name is Shou,	小名名壽
courtesy name Qiuying, she also goes by Lingxiu.	字秋英又喚靈修
The books on her shelf are old friends.	架上圖書爲素友
Lute and song are her passion— she never refrains from playing or singing,	愛琴歌也無拘手口
but laughs at any payment in return.	笑纏頭
She's a dashing and dapper fellow of the female sex! [88]	他是個女中裘馬風流

Yu's preface does not mention whether she actually sang these songs for him; perhaps the assumption was so obvious it went unsaid, or perhaps tacking anything after this punch line would have detracted from the courtesan's praise of the author's superior understanding. It is striking that what begins as a story of a courtesan soliciting an endorsement of her talents from a client morphs into the courtesan's endorsement of her client's talents instead. As such, this anecdote beautifully shows the way in which mutual validation through gift-giving underpinned relations between top courtesans and their literati admirers.

But in bestowing his lyrics on a courtesan, how could a literary gentleman control their circulation? Most galling of all, in the promiscuous exchange of verse in the pleasure quarters, how could he be sure that another man wouldn't pass off these lyrics as his own? Such was the indignation suffered by Shi Shaoxin 施紹莘 (1581-1640), who is unusual in

having published a collection of his own verse that consists primarily of independent arias along with one section of *ci* lyrics. Like compilers of aria anthologies such as Feng Menglong and Zhang Xu, Shao presents himself as a bon vivant and connoisseur of courtesans and music, but he is even more committed to upgrading the aria genre by establishing his claim to total authorship. His book, entitled *Flower Shadows from the Autumn Floods Hermitage* (*Qiushui an Huaying ji* 秋水庵花影集), suggests how hard it was to "own" an aria. In his notice on "Circulation" ("Liuchuan" 流傳), he cautions readers that although his arias have been passed around for years among "cognoscenti" (*haoshizhe* 好事者), he has revised most of them so heavily—"to the point that in some pieces not a single word of the original remains" 至有終篇一字不同者; only the published version is "correct" (*zheng*正).[89] An even better example is his notice on "Plagiarism" ("Weiqie" 僞竊): "I realize that "xiaoci" [in his usage, referring both to arias and *ci* lyrics] are a rather low form, but when I've gone to the trouble of writing one then I rather prize it. But what can be done about people always stealing them from me? Once on a singing girl's fan I saw ten stanzas of a 'Dreaming of the South.' It was clearly my composition but it had another man's signature! There are numerous cases like this" 小詞雖極蕪陋, 然自寫一得, 亦頗自珍惜, 奈每每爲人掩竊. 曾於一歌女扇頭, 見夢江南十首, 宛然予作, 而已識他人姓字矣. 如此者多.[90] In other words, it may be difficult for a man to lay sole claim to a courtesan's favors, but shouldn't he at least be able to own the words to his own song?

In sum, the problem of certifying authorship of arias in the late Ming stems not simply from the print practices of unscrupulous editors and publishers or because some gentlemen disavowed their authorship of such a frivolous form, but because the lyrics to such songs were copied, freely changed, and recycled, both in performance and in manuscript, within the courtesan world.

Learning to Sing

Singing skill was highly profitable to a courtesan and her establishment, and training in the vocal arts was consequently regarded as an important investment. Singing in a performance context may have been culturally coded as feminine, but the main arbiters of musical taste (the amateurs) and the most prestigious singing teachers (the professionals) were certainly men. Studying with a top music master was understood as one major avenue to a successful career as a courtesan, whose reputation, at least at the outset, might be partially contingent upon the renown of her teacher. Pan Zhiheng's biography of the courtesan Xu Pian 徐翩, for instance, names the four male teachers of different arts with whom she studied simultaneously: one for calligraphy, one for the *qin,* one for poetry, and one for singing

arias.[91] Liang Xiaopian, the courtesan illustrated "realizing the tune" in *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou*, is said to have studied the art of the aria with "the best music master in the south," a certain Gong Muxi 龔慕溪. "More than two-fifths of all members of Suzhou singing societies were his pupils . . . Xiaopian's fellow students all acknowledged that she was the best among them. Whenever her name was mentioned, her peers would all sigh in admiration. In this way Xiaopian's fame came to top the whole region" 楓江有龔慕溪者曲冠江以南. 吳下歌友出其門者, 十之三四 . . . . [小翩]門人中雅稱第一. 輩中談及小翩靡不欽服. 小翩之名亦冠江以南矣.[92]

A dubious honor perhaps. The paragraph concludes with a remark that damns as much as defends her: "Who says that a girl who sings is not worth speaking of?"[93] The line implies that a talent for singing in a girl is ordinarily regarded as a sign of her lack of virtue; therefore, what wins her fame and increases her value in her profession as courtesan is precisely what makes her *not* "worth speaking of" otherwise.

Despite the greater prestige of male music masters, becoming a singing teacher was one possible source of livelihood open to a courtesan past her prime. A courtesan who left the profession and married might even coach her husband's maids in singing or eventually teach her granddaughters to pass on her musical legacy.[94] After the Manchu conquest in 1644, the great loyalist poet Wu Weiye 吳偉業 wrote a poem about one former courtesan singing instructor (possibly real, possibly imaginary), entitled "Ballad of an Old Courtesan from Huai'an" ("Linhuai laoji xing" 臨淮老妓行). The main point of this long poem is to lambaste the corruption of the despised renegade Ming general Liu Zeqing 劉澤清, who employed her in his household in Huai'an during his alliance with the Southern Ming court, and to lament the fall of the dynasty through the venerable trope of meeting a former entertainer of the high and mighty. The ballad nonetheless affords us a deeper view into such women than the brief mentions gleaned from the biographical and anecdotal record:

There still survives an old courtesan teacher	老大猶存一妓師
who can recall the old-world score for "Thorn Tree Branch."[95]	柘枝記得開元譜
Her soft voice gets through but one turn in the song before she begins to weep.	纔轉輕喉更淚流
In front of the revered company, she tells of the suffering of being alone and adrift.	尊前訴出飄零苦
"I used to be chief singer in General Liu's household.	妾是劉家舊主謳
My familiar name was Dong'er; I sang the tunes	冬兒小字唱梁州

of a now fallen state.
I taught his "Peach Leaf" troupe new lyrics that I wrote to the tune 'Water Music,' 翻新水調教桃葉
and I plucked model pieces on my rare *pipa* strung with crane gut to instruct his 'Never-Grieve' girls, too.[96] 撥定鵾絃授莫愁
In those days imperial relatives raved over me as a singer, 武安當日誇聲伎
and my superlative art was the admiration of the age. 秋娘絕藝傾時世
Tian Hongyu, the imperial consort's father, first brought me into his house in a golden carriage.[97] 戚里迎歸金犢車
Later I was transferred to the General's mansion in Huai'an. . . ." [98] 後來轉入臨淮第

We know that extensive training was required to gain the vocal expertise necessary for a top courtesan. Unfortunately, most sources are too terse or formulaic to provide any details on how courtesans were actually trained in singing. One place to find at least imaginative representations of such training sessions, however, are the scenes from operas in which courtesans or palace entertainers are being tutored in the performing arts. Such scenes became stock components of operas, no doubt because they helped vary the spectacle and incorporated the operatic injunction to sing into the plot. Although dramatized singing lessons can be found as early as the fifteenth century, the vogue for such scenes was probably launched by Liang Chenyu's 梁辰魚 famous *Washing Silk* (*Huansha ji* 浣紗記), said to be the first opera written expressly for *kunqu* performance. This opera features a scene entitled "Instruction in the Arts" ("Jiaoji" 教技) where the Queen of Yue teaches the palace lady Xi Shi 西施 to sing and dance so that she will be fully equipped to seduce their enemy, the King of Wu, and help topple his kingdom.[99]

Interestingly, one of two extant aria suites from the courtesan Ma Xianglan's otherwise lost opera, *A Jade Hairpin Passed Down Over Three Lifetimes (Sansheng chuan Yuzan ji* 三生傳玉簪記), comes from a scene entitled "Learning to Sing and Dance" ("Xuexi gewu" 學習歌舞). Since these arias survive only in a late Ming song anthology, which prints the tune titles and texts of the arias alone, without any dialogue, stage directions, or even role type indications, it is impossible to reconstruct fully what is going on, though we know that part of the play retold the famous story of Wang Kui 王魁, who betrayed and abandoned his courtesan lover Guiying 桂英. Nonetheless, the lyrics to this particular scene make it clear that a courtesan

is being taught a full complement of the performing arts. The arias conclude with the unidentified teacher's praise that this pupil now has what it takes to succeed in the profession:

(To the northern tune *"Selling Fine Wine"*)	[北沽美酒]
Now you've mastered the flute and the *pipa*	到如今吹成彈成
You've mastered singing and dancing, too.	歌成舞成
You'll see how before your gate, horses and carriages will jockey for space…[100]	呀看門前車闐馬競.

The best-known and most complex of the singing lesson scenes appears in *Peach Blossom Fan*. First completed and performed in 1699, *Peach Blossom Fan* is a historical drama about the fall of the Ming dynasty some fifty years earlier, which centers much of the action on the pleasure quarters in Nanjing. Virtually all the characters in the play are based on historical figures, including the courtesans, music masters, storytellers, and other denizens of the demi-monde. The scene in question is our first introduction to the heroine, a budding courtesan named Li Xiangjun 李香君, whose career has not yet been launched. The date is 1643, the year prior to the dynasty's collapse. The setting is the house in the Nanjing pleasure quarters in which Xiangjun lives with her adoptive mother, the courtesan Li Zhenli 李貞麗, who is grooming her to enter the profession. A patron of theirs, a politician and man of letters named Yang Wencong 楊文驄, has just come to call, in part because he's interested in finding a mistress for a friend of his, the hero of the play, the celebrated late Ming literary figure Hou Fangyu 侯方域. Yang first admires Xiangjun's beauty, then immediately inquires as to her skill in the arts. Her mother answers that she has hired a singing master to teach her how to sing arias and that she has already learned half of Tang Xianzu's famous opera *Peony Pavilion* ("Mudan ting" 牡丹亭), by now a classic of the *kunqu* repertory. Then she calls her daughter over.

> ZHENLI: Child, Mr. Yang is no outsider. Take out your songbook and quickly practice a few arias. After your teacher has corrected you on these, you'll be ready to start on some new tunes.
> XIANGJUN (*frowning*): How can I practice singing in front of a guest?
> ZHENLI: What a silly thing to say! For those of us in the entertainer ranks, singing and dancing are what put food on the table! If you won't apply yourself to singing, what are you going to do with yourself? *Xiangjun looks at her songbook.*

Zhenli sings, to the tune "Pawlonia Tree:"

For the likes of us born into the ranks of powder and paint,	生來粉黛圍
or who've made the leap into the "oriole-flower" brigade,	跳入鶯花隊
a good singing voice is a goldmine.	一串歌喉 是俺金錢地
Don't lightly give the token of your love[101] away	莫將紅豆輕拋棄
Just master lines like "The lingering moon sets in the morning breeze"[102]	學就曉風月墜
to the slow beat of the red ivory clapper.	緩拍紅牙
Then the splendor of the court music troupe you'll capture,[103]	奪了宜春翠
and the mounts of young nobles will be tethered at your gate. [104]	門前繫住王孫轡

The scene makes clear that Xiangjun, as befits a high-class courtesan is being trained in the elegant "pure singing" style rather than in the performance of full-fledged operas on stage. What Xiangjun sings for her teacher Su Kunsheng 蘇崑生 are two arias from the famous garden scene in *Peony Pavilion*, where the well-born heroine experiences her first carnal dream of love. Since Xiangjun omits all the interspersed dialogue written into the arias in the original play, however, the book she is consulting could not have been a full playtext but is most likely a collection of arias meant primarily for singing.

The lesson proper begins with her teacher asking Xiangjun the usual formula employed in scenes of this sort: "Do you have the arias you learned yesterday down cold?" 昨日學的曲子, 可曾記熟了? When she replies that she has, he asks her to begin.

XIANGJUN: *seated opposite SU, sings to the tune "Black Gossamer Robe" from* Peony Pavilion:

"See how deepest purple, brightest scarlet	原來奼紫嫣紅開遍
open their beauty only to dry well crumbling.	似這般都付與斷井頹垣
'Bright the morn, lovely the scene,' listless and lost the heart"[105]	良辰美景奈何天

SU: Wrong! Wrong! "Lovely" gets an individual beat and so does "lost." You can't just slur them together. Take it from the top again.
XIANGJUN:

"'Bright the morn, lovely the scene.'	良辰美景奈何天
—where is the garden 'gay with joyous cries"?	賞心樂事誰家院
streaking the dawn, close-curled at dusk,	朝飛暮卷
rosy clouds frame emerald pavilion—	雲霞翠軒
fine threads of rain.	雨絲風片

SU: Wrong again! "Fine threads" is the climax point (*wutou* 務頭); it should be sung from inside the throat. [106]

Wutou is a much discussed technical term in the traditional prescriptive literature on the vocal art of the aria.[107] As Marjory Liu defines the term: "In effect, it brings together in two or three words within a line or a song a concentration of literary-musical components that signifies an aesthetic climax. That is to say, a choice grouping of key words, usually in lyrical style each representing a different specific speech tone, coinciding with melodic and rhythmic highlights collectively constitutes a *wutou*."[108] The lingering emotional affect a *wutou* is thus supposed to create makes the interruption of the acoustic pleasure here particularly jarring for a knowledgeable audience.

The term *wutou* is employed in this scene as a piece of musical jargon that the layman is expected to recognize but not necessarily understand. The same usage appears in a scene where a male instructor critiques the vocal technique of a female pupil in a fifteenth-century opera written by the early Ming prince Zhu Youdun 朱有燉. In this play, the lesson takes place in the palace; the music master is an unnamed official in charge of entertainment for the inner court; his charge is not a courtesan but a nameless palace entertainer, and what she sings is not specified but improvised by the performer; the play script only indicates that "the female lead sings something from an opera excerpt" 旦唱一折了. The teacher is not overly pleased with her performance.

OFFICIAL: There are places in your singing where you lose the beat and your delivery of the *wutou* isn't terribly good. Listen to what I tell you.
He sings, to the tune "A Golden Goblet" 金盞兒:

In *xianlü* mode,[109] the opening notes must be quick;	唱的仙呂要起音疾
The final stanza of the suite must slow down at the coda.	賺煞要尾聲遲
You must hit the *wutou* with exquisite precision. . .	你將務頭兒撲得多標致

One important point of the musical jargon in *Peach Blossom Fan* is not only to convey the teacher's professional expertise but to bolster Xiangjun's credentials as a seriously-trained singer, important if she is to succeed as a courtesan. And it works. After she finishes the second aria, with a few additional interruptions, Yang Wencong is impressed. "How delightful that your daughter is so gifted. She'll become a famous courtesan, don't you worry!" 可喜令愛聰明的緊,不愁不是一個名妓哩.[110] And he promptly proposes to arrange a union with his friend, Hou Fangyu.

Coda: The Value of Withdrawal

A number of recent interpretations of this scene in *Peach Blossom Fan* emphasize the extent to which this technical treatment of the singing lesson in the play suppresses and distorts the romantic meaning of the *Peony Pavilion* lyrics that the courtesan sings.[111] Indeed the possibilities for irony are even greater, since the emphasis on learning a technical craft not only undermines the meaning of the lyrics the performer sings, but the affective power of the voice to transport the listener.

The historical nucleus of this scene derives from the biography of Li Xiangjun that Hou Fangyu wrote between 1650 and 1652 describing their former relationship and a letter covering some of the same ground.[112] The biography says that from the age of eleven or twelve Xiangjun studied singing with Zhou Rusong 周如松 and "completely mastered the music" 皆能盡其音節 of Tang Xianzu's four operas. In *Peach Blossom Fan*, Yang Wencong says that Su Kunsheng's former surname was Zhou 周, neatly conflating the two singing masters for dramaturgical purposes. Lu Eting 陸萼庭 has demonstrated, however, that this conflation was pure invention on the playwright's part. Su Kunsheng was never a habitué of the Nanjing pleasure quarters and although Su was indeed renowned as a specialist in the pure singing style of *kunqu*, he served as music master in the entourage of wealthy connoisseurs, where he would have coached household entertainers rather than courtesans.[113]

The historical Hou Fangyu was in a position to appreciate the fineness of Xiangjun's musicianship. He came from a wealthy family of officials, with its own household troupe of boys, and, according to one biographer, was known for "his passion for the vocal arts and knowledge of music" 雅

嗜聲技, 解音律. He is said to have hired a famous teacher for a singing boy he had purchased and to have participated himself in the boy's training, "pointing to the score himself to make sure that not one word was wrong." 身自按譜, 不使有一字訛譜. His ability to detect even minor errors during the performances of professional singers and actors is also reported.[114]

Hou's biography of Xiangjun mentions that she would "invite him to compose poems for her and then reciprocate by singing them" 妓嘗邀侯生爲詩, 而自歌以償上之.[115] There is more than meets the eye here. He uses the word *shi* 詩 here, which refers to poetry that was chanted, not sung, and therefore never written to pre-existing tunes as arias were.[116] Several short poems that he is thought to have written for her appear in his only extant collection of verse.[117] Although we do not know whether these are the poems she actually performed for him, it is clear that none of them would have been singable in that form. Unfortunately, Hou gives no indication of how Xiangjun was able to sing his poems, but they would have needed first to be set to music, by rewriting and expanding the words to conform to a current tune pattern.[118] In this case, "realizing the tune" must have required an unusual degree of literary and musical effort on her part.

Hou's biography of Xiangjun also notes that she was exceptionally skilled at singing arias from another famous opera, *The Pipa* (*Pipa ji* 琵琶記), but that she was extremely reluctant to perform them. When she does at last sing them for him, this initial reticence lends her rendition that much more power and weight. He recounts her passionate farewell at the riverbank upon his departure from Nanjing, in which she sang from *The Pipa* to see him off, knowing their relationship was over. Hou had come to Nanjing to sit for the triennial provincial exams and, as was customary, had taken a mistress from among the courtesans in the famous pleasure quarters directly across the river from the examination compound; now having failed the examination, it was time to take his leave of the city and of her. The transient course of such an affair was entirely predictable.

Yet Xiangjun interjects a deeper meaning into the standard farewell by choosing this particular opera from her repertory and by drawing a historical analogy to warn him against aligning himself with the evil faction of Ruan Dacheng 阮大城, then in power. "We cannot expect to see each other again, so I hope you will always take care of yourself. Don't forget the arias I have sung from *The Pipa*! I will never sing them again!'" 此去相見未可期, 願終自愛. 無忘妾所歌琵琶記也, 妾亦不復歌矣.[119] We know Xiangjun's words only through the remembered speech that Hou Fangyu includes in his idealized biography, but it is still worth pondering the two possible meanings of her last two lines. Why should he not forget the arias she has just sung?

On a superficial level, she is simply reinforcing the seriousness of her message: I will no longer be around to advise you, so you must engrave my words, underscored by these arias, in your memory. In this reading, "I will never sing them again" implies "I will never sing them again *for you."* On a deeper level, however, the arias become a substitute for her person, the injunction not to forget them replacing the more expected plea at a parting of lovers, "Don't forget *me."* Her performance of these arias is a farewell keepsake she bestows upon him, the rarity of her gift imbuing it with correspondingly greater value. In keeping with the logic of restricting the performance of certain arias to enhance their preciousness, a second interpretation of her last line is possible. In this reading, "I will never sing them again" implies "I will never sing them again *for anyone."*

As we have seen throughout this essay, one of the most important currencies at a courtesan's disposal was the performance of song. The dilemma that Li Xiangjun faced at the riverbank was how to turn the seemingly most banal gesture in a courtesan's repertory—singing arias for her lover—into a truly valuable thing, one that could adequately express the integrity of her feelings for him and repay his favor. Her solution was to withdraw these arias permanently from circulation from that moment on. Only in this way could she claim "ownership" of these well-known arias and present them to her lover as "his" forever.

The symbolism of this musical resolve anticipates the grand gesture for which she became famous: her principled refusal of the princely sum of 300 taels to join the household of Tian Yang 田仰, a wealthy and powerful member of the evil political faction that she had warned her lover against. It is for this act of loyalty that Hou Fangyu wrote her biography and that she is featured as the heroine of *Peach Blossom Fan*.

Endnotes

1. An earlier and shorter version of this essay was published as "'Notes of Flesh' and the Courtesan's Song in Seventeenth-Century China" in *The Courtesan's Arts: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Martha Feldman and Bonnie Gordon (Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 75-99.
2. The main exceptions are: Kathryn Lowry's *Tapestry of Popular Songs in 16th- and 17th-century China: Reading, Imitation, and Desire* (Leiden: Brill, 2005) and her "Transmission of Popular Song in the Late Ming" (Phd. Diss., Harvard University, 1996), Dai Ning 戴寧,

"Ming Qing shiqi Qinhuai qinglou yinyue wenhua chutan" 明清時期秦淮青樓音樂文化初探, *Zhongguo yinyuexue jikan* (1997.3), pp. 40-54, Wang Ning 王寧 and Ren Xiaowen 任孝溫, *Kunqu yu Mingqing yueji* 昆曲與明清樂伎 (Shenyang: Chunfeng wenyi chubanshe, 2005), and several publications by Ōki Yasushi 大木康, including *Chūgoku yūri kūkan : Min Shin shinwai gijo no sekai* 中國遊里空間 : 明清秦淮妓女 の 世界 (Tokyo: Seidosha, 2002), recently published in Chinese as *Fengyue Qinhuai: Zhongguo youli kongjian* 風月秦淮：中國游里空間, trans. Xin Ruyi 辛如意 (Taipei: Lianjing, 2007), and his *Fū Bōryū sanka no kenkyū* 馮夢龍山歌の研究 (Tokyo: Keisō shobō, 2003).

3. Late Ming printed songbooks did often indicate the beat and mouth position of certain words to be sung, but publication of opera arias with the full *gongche* 工尺 method of musical notation did not begin until the eighteenth century.
4. *Chang* 娼 is cognate with *chang* 唱 (sing). The term "singing girl" (歌女) can be traced back to the Tang and is found in seventeenth-century sources but is far less common than it became in the twentieth century. The translation "sing-song girl" is a pidgin corruption of the Wu dialect pronunciation for *xiansheng* (先生) used in Southern establishments for "courtesan," but ordinarily meaning "master" or "teacher" and has nothing originally to do with singing.
5. Beverly Bossler, "Shifting Identities: Courtesans and Literati in Song China," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 62. 1 (2002): 6-7.
6. *Qinglou yunyu* 青樓韻語, comp. Zhang Mengzheng 張夢徵 (Hangzhou, 1616); facsimile ed. in *Zhongguo gudai banhua congkan erbian* 中國古代版畫叢刊二編 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1994), vol. 4, 1.1. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.
7. Although *The Classic of Whoring* does not survive as an independent book under this title, I have discovered that the identical content circulated verbatim in late Ming daily-use encyclopedias under headings such as "Regulations of the Green Bower" ("Qinglou guifan" 青樓規範 in *Santai wanyong zhengzong* 三台萬用正宗 21.294-348) or "Secret Mechanisms of Romance" ("Fengyue jiguan" 風月機關 in *Wuju wanbao quanshu* 五車萬寶全書 10.250-266 and *Miaojin wangbao quanshu* 妙錦萬寶全書 24.306-334), all reprinted in *Chūgoku nichiyo ruisho shusei* 中國日用類書集成 (Tokyo: Kyuko Shoin, 1999-2000). On these "brothel treatises," which were also included in drama miscellanies, see Yuming He, "Productive Space:

Performance Texts in the Late Ming" (Ph.D. diss, University of California at Berkeley, 2003), pp. 99-102. *The Embroidered Jacket* (綉襦記), a late sixteenth-century *chuanqi* play based on the Tang tale "Li Wa zhuan" 李娃傳, includes a reference to a *Classic of Whoring* as part of the banter between the courtesan Li Wa and her client, but the title is offered in the spirit of wit and not necessarily as an allusion to an actual book. See Scene 4, 15b in *Guben xiqu congkan chuji* 古本戲曲叢刊初集 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1954).

8. James Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Classical Athens* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1999), p. 124.
9. For example, see James Cahill, *The Painter's Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) and Jonathan Hay, *Shitao* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
10. Commentary by Zhu Yuanliang 朱元亮 in *Qinglou yunyu,* comp. Zhang Mengzheng, 1.230. "Hurling a brick to extract precious jade" is a set phrase meaning "to use some inferior thing to elicit and obtain a superior thing in kind" often employed as a modest reference to one's own writing when sending it to someone else.
11. Feng Menglong 馮夢龍, comp. *Guazhi'er* 掛枝兒 in *Ming Qing min'ge shidiao ji* 明清民歌時調集, ed. Guan Dedong 關德棟 et al. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1987), 10.235.
12. Joseph S. C. Lam, "The Presence and Absence of Female Musicians and Music in China," in *Women and Confucian Cultures in Premodern China, Korea, and Japan*, ed. Dorothy Ko et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), p. 97.
13. For the sexual meaning of these terms, see Wilt Idema and Stephen West, *The Moon and the Zither: The Story of the Western Wing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 147 and 151.
14. Judith T. Zeitlin, "The Secret Life of Rocks: Objects and Collectors in the Ming and Qing Imagination," *Orientations* 30.5 (May 1999): 40-47.
15. In *Shanben xiqu congkan* 善本戲曲叢刊, vol. 2, compiled by Wang Qiugui 王秋桂 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1984-87; henceforth, *Shanben*). *Yugu tiaohuang* 玉谷調簧 is the title on the cover page, but elsewhere the title is printed as *Yugu xinhuang* 玉谷新簧 (New Pipes in the Jade Valley). *Gu* 谷 (gully, ravine) can be used as a poetic double entendre for the vagina. In her reading of the picture and the title, He Yuming 何予明 suggests taking *yu* 玉 (jade) as a pun for *yu* 欲 (desire) and replacing *gu* 谷 with its synonym *he* 壑 to produce the saying "yuhe nantian" 欲壑難填 (Desire is an insatiable ravine).

(Xixue, diaoban yinshua yu wan Ming de wenhua shishang 戲謔，雕版印刷與晚明的文化時尚, in *Zhongguo wenxue: chuantong yu xiandai de duihua* 中國文學：傳統與現代的對話, ed. Zhang Hongsheng 張宏生 and Qian Nanxiu 錢南秀 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2007), p. 212.

16. Sun Zhongling 孫鐘齡, *Dongguo ji* 東郭記 , scene 8, 16b-17a in *Guben xiqu congkan erji* 古本戲曲叢刊二集 (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1955).
17. Ibid., 17b. The *locus classicus* for this cliché praising female singing is an anecdote in *Liezi* 列子 about a beggar woman who sings for a living. When she passes through the city gate, the lingering notes are said to "wind sinuously 'round the rafters," and to be audible for three days. For a full translation, see *The Book of Lieh-tzu*, trans. A.C. Graham (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 109.
18. See, for instance, the section on song in Duan Anjie 段安節, *Yuefu zalu* 樂府雜路 (ca. 894), which lists a few male singers but concentrates mainly on female ones. *Zhongguo gudian xiqu lunzhu jicheng* 中國古典戲曲論著集成 (Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 1959), vol. 1, pp. 46-48. (Henceforth, *Xiqu lunzhu*).
19. Wang Zhuo 王灼, *Biji manzhi* 碧雞漫志, in *Xiqu lunzhu*, vol. 1, p. 111.
20. *Shih-shuo hsin-yü*: *A New Account of Tales of the World*, trans. Richard B. Mather (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), p. 205.
21. The aphorism is cited, inter alia, in: Duan Anjie, *Yuefu zalu*, *Xiqu lunzhu*, vol. 1, p. 47; Yannan zhian 燕南芝庵 (pseud.), *Changlun* 唱論, *Xiqu lunzhu*, vol. 1, p. 159; Wang Jide 王驥德, *Qulü* 曲律, *Xiqu lunzhu,* vol. 4, p. 160; Pan Zhiheng 潘之恆, *Pan Zhiheng quhua* 潘之恆曲話, ed. Wang Xiaoyi 汪效倚 (Beijing: Zhongguo xiju chubanshe, 1988), p. 19.
22. *Pan Zhiheng quhua*, p. 28; for another instance of the phrase "notes of flesh," see *ibid*., p. 8.
23. Li Yu 李漁, *Xianqing ouji* 閑情偶記, ed. Bei Jinheng 卑錦珩 (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1999), 3.139.
24. Ibid., 3.138.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid., 3.135.
27. Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Quarters* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), pp. 264-65.
28. Li Yu, *Xianqing ouji*, 3.136-37.

29. Wang Anqi 王安祈, *Mingdai chuanqi juchang ji qi yishu* 明代傳奇劇場及其藝術 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1985), p. 87.
30. *Wuji baimei,* register 3, #16, 54a-b.
31. Qian Qianyi 錢謙益, ed. *Liechao shiji xiaozhuan* 列朝詩集小傳 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), vol. 2, p. 765. There is evidence that Ma Xianglan and her troupe also gave performances in other cities. Feng Mengzhen's 馮夢禎 diary records having seen two scenes from the northern version of *Xixiang ji* performed by Ma Xianglan and her girls at someone's private residence. Shen Defu's 沈德符 account in *Wanli yehuo bian* 萬歷野獲編 mentions that Ma Siniang 馬四娘 of Nanjing (presumably Ma Xianglan) brought her girls to Suzhou and put on a full-length performance of the northern version of *Xixiang ji* 西廂記 the same year and died soon after her return to Nanjing. Both are cited in Wang Anqi 王安祈, *Mingdai xiqu wulun* 明代戲曲五論 (Taipei: Da'an chubanshe, 1990), p. 10.
32. Zhang Dai 張岱, *Tao'an mengyi* 陶庵夢憶 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1982), pp. 69-70.
33. On the fashion for amateur theatrical performances in the late Ming and the backlash against it, see Sophie Volpp, *Worldly Stage: The Figure of the Theater in Seventeenth-century China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Asia Center Publications, forthcoming).
34. Yu Huai 余懷, *Banqiao zaji: wai yizhong* 板橋雜記: 外一種, ed. Li Jintang 李金堂 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2000), 11.8.
35. Yu Huai, *Banqiao zaji*, p. 11.
36. Ibid., p. 22.
37. Dai Ning, "Ming Qing shiqi Qinhuai," p. 43; Wang Anqi, *Mingdai chuanqi*, 87-94; Fu Xueyi 傅雪漪, *Kunqu yinyue xinshang mantan* 昆曲音樂欣賞漫談 (Beijing: Renmin yinyue chubanshe, 1996), pp. 8-10. The term "pure" connotes cool, quiet, and elegant as opposed to noisy, hot, and vulgar.
38. *Quxie* 曲諧, vol. 4, 4.54b-55a in *Sanqu congkan* 散曲叢刊, comp. Ren Zhongmin 任中敏 (Taipei: Zhonghua shuju, 1964).
39. Wang Xiaoyi 汪效倚, "Pan Zhiheng xiqu pinglun chutan" 潘之恆戲曲評論初探 in *Shuoshi xuewei lunwen ji: xiqu juan* 碩士學位論文集：戲曲卷 (Beijing: Wenhua yishu chubanshe, 1985), pp. 124-25.
40. Wang Jide, *Qu lü* in *Xiqu lunzhu*, vol. 4, p. 117.
41. Isabel Wong, "Kunqu," in the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, vol. 7, ed. Robert C. Provine et al. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998-2002), p. 293.

42. Stephen West, entry on Yuan entertainers, in *Women Writers of Traditional China*, ed. Kang-i Sun Chang and Haun Saussy (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 115-16.
43. In "Transmission of Popular Song," Lowry translates *duoqu* 度曲 as "to realize or unfold a tune" (48) and defines the phrase as meaning "to shape a song in accordance with the score, or often (since there is no musical notation for 16th century popular songs till more than 150 years later) in accordance with the conventional notion of a tune, a tune type" (51). In *Tapestry of Songs* (286), she translates the term simply as "singing an aria," which "involves adaptation of the tune to the lyrics, resulting in a unique version of the tune." Another possible derivation might be from the meaning of 度 *du* "to make calculations, to measure," as in beating out a tune.
44. On the composite tune method, or what musicologists call "centonization," see Marjory Bong-Ray Liu, "Tradition and Change in Kunqu Opera" (Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA, 1976), pp. 64-65; 67. "Patchwork melodies" is Rulan Chao Pian's term in *Sonq Dynasty Musical Sources and Their Interpretation* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 36.
45. Wong, "Kunqu," p. 293.
46. Drew Edward Davies, "On Music Fit for a Courtesan: Representations of the Courtesan and her Repertoire," *The Courtesan's Arts*, p. 150.
47. Wang Jide, *Qu lü*, in *Xiqu lunzhu*, vol. 4; Wei Liangfu, *Qu lü*, and Shen Pangtuo, *Duqu xuzhi*, in *Xiqu lunzhu*, vol. 5.
48. Liang Mingyue, *Music of the Billion: An Introduction to Chinese Musical Culture* (New York: Heinrichshofen, 1985), pp. 240-41.
49. Wang Duanshu 王端淑, *Mingyuan shiwei* 名媛詩緯 (Qing edition), 38.4a-b. The same aria, credited to "A Courtesan from Hubei" ("Qizhou ji"祁州妓), also appears in Feng Menglong's 1627 anthology *Taixia xinzou* 太霞新奏 in *Feng Menglong quanji* 馮夢龍全集, ed. Wei Tongxian 魏同賢 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1993), 15: 742-43.
50. The meaning of this line is not clear.
51. Literally, Han dynasty Zhaoyang palace, where empresses lived. Here simply a cliché.
52. Cliché for the site of an erotic tryst between an ancient king and the Nymph of Wu Mountain from Song Yu's 宋玉, "Gaotang fu" 高唐賦. Following the correction 高唐 for Wang Duanshu's 高堂 in Xie Boyang 謝伯陽, ed., *Quan Ming sanqu* 全明散曲 (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe, 1994), 3: 3419-20.

53. The Han dynasty court poet Sima Xiangru 司馬相如 and Zhuo Wenjun 卓文君, who opened a wineshop after eloping.
54. Wang Duanshu, *Mingyuan shiwei* ("yaji" 雅集), 38.6b-7a. Wang took this aria from *Stylish Verses from the Green Bower,* which she says her husband had bought for her, and which she acknowledges as her principal source for works by courtesans.
55. *Si* 絲, the character I have translated as "string," is commonly punned with its homophone *si* 思 to mean "thoughts of longing." Wang Duanshu probably took Jing Pianpian's first aria from *Songs of the Southeast, second series (Wu sao erji* 吳騷二集), comp. Zhang Qi 張琦 and Wang Huixuan 王煇選 (preface 1616), where it also credited to this courtesan. The attribution is spurious, however, because the aria had been published over a century earlier as the work of the mid-Ming poet Chen Duo 陳鐸 (d. 1507) in his *Kexuezhai gao* 可雪齋稿. See *Quan Ming sanqu*, 3: 3420-21.
56. Wang Duanshu, *Mingyuan shiwei*, 38.5a.
57. My deep thanks to Kathryn Lowry and Patrick Hanan for making copies of these rare works available to me. For the identification of Zhou Zhibiao, see *Quan Ming sanqu*, 3: 3690. For the identification of Li Yunxiang, see Hanan, *The Chinese Vernacular Story* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), p. 89. In *The Tapestry of Popular Songs*, pp. 200 and 281, Lowry incorrectly asserts that *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou* is an expansion of one chapter in Deng Zhimo's 鄧志謨 *Debonair Collection (Sasa bian* 洒洒篇) and that *Sasa bian* furnished the model for both *Seductive Courtesan* collections. Quite the contrary. *Sasa bian* consists of unacknowledged abridgments of previously published books related to the courtesan world, including not only *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou,* but *Stylish Verses from the Pleasure Quarter* and *Songs of the Southeast (Wusao ji* 吳騷集)*,* comp. Wang Zhideng 王稚登 and published by Zhang Qi 張琦 (preface 1614), plus one or two collections whose sources are still to be identified.
58. On "flower registers," see Dorothy Ko, "The Bound Foot and the Written Word," in *Writing Women in Late Imperial China*, edited by Ellen Widmer and Kang-I Sun Chang (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 74-100; Goyama Kiwamu 合山究, "Kaan, kabo kō" 花案，花棒攷, *Bungaku ronshū* 35 (1989), p. 12.
59. The anthologies of arias are *Wind-Chime Lyrics (Shanshan ci* 珊珊詞) (*Shanben*, vol. 14) and *Wuyu cuiya* 吳歈萃雅 (preface 1616; *Shanben*, vol. 12-13). On his anthologies of women's poetry, *Nüzhong qi caizi*

Lanke ji 女中七才子蘭咳集, and its sequel, see my "Disappearing Verses: Writing on Walls and Anxieties of Loss," in *Writing and Materiality in China*, ed. Judith T. Zeitlin and Lydia H. Liu (Harvard Asia Center Publications, 2003), pp. 73-132.

60. *Wuji baimei*, 1.6b-7a.
61. *Ibid*., 1.56b-57a.
62. The other two are Feng (Chou) Youbai 馮 (丑) 幼白 (second in the top register) and Han Kui 韓葵 (tenth in the bottom register); the list of top singers appears in the general comments for Han Kui (2.48b).
63. Along the same grounds, Li Yu (*Xianqing ouji*, 3.138) advises that a woman looks best playing the vertical flute because it makes her mouth appear attractively smaller. This is why, he says, pictures of beautiful women like to portray them playing this particular instrument and why a woman should never play the shawm, which distorts the face.
64. On *Pinhua jian*, comp. Qingtiao huashi 清苕花史(pseud.), in the National Central Library in Taiwan, see Mao Wenfang 毛文芳, *Wu, xingbie, guankan: Mingmo Qingchu wenhua shuxie xintan* 物, 性別, 觀看: 明末清初文化書寫新探 (Taibei: Xuesheng shuju, 2001), pp. 384-92.
65. Literally, "penetrates the magic rhinoceros horn," a common poetic cliché for erotic love and mutual understanding between lovers taken from a line by Tang poet Li Shangyin 李商隱.
66. "White Snow" is an ancient tune title reused in the title of the important Yuan anthology of independent arias, *Sunny Spring and White Snow* (*Yangchun baixue* 陽春白雪), compiled by Yang Chaoying 楊朝英.
67. This erotic cliché derives from the site of lovemaking between an ancient king and the Nymph of Wu Mountain in Song Yu's 宋玉, "Gaotang fu" 高唐賦.
68. The aria appears in *Guazhi'er*, 10.236.
69. In the editorial notice (*fanli* 凡例, p. 23), *Stylish Verses* acknowledges that some of the verses lack authors and that the attributions for others may be shaky 時下頗乏作家. 有亦未能盡識. 据遠近徵得者若干首. 隨徵隨錄, 真贋未暇窮執也.
70. Lowry, "Transmission of Popular Song."
71. Ko, "The Written Word," pp. 90-95.
72. For Pan's biography of Zhu Wuxia, see pp. 116-17; on the inclusion of her work in major late Ming and early Qing poetry anthologies as evidence of her fame as a courtesan-poet in literati circles, see Sufeng

Xu, "Lotus Flowers Rising from the Dark Mud: Late Ming Courtesans and Their Poetry" (Ph.D. diss., McGill University, 2007), p. 80.

73. *Pan Zhiheng quhua*, p. 127. Both poems are literary songs in the *yuefu* 樂府 style rather than popular songs or arias. Pan Zhiheng was a frequent guest at the "House of Twin Enchantments," whose name he coined to reflect the talents of Fu Lingxiu and her brother. See *Pan Zhiheng quhua,* pp. 51; 32; 120.
74. Martha Feldman makes a similar argument about the Italian renaissance in "Authors and Anonyms: Recovering the Anonymous Subject in Cinquecento Vernacular Objects," in *Music and the Cultures of Print*, ed. Kate van Orden (New York: Garland Publishing Inc. 2000), pp. 166-199.
75. The suite is entitled "Zeng Feng Xi sheng: Liangzhou xu" 贈馮喜生: 梁州序 in *Caibi qingci (Shanben* vol. 75, juan 1); in *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou*, it is the first *qu* under the entry for Feng Xi 馮喜.
76. Xie Boyang, ed., *Quan Ming sanqu,* vol. 3, 3670-3690. The entire entry is credited to Wanyuzi, who is identified as Zhou Zhibiao, but each aria also lists the courtesan under whose name it appeared in *Seductive Courtesans of Suzhou.* Xie Boyang did not use *Seductive Courtesans of Nanjing* as a source, presumably because the only surviving copy is in Japan.
77. Lowry, "Transmission of Popular Song," p. 242; *Tapestry of Songs*, p. 293.
78. Ibid. pp. 3-5 and chapter 3.
79. "Artery" is the phrase used by Dai Ning in "Ming Qing shiqi Qinhuai"; for a more extended version of this argument, see Ōki Yasushi, "Sokuchô shu 'Guazhi'er' ni tsuite" 俗曲集掛枝兒にづいて in *Tōyō bunka kenkyūjo* 107 (Oct 1988), pp. 95-96.
80. Hanan, *The Chinese Vernacular Story*, pp. 89-90.
81. *Taixia xinzou* 太霞新奏*,* comp. Feng Menglong in *Feng Menglong quanji*, ed. Wei Xiantong, vol. 15: 7. Only three of the arias in this collection are by women, only one of whom is a courtesan.
82. Ibid.
83. *Caibi qingci* in *Shanben*, vol. 75, pp. 14-15.
84. *Guazhi'er*, 4.107-8.
85. In the same collection, Feng Menglong describes how a female musician named Ayuan 阿圓, a pipa player who is also an expert at "pure singing" and skilled at "making new music," comes to see him

expressly to give him the words to some of her songs when she hears that he is expanding an earlier edition of such material (*Guazhi'er* 3.85).

86. For a translation and discussion of these songs, see Lowry, *Tapestry of Song,* pp. 192-199. Lowry ("Transmission of Popular Song," p. 193) suggests that Feng Xi may sing this particular song because the words obliquely express her own feelings about her imminent marriage.
87. In his biography of Fu Lingxiu (*Pan Zhiheng quhua*, p. 126), Pan takes credit for making her early reputation through his writing.
88. Yu Wanlun, "Fu Lingxiu wudiao" 傅靈修五調 in *Quan Ming chuanqi* 3:3658. It is listed under his *zi* 字 Junxuan 君宣 and entitled "Zeng Fu ji Lingxiu" 贈傅妓靈修, in Zhang Xu, *Caibi qingci*, 1.47-48.
89. Shi Shaoxin 施紹莘, *Quan Ming sanqu*, vol. 3: 3895.
90. Ibid. "Dreaming of the South" is a well-known *ci* tune title. Shi Shaoxin includes a ten-stanza *ci* to this tune subtitled "Longing in Autumn" (秋思十首), but does not clarify whether these were the plagiarized verses. (*Qiushui an Huaying ji*, facsimile of Ming edition in *Xuqiu siku quanshu* 續修四庫全書 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1995-2002), vol 1739, 5. 370-71.) For an example of *xiaoqu* to mean aria, see his colophon to 舟中端午, *Quan Ming sanqu*, vol. 3: 3803.
91. *Pan Zhiheng quhua*, p. 110.
92. *Wuji baimei*, 2.11a-b; list of top singers 2.48. On the phenomenon of late Ming singing societies for *kunqu* and the participation of courtesans along with literati and singing masters, see Ren Xiaowen 任孝溫, "Ming Qing Jiangnan quhui yanjiu" 明清江南曲会研究 (Ph.D. Diss., Nanjing University, 2005), ch. 2.
93. *Pan Zhiheng quhua*, 2.11b.
94. See Yu Huai, *Banqiao zaji*, pp. 27-28; 17.
95. Throughout the poem, Wu Weiye uses allusions from the Tang dynasty reign of Emperor Xuanzong, which was toppled by the An Lushan 安禄山 rebellion in 755, to refer to the fallen Ming dynasty. "Thorn Tree Branch," "Liangzhou" (which I translate as "tunes of a now fallen state"), and "Water Music" were the titles of music-and-dance pieces performed at the Tang court.
96. The poem uses names of famous entertainers and courtesans of the past to allude both to the old courtesan and to the household troupe of girls she instructs. I have kept two of them—the third-century "Peach Leaf" and the fifth-century "Never-Grieve"—in my translation.

97. The rich and powerful Tian Hongyu 田宏遇 was the father of the most favored imperial concubine of the last Ming emperor.
98. "Linhuai laoji xing" 臨淮老妓行 in *Wu Meicun shi xuan* 吳梅村詩選, ed. Wang Tao 王濤 (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian, 1987), pp. 149-51.
99. Liang Chenyu 梁辰魚, *Huansha ji jiaozhu* 浣紗記校注, ed. Zhang Chenshi 張忱石 et al. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994), scene 25, pp. 142-47.
100. In *Qunyin leixuan* 群音類選, comp. Hu Wenhuan 胡文煥 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), vol. 3, 18.932-933.
101. Literally, "a red bean," a conventional symbol of lovesickness, whose color works nicely with the red clapper in the next line.
102. The line comes from "Yulin ling" 雨霖铃, a song lyric by the eleventh-century poet Liu Yong 柳永, which were said to be suited to be sung only by a girl of sixteen or seventeen, holding a red clapper.
103. An allusion to the Yichun 宜春 Palace, the site of the Tang dynasty Pear Garden academy of imperial musicians founded by Emperor Xuanzong.
104. Kong Shangren, *Taohua shan* (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1980), p. 17.
105. Lines from *Peony Pavilion*, translated by Cyril Birch, *The Peony Pavilion* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), p. 44.
106. Kong Shangren, *Taohua shan*, ed. Wang Jisi 王季思 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1997 reprint of 1959 ed.), scene 3, pp. 17-18.
107. My translation of *wutou* follows Stephen H. West, "Text and Ideology: Ming Editors and Northern Drama," in *The Song-Yuan-Ming Transition in Chinese History*, ed. Paul J. Smith and Richard von Glahn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Asia Center Publications, 2003).
108. Liu, "Tradition and Change in *Kun qu* Opera," p. 136.
109. *Xianlü gong* was a popular (e.g. not classical) name for one of the 28 modes. For the Song dynasty usage and meaning of these modal names, see Pian, *Sonq Dynasty Musical Sources*, pp. 43-58.
110. Kong, *Taohua shan*, p. 18.
111. For example, Wai-yee Li, "The Representation of History in *The Peach Blossom Fan,*" *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115. 3 (1995), pp. 421-33; Tina Lu, *Persons, Roles, and Minds* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 161; and Stephen Owen, "'I Don't Want to Act as Emperor Anymore,'" in *Trauma and Transcendence in Early Qing Literature*, edited by Wilt Idema et al. (Harvard Asia Center Publications, 2006), pp. 488-509.

112. *Hou Fangyu ji jiaojian* 侯方域集校箋, ed. Wang Shulin 王樹林 (Zhengzhou: Zhongzhou guji chubanshe, 1992), pp. 112-14; pp. 262-64.
113. Lu Eting 陸萼庭, "Su Kunsheng yu Kun qiang" 蘇崑生與昆腔 in his *Qingdai xiqujia congkao* 清代戲曲家叢攷 (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 1995), pp. 33-52.
114. Hu Jiezhi 胡介祉, "Hou Chaozong gongzi zhuan" 侯朝宗公子傳, in *Hou Fangyu ji jiaojian*, 562. Hu says he lived too late to have met Hou Fangyu, so he was not a direct contemporary.
115. Hou Fangyu, "Li ji zhuan" 李妓傳, in *Hou Fangyu ji*, p. 262.
116. In his letter, he refers to the *xiao shi* 小詩 ("little poems") that he wrote for her but does not mention her having sung them for him.
117. Hou Fangyu 侯方域, *Siyitang shiji* 四憶堂詩集 (Shanghai: Saoye shanfang, 1923), *juan* 2. One of these is the poem he inscribes on the fan on their "wedding night" in *The Peach Blossom Fan*. For the list of poems, see *Hou Fangyu ji*, p. 114, n. 8. His extant literary corpus preserves no *qu* or *ci*, which may make it more plausible that the verses he gave her were actually *shi* not *qu*.
118. For a *ci* whose lines are altered to conform to a *qu* tune pattern so that it can be sung, see the treatment of Li Bai's 李白 "Qingping diao" 清平調 in scene 24 of Hong Sheng 洪昇, *Changsheng dian* 長生殿 (Beijing: Renmin wenxue, 1986), p. 126.
119. Hou Fangyu, "Li ji zhuan," p. 263.