

## MASTER'S THESIS

### Does music make coming home easier?: musical and sociological analyses of selected compositions commemorating the 1997 return of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China

Poon, Yan Chee

*Date of Award:*  
2002

[Link to publication](#)

#### General rights

Copyright and intellectual property rights for the publications made accessible in HKBU Scholars are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners. In addition to the restrictions prescribed by the Copyright Ordinance of Hong Kong, all users and readers must also observe the following terms of use:

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from HKBU Scholars for the purpose of private study or research
- Users cannot further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- To share publications in HKBU Scholars with others, users are welcome to freely distribute the permanent URL assigned to the publication

**Does Music Make Coming Home Easier?  
Musical and Sociological Analyses of Selected Compositions  
Commemorating the 1997 Return of Hong Kong to  
the People's Republic of China**

POON Yan Chee

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Philosophy

Principal Supervisor: Professor Manny Brand

Hong Kong Baptist University

August 2002

## **Abstract**

The Reunification of Hong Kong with China was a significant world event in the last decade of the twentieth century. To commemorate the event, Chinese communities worldwide held a myriad of celebratory activities. In Hong Kong, the Association for Celebration of Reunification of Hong Kong with China (ACRHKC) was set up by a group of politicians and businessmen to promote and organize celebratory activities, which prompted Hong Kong composers to respond with the so-called Reunification compositions. The purpose of this study is to examine the role music played in the 1997 Reunification as well as the meaning of such celebratory activities and compositions. While the Reunification celebratory activities are carefully documented in this thesis, such activities are scrutinized in the context of the social and political condition of Hong Kong at the time. The focus of this thesis is however on a repertoire of ten Reunification works composed by eight local composers. To better understand this repertoire of music, the composition history and the composers' attitude towards the Reunification are examined. Special attention is given to the exploration of the musical characteristics and the ideological subtext as expressed in the music. In light of globalization, the torrent that changes the world tremendously, the final section of this thesis discusses the issue of cultural identity that troubled composers of Hong Kong and the PRC prior to the Reunification.

## Table of Contents

Declaration	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Figures	v
List of Musical Examples	vi
Chapter 1 Introduction	1
Chapter 2 The Reunification of Hong Kong with the Motherland	
2.1 Historical Background	22
2.2 Celebratory Musical and Cultural Activities in Hong Kong	28
Chapter 3 Hong Kong Composers and the Reunification	
3.1 Impetus of the Reunification Compositions	51
3.2 Attitudes Towards the Reunification	61
Chapter 4 Meaning of the Reunification Works	
4.1 A Glorious Reunification	68
4.2 Nostalgia and Stable Present	86
4.3 Hong Kong versus the Motherland	101
4.4 Hope	116
Chapter 5 Reconciling One's Identity: Ambivalence and Pride	125
Chapter 6 Conclusion	137
Appendix 1 Composers' Biographical Information	141
Appendix 2 Information on Premiere and Instrumentation	156
Appendix 3 Telephone Interview with Dr. Patrick Ho	166
Appendix 4 Interviews with Composers	167
Bibliography	169
Curriculum Vitae	197