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Dramatic Publishing

LUTE SONG

By

KAO-TONG-KIA

Adapted for Broadway Presentation by

WILL IRWIN AND SIDNEY HOWARD

Acting Version Arranged by

RUTH SERGEL



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

"LUTE SONG"

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BERNARD HANIGHEN and RAYMOND SCOTT

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Copy of the program of "Lute Song," as produced at the Plymouth Theatre, New York, February 6, 1946.

MICHAEL MYERBERG

presents

MARY MARTIN

in

A love story with music

LUTE SONG

By SIDNEY HOWARD *and* WILL IRWIN
(From the famous Chinese play, "Pi-Pa-Ki")

Music by RAYMOND SCOTT Lyrics by BERNARD HANIGHEN

with

McKay
MORRIS

Helen
CRAIG

Clarence
DERWENT

Augustin
DUNCAN

Mildred
DUNNOCK

Rex
O'MALLEY

Ralph
CLANTON

and YUL BRYNNER

Directed by JOHN HOUSEMAN

Choreography by YEICHI NIMURA

Musical Director EUGENE KUSMIAK

Miss Martin's Costumes Designed by VALENTINA

Orchestrations by RAYMOND SCOTT

Scenery, Costumes and Lighting by

ROBERT EDMOND JONES

CAST

(In the Order of their Appearance)

THE MANAGER

THE HONORABLE TSCHANG

TSAI-YONG, *the Husband*

TSAI, *the Father*

} Clarence Derwent

} Yul Brynner

} Augustin Duncan

3

MADAME TSAI, <i>the Mother</i>	Mildred Dunnock
TCHAO-OU-NIANG, <i>the Wife</i>	Mary Martin
PRINCE NIEOU, <i>the Imperial Preceptor</i>	McKay Norris
PRINCESS NIEOU-CHI, <i>his Daughter</i>	Helen Craig
SI-TCHUN, <i>a Lady in Waiting</i>	Nancy Davis
WAITING WOMEN.....	Pamela Wilde, Sydelle Sylvona
HAND MAIDENS.....	Blanche Zohar, Mary Ann Reeve
YOUEN-KONG, <i>the Steward</i>	Rex O'Malley
A MARRIAGE BROKER.....	Diane de Brett
A MESSENGER.....	Jack Amoroso
THE IMPERIAL CHAMBERLAIN.....	Ralph Clanton
THE FOOD COMMISSIONER.....	Gene Galvin
FIRST CLERK.....	Max Leavitt
SECOND CLERK.....	Bob Turner
FIRST APPLICANT.....	Tom Emlyn Williams
SECOND APPLICANT.....	Michael Blair
IMPERIAL GUARDS.....	John Robert Lloyd, John High
IMPERIAL ATTENDANTS.....	Gordon Showalter, Ronald Fletcher
THE GENIE.....	Ralph Clanton
THE WHITE TIGER.....	Lisa Maslova
THE APE.....	Lisan Kay
PHOENIX BIRDS.....	Lisa Maslova, Lisan Kay
LI-WANG.....	Max Leavitt
PRIEST OF AMIDA BUDDHA.....	Tom Emlyn Williams
A BONZE.....	Gene Galvin
TWO LESSER BONZES	Joseph Camiolo, Leslie Rheinfeld
A RICH MAN.....	Bob Turner
A MERCHANT.....	John High
A LITTLE BOY.....	Donald Rose
THE LION	Walter Stane, Alberto Vecchio
CHILDREN.....	Mary Ann Reeve, Blanche Zohar, Teddy Rose
A SECRETARY.....	Michael Blair
Travellers on the North Road, Beggars, Guards, Attendants, Gods, and others: Mary Burr, Arlene Garver, Sydelle Sylvona, Pamela Wilde, Alan Banks, Victor Bursset, Jack Amoroso, Joseph Camiolo, Jack Cooper, Ronald Fletcher, John High, John Robert Lloyd, Lang Page, Bernard Pisarski, Leslie Rheinfeld, Gordon Showalter, Walter Stane, Alberto Vecchio.	

LUTE SONG

A Play in Three Acts

FOR NINE MEN, SIX WOMEN, AND EXTRAS

CHARACTERS

- THE MANAGER *who also plays the part of the Honorable Tchang, friend of the family and adviser of the village*
- TSAI-YONG *a brilliant scholar*
- TSAI *his father*
- MADAME TSAI *his mother*
- TCHAO-OU-NIANG *devoted and beautiful bride of Tsai-Yong*
- PRINCE NIEOU *Preceptor of the Emperor*
- PRINCESS NIEOU-CHI *his daughter*
- SI-TCHUN *waiting-woman of the Princess*
- GOVERNESS *an attendant of the Princess*
- LI-WANG *attendant of the Prince*
- YOUEN-KONG *the steward*
- MARRIAGE BROKER *an older woman*
- IMPERIAL CHAMBERLAIN *a court official*
- FOOD COMMISSIONER *a provincial official*
- HOLY MAN *a pilgrim*
- EXTRAS *First and Second Property Men, Imperial Guards, Attendants, Students, Messengers, Secretary, Merchants, Servants, Beggars, Travelers, Clerks, Priests, Dancers, Children, Gardener, Bonzes, and Coolies.*

SETTING AND COSTUMES

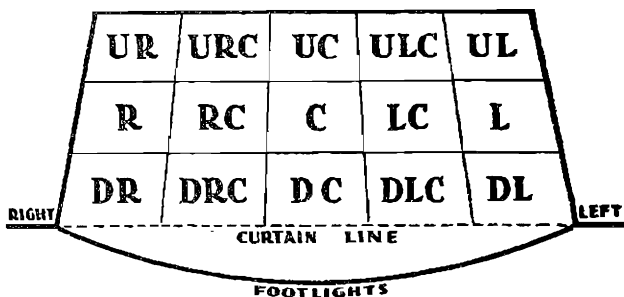
The same basic set is used throughout the play with curtains as a background. This set consists of a raised platform on the stage which serves variously as the humble house of Tsai, and Pavilion and Palace of the Prince, the exterior of the Palace of the Voice of Jade, the office of the Food Commissioner, and the temple of O-Mi-To-Fo Buddha. The stage proper may then serve as the garden of the Palace, the exterior of the house of Tsai, the burial place, etc. The raised platform is set directly center, against the background curtain. It is approached in front by two or three broad steps and at either side by narrower steps. Entrance to the platform also can be made through the curtains *U. C.* Changes of scene are simply indicated by the use of different types of hangings—faded blue for the house of Tsai, yellow and gold for the Palace of the Prince (you may, if you wish, use a crimson dragon design to indicate his connection with the Imperial Household), black and gold for the office of the Food Commissioner, and red and gold for the Palace of the Voice of Jade. These hangings can be lowered from above, or simply hung on a small standard set at one corner of the platform. It should be borne in mind that Chinese theatre properties are never realistic. They are always elaborated and heightened to a fantastic and beautiful abstraction of themselves.

Although the presumably “invisible” Property Men make changes of hangings in full view of the audience it is not desirable that the production emphasize the quaintness of the Oriental stage technique as contrasted with the sophistication of our own. Producers are asked to consider the play on its own merits for the homely wisdom of its dialogue, the poetic simplicity of its story and for its fidelity in the portrayal of Chinese character and civilization.

“Pi-Pa-Ki” (“Lute Song”) is a classic on the Chinese stage, exactly as “Hamlet” is a classic on our stage. It is known that

it was written by Kao-Tong-Kia in ancient China and that an adaptation of it was made by Mao-Taou for presentation at the Imperial Court of Peking in the year 1404. Since that date it has enjoyed a continuous stage life for more than five hundred years.

CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS

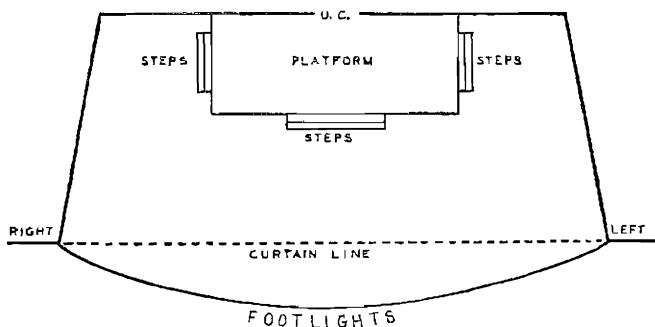


STAGE POSITIONS

Upstage means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: U R for *up right*, R C for *right center*, D L C for *down left center*, etc. One will note that a position designated on the stage refers to a general territory, rather than to a given point.

NOTE: Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

STAGE CHART



PROPERTIES

PROLOGUE: Faded blue hangings, crude table and chair, books. MANAGER (Tchang): fan; FIRST PROPERTY MAN: hat; SECOND PROPERTY MAN: stool, staff and wallet, lute; TSAI-YONG: glittering pin.

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE: Yellow and gold hangings (decorated with crimson dragons), elaborately carved table and two chairs, tea service, matching yellow and gold draperies for chairs, pots of flowering shrubs. PRINCE: fan; SI-TCHUN: embroidery; PRINCESS: fan; FIRST and SECOND PROPERTY MEN: decorative see-saw; GOVERNESS: fan; MARRIAGE BROKER: hatchet and scales.

ACT ONE, SCENE TWO: Faded blue hangings, crude table and chair. TSAI: stick; TCHAO-OU-NIANG: glittering pin.

ACT ONE, SCENE THREE: Red and gold hangings, Scarlet Gates, gold screen. GUARDS: weapons; ATTENDANTS: betrothal robes; CHAMBERLAIN: fan; PRINCE: fan; PRINCESS' ATTENDANTS: small flowering trees.

ACT TWO, SCENE ONE: Yellow and gold hangings, table and two chairs, lute. ATTENDANT: fan; WAITING-WOMEN: wedding robes of Princess; SI-TCHUN: tray with two wine cups; HAND-MAIDENS: gold robe.

ACT TWO, SCENE TWO: Black and gold hangings, table and

chair, bag of rice with small scoop, large ledger. TCHAO-OU-NIANG: bowl or basket; OLD MAN: sack; BLIND MAN: sack, staff.

ACT TWO, SCENE THREE: Yellow and gold hangings, table and chair, document, brush and ink holder, letter, purse, small leather bag, smaller purse. PRINCE: fan.

ACT TWO, SCENE FOUR: Faded blue hangings, crude table and two chairs. FIRST PROPERTY MAN: small stove; SECOND PROPERTY MAN: two small earthenware cooking pots; TCHAO-OU-NIANG: tray with three bowls; TSAI: staff; TCHANG: small writing tablet, brush and ink holder.

ACT TWO, SCENE FIVE: Black hangings. FIRST AND SECOND PROPERTY MEN: gravestones with Chinese characters, pots filled with boughs and white blossoms; PRIESTS: prayer bells; WILLOW BEARERS: willow branches; TCHAO-OU-NIANG: tray with offerings for dead; HOLY MAN: lute.

ACT THREE, SCENE ONE: Yellow and gold hangings, table and two chairs, book, pots filled with chrysanthemums in garden. PRINCE: fan.

ACT THREE, SCENE TWO: Table draped with gold cloth and arranged as an altar, with jar for offerings. BONZES: prayer drum, hanging gong, kettle gong; BEGGAR WOMAN: staff; MERCHANTS: coins for offerings; TCHAO-OU-NIANG: lute; TRIPLE-PARASOL BEARER: parasol; ATTENDANTS: gifts and bags of money; YOUEN-KONG: bag of coins, silver coin; CHILDREN: lanterns; ATTENDANT: parasol; SMALL BOY: kite.

ACT THREE, SCENE THREE: Yellow and gold hangings, table and two chairs, cup on table. SECRETARY: large scroll; PRINCE: fan; SI-TCHUN: robe, headdress, mirror, pots of rouge; ATTENDANT: lute.

PROLOGUE

BEFORE RISE OF CURTAIN: *The house lights are lowered. A gong is struck three times and the MANAGER enters D R and comes to center in front of the curtain. He bows deeply to the audience, center, right and left. A flute may play softly through the speech of the MANAGER.]*

MANAGER. Honorable gentlemen and ladies, whose radiant presence will inspire our actors to their highest art, we have engaged to perform for you tonight the "Lute Song." It is a venerable tale of the time when the gods walked upon earth and wrought their wonders in the sight of men. Since those days the winds of the centuries have swept across China. The Scarlet Gate has fallen, the Emerald Throne is dust, and yet the ancient lute still sings—sings of life's cruelty, but also of its beauty; sings of ambition which consumes itself, but also of affection and fidelity; sings of harshness, but of pity, also; and sings of love which is stronger even than the Voice of Jade from the Imperial Throne. [*Bows deeply to the East.*] And now, with your permission, our play begins. [*Holding up his hands.*] Do not be afraid—we shall leave nothing out, and we hope to be finished before morning.

[*The MANAGER bows to the audience and moves U R C unfurling his fan and fanning himself as the curtain rises. A faded blue hanging reveals that the raised platform is the house of Tsai. TSAI-YONG is seated behind a crude table in the center of the platform, studying a heavy book. Other books are stacked near on the table. He looks up and speaks.*]

TSAI-YONG. Six thousand volumes have I read, all with the utmost concentration, and never once have I been tempted to turn my knowledge to the base uses of personal advancement. [*Passes his hand over his forehead and returns to his*

book.] Where was I? Ah, yes, that Fourth Maxim—so profound that we are commanded not to understand it. [*Studies again.*]

MANAGER [*moving D R C and speaking to audience*]. Now I assume my part in the play—that of the Honorable Tchang, an old friend of the family and counselor to them and the whole village.

[*During this speech the FIRST PROPERTY MAN enters R, carrying a bat. He removes the MANAGER'S robe, exchanges the bats and withdraws R. The SECOND PROPERTY MAN enters L, carrying a stool which he places D R C and withdraws L. The MANAGER speaks to the audience.*]

MANAGER. Nine families have I advised in the last three days and now comes the affair of this obstinate young scholar! [*Goes up steps right of platform and knocks on imaginary door. In similar pantomime, TSAI-YONG pushes aside books, rises, opens imaginary door. Seeing TCHANG, he bows profoundly and gestures to him to enter. TCHANG acknowledges gesture with a majestic wave of his fan and enters.*]

TCHANG. Tsai-Yong, why do you linger here? The Emperor of the Middle Kingdom summons all young scholars to the capitol to prove by examination their right to be exalted in the Imperial Service.

TSAI-YONG. Honorable Tchang, surely it is wrong to use the wisdom of the sages for the base purpose of personal advancement. [*Sits again.*]

TCHANG [*dismissing point with a wave of fan*]. Presumptuous youth, know you not that the glory of the Kingdom is maintained by the ancient custom of bringing the best young scholars from the provinces to the Royal Court? [*Interrupting himself as he turns R.*] But here are your honorable parents. We will consider your case together.

[*TSAI and MADAME TSAI enter R and cross to the stool D R C. TCHANG bows deeply to them. The PARENTS return the salutation. TSAI sits on the stool D R C. MADAME TSAI stands right of him. TCHANG continues to the PARENTS.*]

TCHANG. My old associate in the magistracy of this province, you and your wife have sought my advice. It is that you instruct your son to depart immediately for the capitol.
[*Waves fan.*]

TSAI. It is as I have said, Tsai-Yong, the competitions are beginning. You have proved yourself in the assembly of the district. Why do you not compete for a higher station?

TSAI-YONG [*rising*]. My father, your son does not refuse to answer at your bidding the call of the Emperor. He hesitates only because you are so old and blindness has afflicted you, and because he fears misfortune for you. When I am gone, who will provide for you? Who will cherish you?

MADAME TSAI [*moving toward TCHANG*]. He is the only son I ever brought into the world and I mean to keep him.

TSAI. Peace, wife! [*MADAME TSAI steps back.*]

TSAI-YONG. My mother is right!

TSAI. Is your father wrong? [*Turns to TCHANG.*] I know well what holds him here—the charms of his young wife, Tchao-ou-Niang.

[*TCHAO-OU-NIANG enters on the platform from behind the curtains U C and comes to left of the table. She is young and beautiful. She bows deeply to the PARENTS, to TSAI-YONG and to TCHANG. ALL return her salutation.*]

TSAI [*continuing*]. Day and night my son thinks only of his love. His ship clings to the shore. He dare not steer his course for the wide horizon. [*TCHAO-OU-NIANG bows her head in shame.*]

TSAI-YONG. Would my father have the world look on me as a monster who abandons his parents to pursue his own selfish ends? Would my father hear himself named as an accomplice in so black a crime against filial piety?

TSAI. What do the sages teach of the nature of filial piety?

TSAI-YONG [*stepping back a bit, then speaking as if reciting*]. A son's duty is to know, in winter as in summer, that his parents lack no single necessity of life. He shall himself each evening make their bed. Each morning at cockcrow, he

shall himself inquire, in the most affectionate and respectful tone, concerning the state of their health. Many and many times each day he shall inquire whether they be hot or cold and upon what thing, great or small, their desire of the moment is inclined. He shall love the very dogs and horses his father loves. [*He and TCHAO-OU-NIANG bow in unison to PARENTS.*]

TSAI. My son, you neglect the loftier aspects. To attain greatness in the world—and so to make glorious the name of the father and mother who conceived and bore you—that is the son's noblest expression of filial piety.

TCHANG. As a great scholar of the past remarked, "Youth sees too far today to see how near it is to seeing farther." [*Fans himself vigorously. TSAI nods approval of saying.*]

MADAME TSAI [*coming between TCHANG and TSAI*]. Enough, enough, Honorable Tchang! You both certainly do not lack magnificent words to urge my son to leave! For three years now we've poured out money like water for books and teachers for him. Books, books, until the whole house smells of ink! Our money is gone and now you want to send him away. Let me tell you a story.

TCHANG [*bowing*]. Madame, a venerable Chinese deigns to listen. [*TSAI-YONG and TCHAO-OU-NIANG bow to MADAME TSAI.*]

MADAME TSAI. Once in a remote village lived a magistrate whose son had read all the books man has ever written. His father and his father's friends kept after him to seek honor in the Emperor's capitol. Like a fool the boy went. He didn't find anyone in the capitol to take him in hand. It was beg or starve—so he begged. One day he begged of a Councillor of the Emperor and the Councillor took pity on him. "The Poorhouse is my department," he said. "Go over there; I'll appoint you chief pauper." When the boy entered the Poorhouse he saw his father and mother there before him. And do you know what his father said? His father said, "There! I told you my son would get somewhere!" [*The story is greeted by a dismayed flurry from all the others.*]

TCHANG. Madame Tsai, the moral of your story would seem to

be, "'Tis a wise son that follows not in his father's footsteps." It is my considered opinion that your husband has the better of the argument. [TSAI bows slightly.] The season grows late, the summer rains draw near. The sooner your son takes the road, the sooner he will have achieved his destiny.

TSAI [*rising*]. Go, my son.

TSAI-YONG [*reluctantly, coming in front of table*]. My father—

TSAI [*firmly*]. I have spoken!

TSAI-YONG [*glancing at TCHAO-OU-NIANG, who nods reluctant assent*]. I bow to the superior wisdom of my elders. I will go. [ALL bow.]

MADAME TSAI [*moving up front platform steps, to TSAI-YONG*].

So! In the twinkling of an eye I am robbed of the pearl that I held in my hand! Go, my son! Go to your glory! And when you return home in the embroidered robes of a magistrate, if your father and mother have died of starvation and cold, how bright will your glory be then?

TCHAO-OU-NIANG [*coming between TSAI-YONG and MADAME TSAI*]. My husband need have no fear for the fate of his parents.

TSAI-YONG. Heaven, that made my parents virtuous, make my wife generous! [MADAME TSAI returns to her position right of TSAI.] I confide my parents to my wife's care, trusting that when the time comes for my return to the land of my birth, robed in the splendors of a Mandarin, my parents will not have forgotten me, and my wife will recognize and welcome my unworthy person. [TSAI-YONG and TCHAO-OU-NIANG bow.]

TCHAO-OU-NIANG. The day on which the Son of Heaven creates my husband Mandarin, I will serve his parents from morning until nightfall upon tables of carven teakwood inlaid with pearls in the symbols of the Emperor. I will serve his parents on dishes of fine porcelain. When my husband returns robed in the garments of a Mandarin, his glory will be my pride. [TSAI-YONG and TCHAO-OU-NIANG bow to