



WU FEI & ABIGAIL WASHBURN

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SFW CD 40236

01 WATER IS WIDE / WUSULI BOAT SONG 乌苏里船歌 4:16

Arranged by Abigail Washburn/Modern Works Music Publishing o/b/o Abbyinchina Music
ASCAP-Wu Fei/Hutong Music, ASCAP

02 FOUR SEASONS MEDLEY: FOUR SEASONS / DARK OCEAN WALTZ 四季歌 / 青海华尔兹 3:51

Four Seasons: Arranged by Abigail Washburn/Modern Works Music Publishing o/b/o Abbyinchina
Music, ASCAP-Wu Fei/Hutong Music, ASCAP | Dark Ocean Waltz: Abigail Washburn/Modern
Works Music Publishing o/b/o Abbyinchina Music, ASCAP-Wu Fei/Hutong Music, ASCAP

03 PING TAN DANCE 评弹舞 2:33

Wu Fei/Hutong Music, ASCAP

04 BANJO GUZHENG PICKIN' GIRLS 天涯海角走一遍 2:23

Arranged by Lily May Ledford/Jaymore Music, BMI. Additional instrumentation and Chinese lyrics
by Abigail Washburn/Modern Works Music Publishing o/b/o Abbyinchina Music, ASCAP-Wu Fei/
Hutong Music, ASCAP

05 WHO SAYS WOMEN AREN'T AS GOOD AS MEN 谁说女子不如男 1:21

Arranged by Abigail Washburn/Modern Works Music Publishing o/b/o Abbyinchina Music,
ASCAP-Wu Fei/Hutong Music, ASCAP

THE ROVING COWBOY / AVARGULI 阿瓦尔古丽 8:05

The Roving Cowboy: Arranged by Abigail Washburn/Modern Works Music Publishing o/b/o
Abbyinchina Music, ASCAP-Wu Fei/Hutong Music, ASCAP | Avarguli: Arranged by Shi Fu

WEAVING MEDLEY: BUSY WEAVING / JULIANNE JOHNSON / OPEN LITTLE HAND / BACK STEP CINDY 纺织忙 / 小开手 3:05

Busy Weaving: Arranged by Liu Tianyi

BU DA DA 三十里名山二十里水 3:03

Arranged by Abigail Washburn/Modern Works Music Publishing o/b/o Abbyinchina Music,
ASCAP-Wu Fei/Hutong Music, ASCAP

HO HEY / GLUCK OLD HEN 推炒面 2:36

Arranged by Abigail Washburn/Modern Works Music Publishing o/b/o Abbyinchina Music,
ASCAP-Wu Fei/Hutong Music, ASCAP

PRETTY BIRD 3:21

Hazel Dickens/Happy Valley Music, BMI

06

07

08

09

10



INTRODUCTION

In 1977, Wu Fei was born in Beijing, and Abigail Washburn was born in Evanston, Illinois, sisters of the year of the snake. Wu Fei trained to be a soldier of musical achievement, practicing her *guzheng* for endless hours as a child, and eventually winning the highest position in composition at the China Conservatory of Music. On the other side of the planet, Abigail grew up in public schools in the Washington, D.C., area, fell for China studies while at university, and didn't meet the banjo until her final year there.

We found one another in our late 20s, when our musical paths crossed in a little mountain town in Colorado. We jammed on American and Chinese folksongs and fast became friends. Over the years, we met at different stops on the road, and we joined up for our first duo concert in Beijing in 2009. Shortly after, we both got married, had babies, and started juggling the life of motherhood and professional music-making. Wu Fei moved with her family to Nashville in 2014, and we began meeting on Abigail's porch to weave stories of motherhood, music, and folksongs of both cultures. In 2017, we birthed the music of this record in Abigail's basement with her husband, Béla, producing.

This music is a labor of love over more than 10 years of friendship and shared life paths, and we are so glad you want to share it with us.

We'd like to introduce you to one of our friends of many years, Xiaoshi Wei, an avid music lover and a music scholar of the highest order. Abigail met him first, when he was deep in his study of ethnomusicology with a focus on Central Asian folk music at Indiana University in Bloomington and was making a podcast about American roots music. Fei and Xiaoshi began communicating via email about her willingness to take the guzheng and its inherent traditions in new directions. We revere his commitment to research and authenticity in roots music, along with his relentless dedication to recording folk music of the far reaches of China. When considering our liner notes for this record, we knew there was no other person so completely in line with the craft of considering the folk traditions of both of our native cultures as Xiaoshi.

— WU FEI AND ABIGAIL WASHBURN



LABOR OF LOVE

By Xiaoshi Wei

This album is a labor of love—a collaboration between musicians Wu Fei and Abigail Washburn. Ten years' effort has merged Chinese folksongs and American old-time music into an integrated album. The collection not only includes folksongs from unique places and in diverse dialects and musical forms, but brings Chinese and American lyrics, themes, instrumentals, and rhymes together in ten tracks.

In the mid-1990s, Abigail began to learn Chinese music during her time in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, where she gained inspiration for her albums, *Song of the Traveling Daughter* (2006), *The Sparrow Quartet* (2008), *Afterquake* (2009), and *City of Refuge* (2012). Likewise, Fei released three solo albums before the duo's collaboration: *A Distant Youth* (2007), *Yuan* (2008), and *Pluck* (2011). The two musicians then started to work together with their first band, The Wu Force. I began hearing about Abigail in 2005, when she collaborated with the Hanggai Band in Beijing, performing her covers of folksongs from China. As a fan of American roots and old-time music, I became fascinated by her musical ability and her personal interpretation of Chinese culture. I had the opportunity to interview

her in 2009 when she visited Indiana University, and I heard her complex and humorous stories about creating music between the nations and about her close musical partner, Wu Fei. From 2009 to 2014, I hosted an online radio program, which gave me a great reason in 2012 to visit Fei in Beijing. At that time, she was seeking opportunities to make music in China, and I was fortunate to collaborate with her on a project of *guzheng* and Sichuan workers' songs. Around the same time, I saw Fei and Abigail's performances in North Carolina and Tennessee, where several tunes in this album were already being performed on stage. It was then that I came to understand their long journey together—not simply merging their two languages, but rather digging up their shared roots.

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON OLD-TIME MUSIC

This album is for lovers of American old-time music and Chinese music, and those who never had any impression of either. These tracks deserve a close listen because of the connections they represent between the folk cultures of seemingly remote nations.

American old-time music is often pigeonholed as a representation of white hillbilly mountain music culture, and though this is a partly true statement, it is a limited one. American old-time music is the mixing of a myriad of cultures that both immigrated to America and are indigenous to it. Africans from The Gambia brought their *akontings* (folk lutes of the Jola people) on slave ships, the familiar sounds keeping tortured and oppressed souls alive on the journey across the ocean. The instrument eventually took a new form, becoming the banjo played at plantation dances. Banjos created the trancelike rhythm underneath the driving melodies of fiddling traditions brought from Scotland and Ireland. American old-time music is not static or specifically descended from one source: it consists of all of its sources, and its complexities continue to unfold, as hidden histories emerge, including the virtually unexplored contributions of Chinese traditions.

Fei and Abigail have definitely found a vivid approach to traditional, one that embraces multiple sources, in this case, primarily Chinese music. The tracks provide examples of the interconnectedness between vastly disparate cultures. The pair make their mark on American old-time music by bringing their own interpretation to classic tunes with the noteworthy accompaniment of the *guzheng*, a Chinese plucked zither, known for its sonic complexity.

Simultaneously, this album provides fresh meanings for being “old-time”—a notion that represents diversity and possibility, especially when two traditional instruments from across the globe are united together. These bilingual songs are connected by themes, characters, rhymes, and perhaps most importantly, a familiar nostalgia, a universal sense of longing and hope. Under such a framework, the merging of American old-time tunes with Chinese folksongs is an imaginative process requiring deep collaborative effort in gigs, rehearsals, and jam sessions. This album provides an opportunity to become acquainted with two past works of the musicians: “Ping Tan” had its first edition in Wu’s *A Distant*

Youth album, and “Banjo Pickin’ Girl” is a traditional tune made famous by Lily May Ledford’s arrangement, and was included in Washburn’s *The Sparrow Quartet* album. Both tracks feature fresh interpretations: “Ping Tan” adds spoken words in both Chinese and English, as sung by the complaining character in an imagined drama, and “Banjo Pickin’ Girl” has become “Banjo-Guzheng Pickin’ Girls” with the addition of Chinese lyrics, for which Wu brings humorous sensations of Chinese into the song.

All other tracks are first-time releases, with six synchronizing American old-time songs and Chinese folksongs. “The Wusuli Boat Song” and “The Water Is Wide” are a natural match, not only because of the similar tonality and chords, but also because of the comparable themes and images that incorporate the indigenous people and their watery environments. “The Roving Cowboy” and “Avarguli” present similar wild-west images, in both Texas and Xinjiang, where love is in exile. “Ho Hey” and “Cluck Old Hen” are songs for depicting a vivid countryside life, and “The Weaving Medley” includes two instrumentals that depict the same action, the quiescent but meticulous work of weaving. Even within “Who Says

Women Aren't as Good as Men," the musicians take a humorous and improvising approach to the traditional Henan opera *Hua Mulan*—which completely changes its feel.

It is fair to say that the combination of Chinese folksongs and American old-time tunes works so well because the duo merges themes that evoke the sensation of both folks, creates musical characters that can be shared in two cultural forms, links rhymes that are familiarized by both poeties, and captures the sense and sensibility of music handed down through the ages.

UNPACKING CHINESE FOLKSONGS

This album features the recreation and adaptation of Chinese folksongs. Like other nations, China has many disparate folk musical cultures; it is a vast and rich resource of diverse creative traditions. The idea of China is itself a broad category, encompassing considerable cultural, linguistic, and geographic diversity. In fact, a Beijing native may not understand

the language spoken in Shanghai, Fujian, or Canton, and is even less likely to know the country's many minority languages, including Tibetan, the Turkic languages, and, in this case, Tungusic and Uyghur. This album showcases a comprehensive snapshot of numerous Chinese folksongs, with selections both renowned and obscure. Examples include "The Wusuli Boat Song," which originated in the northern territory of the Nanai people (Hezhe in Chinese) in Heilongjiang province; "Ping Tan," which uses a storytelling form from Suzhou, a mid-southern city along the Yangtze River; "Avarguli," which describes the romance of a Uyghur girl in the prairie of Xinjiang, the westernmost province of China; "Four Seasons," "Bu Da Da," and "Ho Hey," folksongs from the northwest, performed by local people in praise of love and labor, using their idiosyncratic northwestern phonology; and finally, "Who Says Women Aren't as Good as Men," a *zhongyuan* ('the central land') classic and a favorite of *yuju* (Henan opera) fans.

National ideologies and politics can shape folk cultures, and China is no exception. Two key questions remain: who are the folk? and what folksongs best characterize the Chinese

people? With the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the government started to identify particular types of folk and traditional music as a way to build a national identity. It recognized certain musical forms as ideal types, primarily featuring traditional operas from the north. For example, "Who Says Women Aren't as Good as Men" was performed in 1951 to support the Chinese Army during the Korean War. In addition, many songs from local folk cultures have been adopted as representative of the larger Chinese national identity. For example, Pingtan is a folk music tradition that is historically popular in Suzhou and Shanghai because of the region's non-Mandarin language. Likewise, "Four Seasons," "Bu Da Da," and "Ho Hey" are sung using the forms of Hua'er (a folk tradition from Qinghai, northwest China) and workers' songs, which comprise the general idea of *xibei feng* ("northwestern wind") and use a strong accent and regional phonetic expressions.

Two particular songs from the album, "Wusuli Boat Song" and "Avarguli," originate from ethnic minority groups in China, and the musicians have given fresh imaginings to them. Normally, such folksongs have been sung in Chinese and have been popular on the major

state stage because they convey an image of non-Han ethnic groups promoted by the Chinese authority or state-supported composer-singers. "Wusuli Boat Song," having prototypes among the Nanai people, is a typically adapted folksong from the mid-1960s; the Nanai fisherman on the Wusuli River were given a positive image, reflecting the newly liberated life in the People's Republic of China. Such adapted folksongs often employ new lyrical lines about people living a happy new life while omitting their original lyrics. Below are the lyrics from the version of the "Wusuli Boat Song" that was created in the 1960s.

白桦林里人儿笑
笑开了满山红杜鹃
赫哲人走上幸福路
人民的江山万年

Folks are breathing in the birch trees;
Red azaleas all over the mountains join the laughter.
Nanai people are marching on the road to happiness.
Salute to the long life of our motherland.

Xiaoshi Wei

PhD in ethnomusicology
Director, Huayun Archives in Beijing
Research associate, Archives of Traditional Music,
Indiana University

Wu Fei, in her rendition of this song, has moved away from the adapted version because of its overtones of politics and ideology; rather, she presents an image of the people and the pure environment. She adopts Nanai words in the lyrics.

乌苏里乌拉, 纳尼哟纳贝
绵绵的青山, 蓝蓝的水
鱼儿那个窜呐, 浪儿那个飞
额涅在船头她摇着宝贝

The Wusuli River with the Nanai natives:
Mountains are green, and the water is blue.
Fish are jumping, and waves are flying.
Old mother rocks her baby on the prow of the boat.

Similarly, “Avarguli” was adapted from Uyghur folksongs, for which the Uyghur versions and relevant folks were rarely credited, and even its Uyghur name, “Hawagül,” is unknown to Chinese audiences. For Uyghur audiences, the prototype of the song might be about local

anecdotes or romance, but for the general public on the state stage, the song draws on a wild west conceit, representing the diversity of “the great Chinese state.” In contrast, the musicians have created acoustic versions of both songs, “Wusuli Boat Song” and “Avarguli”; they have moved away from the most widely known polished and highly produced versions of these songs, to forms that are closer to the acoustic environment in local life.

CREATION IN A HARD TIME

For Wu Fei and Abigail Washburn, this album is an outcome of love for all nations, people, and music. It represents much more to the musicians than simply being an artistic album: rather, it shows a ten-year voyage of seeking freedom. With this music, Wu and Washburn aspire to encourage hope, and demonstrate their belief in a shared humanity between and within different civilizations.

1. WATER IS WIDE / WUSULI BOAT SONG 乌苏里船歌

CHINESE LYRICS

乌苏里乌拉，纳尼哟纳贝
绵绵的青山，蓝蓝的水
鱼儿那个窜呐，浪儿那个飞
额涅在船头她摇着宝贝

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

The Wusuli River with
the Nanai natives:

Mountains are green,
and the water is blue.

Fish are jumping, and
waves are flying.

Old mother rocks her baby
on the prow of the boat.

ENGLISH LYRICS

*The water is wide;
I can't cross o'er,*

*And neither have
I wings to fly.*

*Give me a boat that
can carry two,*

*And we shall row,
my child and I.*

The melody of "Wusuli Boat Song" was adapted from traditional tunes of the Nanai people in Heilongjiang province by a group of Chinese cultural workers in the 1960s. In 1962, preparing the second edition of the Ha'erbin Summer Music Festival, the organizing committee proposed extensive fieldwork to collect folksongs in the nearby region. The Nanai people were famous for their lifestyle of fishing, shamanism, and "a simple way of life." In fact, materials produced by local cultural workers suggested the Nanai group were a good model to show a nation living happily in the new People's Republic of China—people who became the masters of their own land. Two composers, Hu Xiaoshi and Wang Yuncai, went to a Nanai village along the Wusuli River and transcribed folksongs sung by the villagers. The two composers rearranged this song based on these transcriptions. In 1964, it was further popularized by singers such as Guo Song and Hu Songhua. Both versions became famous among audiences in China. The best-known parts of the song in China are the introduction and the ending, called *imakan*, which are free of metered rhythm.

In 2002, Guo Song was sued by the local Nanai government in Heilongjiang, and the court urged him to acknowledge the Nanai traditional elements used in the song.

"The Water Is Wide" is the song of immigrants |from Scotland and Ireland. The lyrics and melody were passed along in the oral tradition of the eastern seaboard of the US, and now the tune finds a home in many cultures around the world. In most iterations it is known as a song of unrequited romantic love or love waning with time. As the song has passed through hands and voices over generations, it has taken on different verses and meanings. For some it is a song of longing to be with one's God. In this version "The Water is Wide" is a story of the vulnerability and strength of motherhood.

2. FOUR SEASONS MEDLEY: FOUR SEASONS / DARK OCEAN WALTZ

四季歌 / 青海华尔兹

CHINESE LYRICS

春季里那么到来这，水仙花儿开
年轻轻这个女儿家呀，踩呀么踩青来呀，
小呀阿哥哥

夏季里那么到了这，女儿心上焦
石榴花那个结籽呀，赛过呀那玛瑙呀，
小呀阿哥哥

小呀哥哥，小呀哥哥
小呀哥哥，亲手摘一颗

秋季里呀么到了这，丹桂花儿香呀
女儿家那个心上呀，起了个波浪呀，小呀阿哥哥

冬季里呀么到了这，雪花满天飞呀，雪花满天飞
女儿家那个心儿呀，赛过那雪花白呀，
小呀阿哥哥

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Spring comes with daffodils blooming;
Young girls come to pick the wildflowers, my love.

Summer arrives, girls' hearts full of longing.
Pomegranate flowers turn to seeds, prettier than
agate, my love.

My love, my love,
My love, I will take your hand.

Autumn arrives and tan-kwai fragrance is
everywhere;
Girl's hearts rippling and waving, my love.

Winter arrives, snow flying, filling the sky.
Girls' hearts whiter than the driven snow, my love.

ENGLISH LYRICS

*Springtime, I lay
To the earth to feel you rise
Summer winds may pull and pry
But my love will find you
Will find you*

*Fall leaves may hush the ground
Winter snows will layer, lower, linger, hover,
cover your body round and round
But my love will find you*

In China, a dozen folksongs are titled "Four Seasons," and each of them cites the four seasons as metaphors for love and friendship. In this version, daffodil, pomegranate, orange, osmanthus, and snow represent a girl's longing for love. The melody is common among the Hua'er folksongs in Qinghai and Gansu provinces. The song's popularity originated in a 1956 stage show called "Hua'er and Youth," a modified version of the original folksong. Different sources credit collection of the song to either Wang Luobin or Zhu Zhonglu, both of whom have promoted northwestern folksongs in China. Fei and Abigail chose a 3/4 time signature for the tune after the first two Chinese verses, and incorporate a poetic translation of the original Chinese, which they entitled "The Dark Ocean Waltz."

3. PING TAN DANCE 评弹舞

CHINESE LYRICS

他叫我不要等候，
叫有心的人，
因为首长等候。

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

She told me to wait not,
But to call on those interested,
The chief is waiting.

This composition was created by Wu Fei during her college days in Beijing. She studied *quyi* (narrative songs and storytelling) from various places in China, among which pingtan is a peculiar form from Suzhou, in southern China. "Ping Tan" becomes Wu Fei's funny imitation of pingtan songs, a satire of a female colleague who goes to parties to advance her career. Abigail Washburn says:

We feel like angry old grandmas when we think about [the injustice for women musicians]. And so that's what we did in this song; we both inhabit our internal 'angry old gramma.'



4. BANJO GUZHENG PICKIN' GIRLS 天涯海角走一遍

ENGLISH LYRICS

*Goin' round this world,
baby mine. (2x)*

*Goin' round this world,
I'm a banjo-pickin' girl.*

*I'm goin' round this world
baby mine.*

*Goin' to North Carolina,
baby mine. (2x)*

*Goin' to North Carolina,
from there off to China.*

*I'm goin' to North Carolina,
baby mine.*

CHINESE LYRICS

哥呀我去田纳西，哥呀我去田纳西，
弹着琴我唱着歌去看世界，
哥呀我去田纳西。

天涯海角走一遍，天涯海角走一遍。
弹着琴我唱着歌去看世界，
天涯海角走一遍。

千里有缘相会来，千里有缘相会来，
弹着琴我唱着歌去看世界，
千里有缘相会来。

天涯海角走一遍，天涯海角走一遍，
弹着琴我唱着歌去看世界，
天涯海角走一遍。

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

I'm going to Tennessee,
baby mine. (2x)

Pluckin' the strings,
I go sing and see the world.

I'm going to Tennessee,
baby mine.

To the ends of the earth, (2x)

Pluckin' the strings,
I go sing and see the world,

To the ends of the earth.

*Thousands of miles for a friend,
(2x)*

*Pluckin' the strings,
I go sing and see the world,*

Thousands of miles for a friend.

To the ends of the earth, (2x)

*Pluckin' the strings,
I go sing and see the world,*

To the ends of the earth.

*Pluckin' the strings,
do I sing and see the world,*

*Pluckin' the strings,
I go sing and see the world,*

*Through the strings
I sing and see the world.*

This song is a traditional tune, best known for banjo pioneer Lily May Ledford's 1938 arrangement. Lily May added a feminist twist to the lyrics of this previously recorded song, focusing on traveling around the world and playing music with her band, The Coon Creek Girls. Wu Fei added the Chinese lyrics, imagining herself as a "pickin' girl" in Tennessee.

5. WHO SAYS WOMEN AREN'T AS GOOD AS MEN 谁说女子不如男

CHINESE LYRICS

刘大哥讲话理太偏，
谁说女子享清闲？
男子打仗到边关，
女子纺织在家园。

白天去种地，
夜晚来纺绵，
不分昼夜辛勤把活儿干，
这将士们才能有这吃和穿。

你要不相信（哪），
请往身上看，
咱们的鞋和袜，
还有衣和衫，
千针万线可都是她们连
（哪啊）。

有许多女英雄，
也把功劳建，
为国杀敌是代代出
英贤，
这女儿家哪一点儿不
如儿男！

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Brother Liu,
be reasonable:
Who says women
aren't incredible?
While men fight for the
country, unstoppable,
Women weave at
home, irreplaceable.

During the day,
they sow the field;
Over the night,
they spin the wheel.
Day and night,
they plow and plow
To feed and warm
our soldiers now.

If you don't believe it,
Please look not
elsewhere:
Our shoes and socks,
Our clothes and cloths,
All are works of theirs.

Women of all
generations
Have not offered less:
They kill our enemies,
making great progress!
Men, tell me: how are
women less!

This famous *yuju* (Henan opera) excerpt was performed in 1951 by Chang Xiangyu, a *yuju* master, who was participating in a song and dance troupe to support the Chinese army in the Korean War. In 1952, the same excerpt was performed and awarded at the National Exhibition of Traditional Opera.

6. THE ROVING COWBOY / AVARGULI 阿瓦尔古丽

ENGLISH LYRICS

*Come all you rovin' cowboys,
bound down this lowly land.*

*I'll tell to you a story, while you
around me stand.*

*I'm a goin' to quit this wild west;
it's a bleak and stormy plain,*

*For I'm a-thinkin' I will leave you
to never return again.*

*So sweetheart, my dear
sweetheart, for sure, dear,
I can't get along.*

*I left my dear old father,
my country, and my home.*

*I left my dear old mother,
to weep and to mourn.*

*Go to be a rovin' cowboy, and
with the cattle roam.*

*I left my friends and home so
dear, with many a partin' tear.*

*My father followed, sayin'
"My boy, my boy, I fear.*

*May God protect and guide you,
and keep you safe from harm,*

*Or bring his rovin' cowboy back
to his native home."*

*This maiden, fair and lovely,
sits closely by my side.*

*T'night she promised faithful,
that she would be my bride.*

*So I kissed away a flowin' tear,
grew dim from my blue eyes.*

*I'll never forget my darlin' girl;
I'll love her till I die.*

*I've tried the straits of ramblin';
I know their trial well.*

*I've crossed the rocky mountain,
where many a brave boy fell.*

*I've seen the far and distant
lands, full of Indians, armed
and wild.*

*I'll never forget my dear old
home, nor mother's sweetest
smile.*

CHINESE LYRICS

流浪的人儿，踏破了天山越过
那戈壁。

告诉你美丽的阿瓦尔古丽，
我要寻找的人儿啊就是你。

哎呀呀美丽的阿瓦尔古丽。

我骑着马儿唱起了歌走过了伊
犁，看见了美丽的阿瓦尔古丽，
吃斋的岁月是这样炎热，哎呀呀
美丽的阿瓦尔古丽。

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Roamin' soul, over the Tianshan,
across the Gobi,

Let me tell you, beautiful
Avarguli,
you are the one I seek,

Aiyaya, beautiful Avarguli.

On the horse I sing
and ride through Ili, and I see
you, beautiful Avarguli.

Fasting days, scorching heat,
Aiyaya, beautiful Avarguli.

The original title in Uyghur is "Hawagül," meaning "air flower"; it became "Avarguli" because of the Chinese pronunciation. The song was arranged by Shi Fu (1929–2007) according to his understanding of Uyghur folksong. Wu Fei says:

I learned "Avarguli" in 1994–1995 in my folk music class when I was in China Conservatory of Music High School. In my composition class that year, there were twin sisters from Wulumuqi City, Xinjiang (they are Han girls though). They both already knew "Avarguli," being from Xinjiang. (We were about 15 years old at the time.) I remember hearing the two sisters singing this song in the dorm after our teacher taught us in the classroom. I thought the two sisters

sang it with a lot more "authentic flavor" to my ear, since they were raised around the Uyghurs. It made a huge impression on me because I admired the two sisters' extraordinary music talent.

This version of "Roving Cowboy" comes from the 1927 solo recording of Frank Jenkins from the Da Costa Waltz Southern Broadcasters' shellac recording for Gennett records. Many of the lyrics of this version can be heard in other versions by musicians like Buell Kazee. And in the words of Texas Gladden, another musician who performed a different version of this song, "a lot of these words have been passed down by the forefathers."

7. WEAVING MEDLEY: BUSY WEAVING / JULIANNE JOHNSON / OPEN LITTLE HAND / BACK STEP CINDY 纺织忙 / 小开手

“Busy Weaving” is a *guzheng* tune arranged by the Cantonese musician Liu Tianyi in 1955.

There are many Appalachian old-time tunes with the name “Julianne Johnson.” Abigail learned this particular version from the fiddler Rayna Gellert (also a member of Uncle Earl, an old-time string band) from Gellert’s record *Ways of the World*. According to Ms. Gellert’s liner notes, she calls this the “coastal” version of the tune, learned from fiddler Wayne Martin, and Wayne’s source is Clennie Davis. This version brings a much more laid-back, slow-paced feel, as opposed to the more robust driving versions from the mountains.

“Open Little Hand” is a traditional or classical instrumental piece from the ancient Zhongzhou region (中州古曲) (currently Henan province). It has been passed on for hundreds of years. “Open Little Hand” was notated in the gongche notation (工尺谱), an ancient notation system invented at least 1500 years ago during the Tang Dynasty in China. In the 1950s, musicologist and *guzheng* master Mr. Cao Zheng (1920–1998) transposed the score from *gongche* to the numbered musical notation (called *jianpu* 简谱), which has been widely used throughout Asia. This version of “Open Little Hand” is likely close to the traditional version, dating back hundreds of years. The composer’s name has been lost to history.

“Back Step Cindy” is a fiddle tune historically popular in North Carolina and Virginia; Abigail learned it from her main banjo mentor, Riley Baugus, from Surry County, North Carolina, who had learned it from Fred Cockerham and Tommy Jarrell, the great revival purveyors of Round Peak-style banjo picking. Abigail says:

Riley Baugus was the neighbor of Fred Cockerham and Tommy Jarrell, and just like all the northerners who pilgrimaged to learn from Tommy and Fred, Riley was the local boy that sat on the porch and played along until he became the next great purveyor of the tradition.

8. BU DA DA 三十里名山二十里水

CHINESE LYRICS

不大大小青马马蹄拉走，真魂
魂跟在哥哥马后头。

三十里名山（那个）二十里水，
五十里路途（那个）旎妹妹。

“Bu Da Da” are the first words in the first verse of this haunting song. The formal title in Chinese is translated as “Thirty Miles of Great Mountains, Twenty Miles of Waters.” This folksong is popular in both Shaanxi and Shanxi provinces, particularly the Hequ area of Shanxi. It describes a girl who is separated from her beloved. Abigail adds a bluesy holler and poetic translation to evoke the intense

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Forward pulls the hoof, clip clop,
clip clop, I follow my lover on
horseback.

Thirty miles of great mountains,
20 miles of waters, 50 miles of
woozy me.


singing style of the mountainous northwest,
with these original lyrics:

Saddle up my horse, call me gone.

30 miles of mountains, 20 miles to ford.

Hard road, heavy load, coal black hair I see.

These 50 miles of mountains can't keep you from me.



Known as one of the most creative innovators on her instrument, Wu Fei discovered that singing into the sound hole on the underside of the *guzheng* causes the entire instrument to resonate, and

creates a warm and powerful impact on the sound of the vocals. On this recording, Wu Fei and Abigail each stand behind an upright *guzheng*, and sing into the sound holes.

9. HO HEY / CLUCK OLD HEN 推炒面

CHINESE LYRICS

鸡叫餐呀么吼嘿，叫二餐呀么吼嘿。

月亮来推炒面，淅沥沥萨拉拉拉，嗖嗖嗖台！

推炒面呀么吼嘿！

ENGLISH TRANSLATION

Chickens are calling for food;
a second meal, a second meal.

The moon is here to help make
some noodles!

Make some noodles!

ENGLISH LYRICS

Cluck old hen, cluck and sing.

*Ain't laid an egg since away
last spring.*

Cluck old hen, cluck and squall.

*Ain't laid an egg since way
last fall.*

This tune is a stone-hammering chant, popular in the Qingyang region in Gansu province. Such types of workers' chants appear everywhere in China and generally have a call-and-response format. The Chinese title of this song is "Pushing the Mill for Noodles," referring to the rural labor of grinding cooked beans and wheat into edible noodles.

"Cluck Old Hen" is a popular tune across most old-time banjo styles and fiddling traditions. Wherever old-time jams are happening, this mountain modal tune is likely to get called out.

10. PRETTY BIRD

*Fly away, little pretty bird.
Fly, fly away.
Fly away, little pretty bird,
And pretty you'll always stay.*

*I see in your eyes a promise,
Your own tender love you bring,
But fly away, little pretty bird.
Cold runneth the spring.*

*Love's own tender flame warms this meeting,
And love's tender song you'll sing,
But fly away, little pretty bird,
And pretty you'll always stay.*

*Fly far beyond the dark mountains
to where you'll be free evermore,
But fly away, little pretty bird,
To where the cold winter winds don't blow.*

This song was composed by Hazel Dickens, a strong woman, union supporter, and activist from the mountains of West Virginia.

Abigail says:

This song I believe is about not letting a man keep a woman from being the beautiful being that she is. . . . There's an important singing tradition in Appalachia, and probably in all folk cultures around the world, where one voice alone sings a haunting and hopeful melody in a strong voice.

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Additional resources and educational materials:

The UNC World View Global Music Fellows have created a comprehensive curriculum inspired by this record, including lesson plans, learning activities, and educator resources designed to integrate global music into K-12 and community college classrooms. To access these materials and to learn more about the UNC World View Fellows program, please visit: <https://worldview.unc.edu/resources/world-view-fellows-resources-2019/>

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