

胡笳十八拍 Hujia Shibapai

18 Songs of a Nomad Flute

VII, p. 31

Yellow Bell Mode 黃鐘調 1 3 5 6 1 2 3

1, here notated C, should be sung as A or B flat
Compare transcription by 王迪 Wang Di
from 琴適 *Qin Shi* (1611), as printed in
中國古代歌曲 *Songs from Ancient China*
(Beijing, 1990), which makes 1 = f#

From 綠綺新聲 *Luqi Xinsheng* (1597), this is the
earliest surviving melody set to the lyrics attributed
to 蔡琰 Cai Yan, daughter of 蔡邕 Cai Yong.
The lyrics are a first person verse narration of her
abduction by Central Asian nomads ca. 193 CE,
marriage to a Xiongnu prince, and return to China
after being ransomed by Cao Cao in 206

1

slow and free

我 生 之 初 尚 無 爲 ; 我 生 之 後 漢 祚 衰。
Wo sheng zhi chu shang wu wei ; wo sheng zhi hou Han zuo shuai.
At my life's beginning / still in equilibrium; in my life's later / the Han / blessings withered.
(the world was) (years) (dynasty's)

10.0

more rhythmic

天 木 仁 兮 降 亂 離 ; 地 不 仁 兮 使 我 逢 此 時。
Tian bu ren xi jiang luan li ; di bu ren xi shi wo feng ci shi.
Heaven without mercy sent down confusion / separation; and earth without mercy caused me to come into / at this time.
(the world)

10.0

干 戈 日 尋 兮 道 路 危 ; 民 卒 流 忘 兮 共 哀 悲。
Gan ge ri xun xi dao lu wei ; min zu liu wang xi gong ai bei.
Weapons were daily sought, roads were dangerous; people and soldiers fell into neglect, together wailing and grieving.

10.0 13.1 12.3