

# **Piano Transcriptions of Chinese Traditional Music from the Cultural Revolution Period: Political Constraints, Artistic Freedom and Implications for Performance**

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# Abstract

The Cultural Revolution of 1966-76 was a period of extreme tension in China's long history of national political control over culture. As class struggle was identified as the main conflict in society, the piano, as an instrument from bourgeois culture, was largely rejected. However, through the work of the Chinese pianist Yin Chengzong, who used the piano to accompany a Model Opera authorised by the government (The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern*) and arranged revolutionary music for the piano (*The Yellow River Piano Concerto*), the piano found a way to survive in China as a tool to serve politics. Its fortunes then revived in the 1970s when the government started to request composers to arrange piano transcriptions of pieces from traditional Chinese culture to meet the demands of populism and nationalism.

The aim of this thesis is to illuminate the historical situation of Chinese piano music and transcriptions in the social and political context of China led by the proletariat government, especially in the decade of the Cultural Revolution. From a musical point of view, this thesis specifically chooses five piano transcriptions arranged during this period—*Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* by Chen Peixun, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* and *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* by Wang Jianzhong, *Music at Sunset* by Li Yinghai and *The Story of a Cowherd* by Dan Zhaoyi—and analyses their specific musical materials to examine how composers realised the expression of national identity in their piano music in terms of the connection between piano versions and the original versions of traditional works, traditional Chinese culture, philosophy and aesthetics. Meanwhile, due to the lack of government instruction in specific compositional techniques, some scope for the composers' individual musical creativity is observed. Ultimately, the theoretical research in this thesis will be presented through practical piano performance, with an approach of culturally informed performance embodying the expression of national identity in Chinese piano transcriptions which was both a political and a musical goal.

**To my beloved mother**

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# Introduction

This thesis focuses on piano transcriptions from the Cultural Revolution period of Chinese history (1966-1976). The importance of transcriptions during that period is the result of a long and complex history, beginning with the introduction of the piano to China in the nineteenth century and extending through the development of Chinese compositions for the piano in the early twentieth century when China was experiencing modernisation and Westernisation, to the politicisation of Chinese piano music under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party in the mid-twentieth century. Thus, this introduction begins with an overview of the historical context.

In 1842, as a result of China's defeat in the First Opium War, the Chinese Qing government was forced to open five coastal cities (Guangzhou, Fuzhou, Xiamen, Ningbo and Shanghai) as ports of entry to Western commerce under the Sino-British Treaty of Nanking. Along with the massive influx of foreign merchants into the port cities, Western missionaries with their culture became active in influencing the local Chinese society.<sup>1</sup> They brought a variety of hymns, and along with the rapid spread of religious music activities in the coastal cities, Western music scores and the piano as an accompanying instrument started to become familiar to people in these areas.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the familiarisation of the piano and piano music in the whole of China was delayed until the twentieth century, when the system and structure of Chinese society changed qualitatively.

In 1911, the Republic of China was established by Sun Zhongshan, which replaced the feudal Qing Dynasty. As a leader educated in Japan and the United States in the modernisation of the West, Sun guided China officially to start its chapter of being democratised and modernised. All levels of society, including politics, education, literature and the arts, were undergoing the astonishing progress

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<sup>1</sup> Le Kang, 'The Development of Chinese Piano Music', *Asian Culture and History*, 1.2 (2009), 18-33 (pp. 18-19).

<sup>2</sup> Hongbing Yang, *Zhongguo gangqin yinyue yishu* [Chinese Art of Piano Music] (中国钢琴音乐艺术) (Beijing: Tsinghua University Press, 2012), p. 11.

of Westernisation. A large number of Chinese students also began to study in the West, from Japan to Europe and the United States, to learn the advanced knowledge of the modern Western system. Among them, there was one of the first generation of Chinese exponents of Western music, Xiao Youmei, known as 'the father of modern music education in China'.<sup>3</sup> From 1901, he studied the piano and singing at the Tokyo Imperial Conservatory of Music and Tokyo Imperial University in Japan. In 1912, he moved to Germany, studying music theory, composition and philosophy at the Leipzig Conservatory of Music, and received his doctorate in 1916 (the first musician in Chinese history to receive a doctoral degree in the West, while his PhD thesis, 'Historical Study of the Chinese Orchestra Prior to the Seventeenth Century', was the first scholarly study in a foreign language to systematically research the history of Chinese music).<sup>4</sup> Xiao's personal experience made him aware of the advancement of the Western music and education system, and therefore, after his return to China in 1920, he devoted himself to the development of professional music education in China. On 27 November 1927, he established the first professional higher education institution for music in China: the Shanghai National Conservatory of Music.<sup>5</sup> Under his endeavours as the dean of the conservatory, many outstanding European musicians were recruited to teach there. In the piano faculty, the staff members included Mrs. E. Levitin, Z. Pribitkova, B. Lazareff and Alexander Tcherepinin from the Moscow Conservatory and St. Petersburg Conservatory, Boris Zakharoff from the St. Petersburg Conservatory as the head of the piano faculty of the Conservatory.<sup>6</sup>

Under the conditions of the professional institution of the conservatory and the systematic music education it provided, Western classical piano repertoire had blossomed among Chinese students. However, these works, which have their roots in Western culture, were not appreciated by the general Chinese audience. Faced with a bottleneck in the development of piano music in Chinese society, Chinese

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<sup>3</sup> Le Kang, 'The Development of Chinese Piano Music', p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Hongbing Yang, *Chinese Art of Piano Music*, p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15; Le Kang, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> The source identifies these musicians only by their surnames and initials, and I have not been able to discover their full names. See: Le Kang, p. 19.

musicians, influenced and encouraged by their Russian tutors who had shared in the concept of 'musical nationalism' since the nineteenth century in the West, participated in this trend and began their experiment in composition by combining their systematically educated Western compositional techniques with Chinese musical materials.<sup>7</sup> The genre of music created by combining Western compositional techniques such as musical forms, harmony and counterpoint with traditional Chinese music has been defined as 'New Chinese Music'.<sup>8</sup> An important event in promoting the creation of Chinese piano music in the context of 'New Chinese Music' was a competition for piano compositions in Shanghai in 1934, sponsored by the Russian composer and pianist Alexander Tcherepnin, for 'seeking piano music in Chinese style'.<sup>9</sup> The piano piece *The Cowherd's Flute* written by He Lüting won the first prize in Tcherepnin's piano composition competition. It is a work that utilises the Western composing techniques of counterpoint and simple ternary form with a Chinese pentatonic thematic melody, and is known as the first mature piece of piano music with a distinctly Chinese style in history.<sup>10</sup> Tcherepnin evaluated this piano composition: 'He does not speak any language except Chinese; his prize-winning composition, *Buffalo Boy's Flute*, shows originality, clarity, and a sure hand in counterpoint and form'.<sup>11</sup> He Lüting himself believed, 'It is [written in] an authentic Chinese folk style... Since you [indicating He himself] know so many folk songs, what comes out naturally has a folk style'.<sup>12</sup> Since then, the road to presenting Chinese style and characteristics in piano music has begun its historical journey.

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<sup>7</sup> Le Kang, 'The Development of Chinese Piano Music', pp. 19-20.

<sup>8</sup> Barbara Mittler, *Dangerous tunes: The politics of Chinese music in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China since 1949* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997), p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Hongbing Yang, *Chinese Art of Piano Music*, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23; Le Kang, pp. 20-21.

<sup>11</sup> Alexander Tcherepnine, 'Music in Modern China', *The Musical Quarterly*, 21.4 (1935), 391-400 (p. 399).

<sup>12</sup> He's own interpretation comes from his diary, quoted in: Tianji Xie, 'He Lüting qianqi chuanguozuo tezheng jiqi lishi yiyi' [Features of He Lüting's Early Creative Period and Its Historical Significance] (贺绿汀前期创作特征及其历史意义), *Art of Music (Journal of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music)*, 4 (1983), 69-81, p. 73.

Since Marxism started to spread in China in the 1910s until the official establishment of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 who adopted Marxism as their guiding ideology and became practitioners of Marxism in China, Marxism and the proletarian ideology gradually stepped into the mainstream of the social system. Because Marxism asserts that art should be politicised (in other words, art is not for art's sake) and convey the socialist messages in the light of its political nature, the party needed politicised art to convey the revolutionary programme of the proletariat and socialism. Then, since the People's Republic of China was established under the leadership of the CCP in 1949, types and styles of cultural activities and artistic productions have always been governed by their political framework. When Mao Zedong proposed populism in culture in 1942 (artistic creations needed to draw materials from the lives of people in order to be understood, appreciated and popularised by Chinese audiences),<sup>13</sup> this was still the main theme of Chinese musical creation in the 1950s. Chinese piano pieces written based on folk and traditional Chinese music during this time include such pieces as *Xinjiang Dance No. 1, Op. 6* (《第一新疆舞曲》) written by Ding Shande in 1950, *Temple Fair* (《庙会》) composed by Jiang Zuxin in 1955, *Seven Pieces on Inner Mongolia Songs* (《内蒙古民歌主题小曲七首》) composed by Song Tang in 1953, *Selling Sundry Good* (《卖杂货》) and *Longing for Spring, Op. 5* (《思春》) written by Chen Peixun in 1952, as well as *Bolt Thunder in Drought, Op. 6* (《旱天雷》) and *A Pair of Butterflies Flying, Op. 7* (《双飞蝴蝶曲》) composed by Chen in 1954, *The Girl Lan Huahua* arranged by Wang Lisan in 1953, *Prelude No. 2 Flowing Water Op. 4 No. 2* (序曲二号《流水》作品第四号之二) composed by Zhu Jian'er in 1955, *Night of the Fire Festival* (《火把节之夜》) written by Liao Shengjing in 1953 and *Pictures from Bashu* (《巴蜀之画》) composed by Huang Huwei in 1958. Although these Chinese piano works still belonged to 'New Chinese Music', their fundamental motivation for composing was no longer purely musical but political. They became Chinese piano music that followed the government's guidelines within the orthodox ideology.

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<sup>13</sup> The more detailed information of Mao's Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art in 1942 is discussed in Chapter 1.

As socialist China entered the 1960s, the political demands on culture from Premier Zhou Enlai once again emphasised the cultural values that music creations were required to be revolutionary, national and popular.<sup>14</sup> At the same time, Mao Zedong became increasingly dissatisfied with the tendency of the Chinese cultural field, including the dominance of feudalistic and capitalistic content (more detailed discussion is presented in Chapter 1). He worried that capitalism would make a comeback in China, and that bourgeois culture and its products were as the initial sinister sign of capitalism's sprouting return.<sup>15</sup> Then, by the mid-1960s, cultural productions no longer presented historical stories but concentrated on the stories that happened in post-1949 time when the PRC was founded and governed by the CCP.<sup>16</sup> Particularly, historical plays became a type of artwork that was criticised before the start of the Cultural Revolution. In November 1965, Yao Wenyuan, a major researcher in Marxist political theory, published a lengthy criticism of the historical play, *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office* (《海瑞罢官》), written in 1961 by the historian Wu Han.<sup>17</sup> This play tells the story of Hai Rui, an official of the Ming Dynasty who was well-known for his honesty and forthrightness, arrested for reporting to the Jiaqing Emperor directly about his failure in ruling.<sup>18</sup> The political implication of criticising this story then lies in Mao's unaccepting attitude towards such attacks with allegorical connotations,<sup>19</sup> because there was a comparable historical event happening within the CCP. Marshall Peng Dehuai who made a great contribution to the civil war in the 1940s and led the Chinese army dispatched to assist North Korea against the US in the 1950s, led and criticised Mao's policy of the Great Leap Forward at the Party plenum in 1959: the excesses of this policy and the massive misrepresentation of its successes had been accompanied by a neglect of

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<sup>14</sup> The more detailed explanation of Zhou Enlai's talk in 1963 is presented in Chapter 1.

<sup>15</sup> Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red: How Classical Music Became Chinese* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2004), p. 228.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution A History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>18</sup> Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, pp. 225-26.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Clark, p. 20.

basic agricultural production and irrigation. As a result, Peng was dismissed from all his government duties and removed from the party in 1959.<sup>20</sup> The severe criticism of this historical play became 'the opening salvo in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution'.<sup>21</sup> Then, Mao began to politically activate his wife, Jiang Qing who started to wield more political power within the party.<sup>22</sup> The eight Model Operas (performances) directed by Jiang became the only authorised cultural products in the completely restricted Chinese society at that time, as these modernised revolutionary operas showed audiences what was ideologically correct.<sup>23</sup> Sequentially, they became the benchmark in the cultural field in the early years of the Cultural Revolution. During this time in the 1960s, the cultural value of Chinese revolutionism was gradually established in the context of this social environment.<sup>24</sup>

Although there is no definitive statement of the reason why the Cultural Revolution happened in history, one explanation is because of Mao's dual considerations of ideology and self-serving, as well as Jiang's use of control over artistic circles in order to demonstrate her own political rights.<sup>25</sup> Another reason was related that Mao desired to use the Cultural Revolution to avoid Soviet revisionism in China.<sup>26</sup> The enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee in May 1966 and the 11th Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CCP in August of the same year marked the full-scale activation of the Cultural Revolution. From then, a frenzy of criticising the 'bourgeois reactionary line' started throughout

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<sup>20</sup> Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution A History*, p. 20.

<sup>21</sup> Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red: How Classical Music Became Chinese*, p. 226.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 226-27.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Clark, p. 21.

<sup>24</sup> The more information of the cultural value of Chinese revolutionism can be found in: Mei Wang, *Zhongguo yinyue wenhua yu gangqin yinyue yanjiu (1949-1979)* [Research on Chinese Music Culture and Piano Music (1949-1979)] (中国音乐文化与钢琴音乐研究 (1949-1979)) (Jinan: Shandong University Press, 2016), pp. 98-113.

<sup>25</sup> Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, p. 228.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Clark, p. 1.

the country.<sup>27</sup> Then, a group of radical revolutionaries who were named Red Guards, mainly teachers and students from all over the country, raising Chairman Mao's ideology as their core value and with the official recognition by the 11th Plenary Session, they went on a rampage with a 'mission of justice' to suppress 'capitalists' in China.<sup>28</sup> All forms of arts and products associated with Western culture were labelled as the representative of capitalism, targeted by them and entirely forbidden by the government.

Meanwhile, as one of the representatives of showing the Western capitalistic identity, the piano and piano music were labelled as bourgeois products and the enemy of the proletariat. Even the Chinese musicians who had laid the foundations and made outstanding contributions to 'New Chinese Music' in the early twentieth century were swept up in the storm of the revolution: they were accused of being enemies of the proletariat and were physically persecuted (the detailed discussion is presented in Chapter 1). In this social context, the Chinese pianist Yin Chengzong seemed to find logic and access for the piano to survive, sustain and develop in Chinese society, by using the piano as a tool to realise the Marxist political mission for the proletarian revolution and to achieve its political aims. Under his leadership, two pieces of Chinese piano music, *The Piano Accompaniment to The Red Lantern* and *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* were officially approved by the government. These two works followed not only Mao's populism (as piano music accessible to the Chinese public, they gradually popularised the piano in Chinese society) but also Mao's policy in 1964 to address the contradictions arising from the alienation of Western music in Chinese society: making the past serve the present and making foreign things serve China.<sup>29</sup> In this way, Chinese piano music ceased to be a class enemy in this revolution of ideological reform and became a powerful weapon for the

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<sup>27</sup> Xinhuanet, "“Wenhua da geming” [The Culture Revolution] (“文化大革命”), *News of the Communist Party of China*, [n.d.]  
<<http://cpc.people.com.cn/BIG5/64162/64167/4509876.html>> [accessed 21 August 2023].

<sup>28</sup> Party History Research Centre of the CPC Central Committee, 'Zhongguo gongchandang dashiji 1966 nian' [The Memorabilia of the CCP in 1966] (中国共产党大事记·1966年), *News of the Communist Party of China*, [n.d.]  
<<http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64164/4416081.html>> [accessed 23 October 2022].

<sup>29</sup> The detailed information of Mao's policy in 1964 is discussed in Chapter 1.

realisation of political goals. The emergence of these two musical works laid a solid foundation for the subsequent radical development of Chinese piano transcriptions which were vigorously arranged by many composers in the 1970s. Although the initial purpose of this phenomenon was the government's desire that these works could fulfil the role of political propaganda in the country's foreign affairs, it became undeniable that Chinese piano transcriptions were on the way to flourishing in Chinese society in the 1970s.

The Cultural Revolution period came to an end with the death of Mao in 1976, after its history of 10 years. When the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party was held on 22 December 1978, the Reform and Opening-Up policy, led by the new Chairman Deng Xiaoping, was officially launched in China. 'Reform' is defined as a complete change in the domestic political system and economic structure; 'opening up' refers to the destruction of restrictions on foreign commerce and cultural exchanges.<sup>30</sup> In this way, class struggle is neither the main contradiction in social development nor the main task to be solved, which is shifted to the priority of socialist modernisation centred on economic construction.<sup>31</sup> Such a national political context infuses fresh air and brilliant light into the development of modern Chinese culture and constructs closer and more frequent exchanges between Chinese and Western cultures. The Chinese government also began to tolerate more open and relatively unrestricted artistic concepts, forms and works. As a result, the younger generation of Chinese musicians began to draw boldly on modern Western compositional techniques, while

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<sup>30</sup> The History of People's Republic of China, 'Zhongguo gongchandang shiyijie sanzong quanhui' [The Official Communique of The Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party] (中国共产党十一届三中全会), *The History of People's Republic of China*, 2009  
<[http://www.hprc.org.cn/gsgl/dsnb/zdsj/200908/t20090820\\_28317.html](http://www.hprc.org.cn/gsgl/dsnb/zdsj/200908/t20090820_28317.html)> [accessed 21 August 2023].

<sup>31</sup> People's Net, 'Zhongguo gongchandang di shiyijie zhongyang weiyuanhui disan ci quanti huiyi gongbao' [Communique of the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party] (中国共产党第十一届中央委员会第三次全体会议公报), *People's Net*, 1978  
<<http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64563/65371/4441902.html>> [accessed 21 August 2023].



still focusing on the Chinese national style to create modern Chinese piano music.<sup>32</sup> For example, in 1984, Chen Yi used folk music and rhythms of the Dong ethnic minority in China as sources, combining it with modern compositional techniques to compose *Duo Ye* (《多耶》) for solo piano.<sup>33</sup> Gao Weijie used the theory of pitch-class set and the twelve-tone technique to compose his Chinese piano piece, *Field in Fall* (《秋野》) in 1987. The piece depicts a colourful autumn scene through musical and artistic expression.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, in November 1993, the Third Plenary Session of the 14th Central Committee of the CCP formulated the overall plan for the establishment of a socialist market economic system.<sup>35</sup> Driven by the Reform and Opening Up policy and the establishment of the national market economy, the concepts in society were renewed to a great extent, as well as substance resources in people's lives were enriched enormously. The piano is no longer a musical instrument exclusively owned by the urban middle class but has entered the homes of thousands of Chinese families. The piano and its music enter a new era of comprehensive development in which they become popular in the whole of China.<sup>36</sup>

The overall goals of this research, in terms of politics, music, and piano performance in a multi-angle and more inclusive way, are to analyse the historical reasons for the occurrence and development of Chinese piano transcriptions during the Cultural Revolution, as well as to explore what particular musical materials in the selected transcriptions the composers used and added to achieve their cultural

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<sup>32</sup> Le Kang, 'The Development of Chinese Piano Music', p. 24.

<sup>33</sup> Xiaole Li, 'Chen Yi's Piano Music: Chinese Aesthetics and Western Models' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Hawai'i, 2003), pp. 153-219.

<sup>34</sup> Yunliang Zhang, 'Gao Weijie gangqin zuopin qiu ye de yijing' [Discussing the Artistic Concept and Expression of the Piano Piece, *Field in Fall* Composed by Gao Weijie] (高为杰钢琴作品《秋野》的意境), *Musicology in China*, 4 (2007), 103-05, 102.

<sup>35</sup> Xinhuanet, 'Baige shunjian shuo bainian 1993, jianli shehui zhuyi shichang jingji tizhi' ['A Hundred Years in a Hundred Moments' 1993, Establishment of the Socialist Market Economy System] (「百个瞬间说百年」1993, 建立社会主义市场经济体制), *Xinhuanet*, 2021 <<https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1718570464962126969&wfr=spider&for=pc>> [accessed 21 August 2023].

<sup>36</sup> Hongbing Yang, *Chinese Art of Piano Music*, pp. 46-47.

identity, and ultimately, to uncover how this identity is established in actual piano performance. Therefore, the research journey begins by situating the creation of Chinese music within the scope of the dynamic processes of the political and social environment, with a systematic review of the demands placed on cultural works by specific policies outlined by the CCP in various periods from the 1940s to the 1960s. The period of focus in this research then emphasises the decade of the Cultural Revolution and the subject matter concentrates on Chinese piano transcriptions, in an attempt to discover the legacy influence of politics in earlier history on the government's control of Chinese piano music and its transcriptions during the period of the revolutionary decade. This research also aims to understand the positive reactions of Chinese pianists and composers in the highly intense social and ideological climate of the time, as well as to investigate the full historical logic of the vigorous development of Chinese transcriptions achieved in the 1970s. After completing a macro survey of the social context, this research selects five Chinese piano transcriptions, including *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* by Chen Peixun in 1975, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* (1973) and *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* (1975) by Wang Jianzhong, *Music at Sunset* firstly arranged by Li Yinghai in 1975 and revised again in 1981 and *The Story of a Cowherd* by Dan Zhaoyi in 1973. The research intends to show the connection between the piano versions and their original traditional music through a systematic and complete musical analysis. Also, identifying the composers' awareness of musical innovation in their arrangements of these traditional melodies on the piano is emphatically considered. The analysis of specific musical materials also aims to discover that these piano works can still be understood by using traditional Chinese aesthetics and philosophical thinking in order to realise their national and cultural identity as Chinese musical works.

The results of theoretical analyses will eventually be presented in practical demonstration of the performance methods suggested in this research. These five transcriptions have actually been performed and recorded by many Chinese pianists. However, some of the performance methods shown in their recordings do not seem to have a strong enough connection to the original versions of traditional music but are treated as independent piano pieces. Also, the composers' creative and individual perceptions that they wanted to convey in their piano versions when arranging these transcriptions are possibly ignored. Furthermore, because of the

influence of traditional aesthetics and philosophy, it is worth considering how to realise the style of Chinese tunes on this Western instrument. Therefore, this research proposes approaches to culturally informed piano performance after analysing the five selected piano transcriptions according to music theory, in order to achieve the purpose of theory-to-practice study. In this way, the final presentation of this research is in the form of a thesis and a lecture-recital.

A matter of convention that needs to be clarified is the presentation of names, Chinese instruments and Chinese music terms used in this research. Following the Chinese convention, the names of Chinese people are romanised in Chinese pinyin style and given in the order of <family name> and <first name> in text. If researches have been published in English, the names of authors are shown in the order of <first name> and <family name>. In the footnotes, to ensure consistency in the use of the MHRA referencing style, all names of the authors, no matter whether their sources are written in English or Chinese, are presented in the order of <first name> and <family name>. Additionally, Chinese instruments and music terms used in this research are presented in Chinese pinyin style written in italicised font. For Chinese music terms, the original orthography in Chinese characters and equivalents or explanations in English are immediately followed.

## Literature Review

### Chinese piano music during the Cultural Revolution

This research concentrates on the Chinese piano transcriptions arranged during the Cultural Revolution in Chinese history of 1966-76. Therefore, reviewing previous research closely related to this topic is beneficial to understanding what research methods have been applied and what specific findings have been revealed by existing studies. The exploration of this topic from different perspectives is not unknown in academia, and various sources in both Chinese and English have been discovered in this field to some extent.

For example, the book, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution – A History* by Paul Clark observes a specific aspect related to this research. In Chapter 4, 'Elaborating

Culture: Dance, Music, Stage and Fine Arts', Section 2 on 'Scoring the Revolution: Music' devotes some space to piano music created in the Cultural Revolution. Clark argues that after the appearance of piano-accompanied aria singing from *The Red Lantern* (translated as *The Piano Accompaniment to The Red Lantern* in this research), Yin Chengzong's use of the piano popularised the modernised Peking Operas. Thus, this piano-accompanied version of a Model Opera marks a new stage in the development of music during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>37</sup> Meanwhile, Clark notes that *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* served to promote the general awareness of the piano in China, bringing it to Chinese audiences who had never been exposed to this Western instrument.<sup>38</sup> After analysing these two pieces of Chinese piano music written in the late 1960s, Clark also extends his exploration to Chinese piano transcriptions arranged in the 1970s. The works mentioned in this book are *Moonlight on Second Spring (Er quan ying yue)*, *The Red Star Sparkles Splendidly (Hongxing shanshan fang guangcai)* and *Little Sentinels of the Southern Seas (Nanhai xiao shanbing)* by Chu Wanghua; *Flute and Drum at Sunset (Xiyang xiaogu)*, translated as *Music at Sunset* in this Research) by Li Yinghai; and *North Wing (Beifeng chui)* by Yin Chengzong.<sup>39</sup> Clark's investigation here does not just address the broader music genres, but focuses on the section of piano music studies. This provides considerable value to this research in understanding piano music and the development of Chinese piano transcriptions during the Cultural Revolution. However, when he refers to Chinese piano transcriptions of the 1970s, Clark merely lists these works without exploring and analysing them in further depth. This results in a lack of evidence to support his view that these Chinese piano versions have contributed to 'the indigenisation of modern art forms'.<sup>40</sup> More particularly, there are gaps in terms of the specific ways or techniques used to indigenise piano music in these Chinese compositions. Therefore, after using Clark's study to understand the development of piano music in China during the Cultural Revolution, this research

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<sup>37</sup> Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution A History*, p. 184.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 184-85.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

moves on to selected musical case studies discussed in a more detailed and comprehensive way.

A Chinese article, 'Piano Music and its Characteristics in the Cultural Revolution' by Chen Wenhong, outlines Chinese features embodied in piano transcriptions, which include the aspects of: connotation reflected in piano music, piano transcriptions based on traditional instrumental works, traditional melodies accompanied with pentatonic harmony, traditional expression and musical forms.<sup>41</sup> This source does have the value of understanding the basic knowledge of traditional features revealed in Chinese piano transcriptions discussed here. However, the analysis shows a lack of specificity and comprehensiveness in the demonstration of studies due to the limitation of the length of the journal article. Therefore, this research intends to overcome this shortcoming completely by presenting a more comprehensive picture in terms of musical analysis and research findings of the selected musical cases.

The articles written by the historian of Chinese music, Liang Maochun, 'Century Piano Music - The Third Wave of Chinese Piano Composition' (a series of articles divided into 4 parts) provide more examination of piano music in the Cultural Revolution.<sup>42</sup> Liang's articles encompass but briefly analyse many of the Chinese piano transcriptions made during this period. It is considered that Liang's articles offer an insight into the overall situation of Chinese piano transcriptions in this period.

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<sup>41</sup> Wenhong Chen, "'Wenge shiqi" de gangqin yinyue jiqi fengge tezheng' [Piano Music and its Characteristics in the Cultural Revolution] ('文革时期' 的钢琴音乐及其风格特征), *Chinese Music*, 3 (2006), 123-25.

<sup>42</sup> Maochun Liang, 'Bainian qinyun – zhongguo gangqin chuanguo de disanci gaochao (yi)' ['Century Piano Music - The Third Wave of Chinese Piano Composition (Part 1)'] (百年琴韵—中国钢琴创作的第三次高潮(一)), *Piano Artistry*, 3 (2018), 26-33; Maochun Liang, 'Bainian qinyun – zhongguo gangqin chuanguo de disanci gaochao (er)' ['Century Piano Music - The Third Wave of Chinese Piano Composition (Part 2)'] (百年琴韵—中国钢琴创作的第三次高潮(二)), *Piano Artistry*, 5 (2018), 13-19; Maochun Liang, 'Bainian qinyun – zhongguo gangqin chuanguo de disanci gaochao (san)' ['Century Piano Music - The Third Wave of Chinese Piano Composition (Part 3)'] (百年琴韵—中国钢琴创作的第三次高潮(三)), *Piano Artistry*, 6 (2018), 13-19; Maochun Liang, 'Bainian qinyun – zhongguo gangqin chuanguo de disanci gaochao (si)' ['Century Piano Music - The Third Wave of Chinese Piano Composition (Part 4)'] (百年琴韵—中国钢琴创作的第三次高潮(四)), *Piano Artistry*, 7 (2018), 12-19.

Then, this research builds on Liang's synthetical discussions by moving towards a more specific analysis. The aim of the more comprehensive analysis of the selected works is to enable this study to present more detailed scholarly findings while more solidly supporting the research arguments presented. An overall analysis again is presented in another Chinese book, *Chinese Art of Piano Music* written by Yang Hongbin. This book includes a chapter on Chinese piano transcriptions (not restrictedly arranged in the Cultural Revolution).<sup>43</sup> Among many musical examples used by Yang, some of the selected case studies in this research are briefly analysed in the book to demonstrate how composers apply traditional techniques in piano transcriptions. However, only a small section of each transcription has been analysed, and there remains a need for more discussions on the whole pieces and in various aspects such as musical aesthetics and evocation of traditional instruments.

Compared to general analysis, Hua Minglin's book, *Introduction of Piano Music in Chinese Style* concentrates more on one of the chosen piano transcriptions in this research, *Music at Sunset* arranged by Li Yinghai in 1975.<sup>44</sup> Hua gives a brief biography of the composer, several simple sentences on the background of this piano transcription, a short paragraph analysing harmony used in this piece and only two musical examples. This helps to comprehend the transcriber's life as a professional composer, but the origin and development of this ancient *pipa* piece which the piano transcription is based on contains such a complicated history that Hua does not discuss. Furthermore, the composer, Li Yinghai is recognised as one of the most significant theorists who especially researches how to resolve harmony in Chinese piano music, and Hua discusses this only in one short paragraph.

Li's piano transcription is again analysed in an English article, 'The Development of Chinese Piano Music' written by Le Kang. In Kang's exploration, it is suggested that the piano version is intended to imitate various traditional instruments performed in the ensemble version.<sup>45</sup> However, a Chinese source, 'Discussing Performance of

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<sup>43</sup> Hongbing Yang, *Chinese Art of Piano Music*, pp. 65-118.

<sup>44</sup> Mingling Hua, *Zhongguo fengge gangqin yinyue daolun* (Introduction of Piano Music in Chinese Style) [中国风格钢琴音乐导论] (Chengdu: Sichuan University Press, 2009), pp. 94-97.

<sup>45</sup> Le Kang, 'The Development of Chinese Piano Music', p. 23.

the Piano Transcription, *Music at Sunset* by Yang Jin in 2007, reveals the piano composer Li's own words when Yang interviewed him. Li explained that his arrangement of this piano transcription was only based on many different versions of the *pipa* solo.<sup>46</sup> Besides, when Kang provides the structure of the piano version, it shows that the piano version contains 11 sections with different subtitles.<sup>47</sup> The problem here is that Kang claims all of the subtitles from the ancient *pipa* piece are given to the piano arrangement.<sup>48</sup> But according to another Chinese source, 'To Explore Chinese Music, to Seek National Style—an Interview with Li Yinghai' written by Su Lanshen in 1999, this article quotes Li's direct words again, saying his piano transcription is not associated with subtitles. His intention of arranging this piano transcription primarily sets out from the music itself.<sup>49</sup> Even though Kang's article attempts to provide more details in analysing this piano transcription, it still misunderstands this piece to some extent: Kang's analysis is insufficiently informed by what the composer himself explained about this piece. Therefore, this research aims to search sufficient and reliable sources, and then to achieve research findings that reveal the authentic intentions of the composer.

For considering and comprehending the connection between Chinese politics and piano music creations in the Cultural Revolution, Richard Curt Kraus's book *Pianos and Politics in China: Middle-Class Ambitions and the Struggle over Western Music* is a vital study, linking the 'struggling' relationship between Chinese piano music and politics in the 1960s with a selected Chinese pianist. Chapter five in Kraus's book especially concentrates on the pianist Yin Chengzong who played the most crucial role in the development of piano music in China during the Cultural Revolution. Because of Yin's efforts in arranging a Model Opera, *The Red Lantern*,

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<sup>46</sup> Jin Yang, 'Shitan gangqin gaibianqu xiyang xiaogu de yanzou' [Discussing Performance of the Piano Transcription, *Music at Sunset*] (试谈钢琴改编曲《夕阳箫鼓》的演奏), *The New Voice of Yue-Fu (The Academic Periodical of the Shenyang Conservatory of Music)*, 2 (2007), 164-67 (p. 164).

<sup>47</sup> Le Kang, 'The Development of Chinese Piano Music', p. 28.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>49</sup> Lanshen Su, 'Tan zhonghua zhi yue, qiu minzu zhi feng—Li Yinghai xiansheng fangtan lu' [To Explore Chinese Music, to Seek National Style—an Interview with Li Yinghai] (探中华之乐, 求民族之风—黎英海先生访谈录), *Piano Artistry*, 1 (1999), 4-9 (p. 8).

for the piano and his leadership in arranging *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* based on a revolutionary song, Kraus argued that ‘the piano was transformed from a target of revolution into a positive symbol of radical change in Chinese Revolution’.<sup>50</sup> Kraus’s explanation helps to understand Yin as an influential person who rescued the piano and even placed it into the party during the Cultural Revolution. However, Kraus’s exploration of Yin’s key activities during the revolution time concentrated on the period at the end of the 1960s. It lacks the aspects of which direction the piano went to under the political restriction and tolerance in the 1970s. This was the main time when piano transcriptions were active on the historical stage.

A Chinese source, *Research on Chinese Music Culture and Piano Music* written by Wang Mei, discusses the comprehensive and detailed policies impacting on Chinese art and piano music from when the People’s Republic of China was founded until the end of the 1970s. In Chapter 4, ‘Reinventing the Musical and Cultural Values of Chinese Revolutionism’, Section 4, ‘Revolutionary Piano Music for People and for the World’, concentrates on the discussion of Chinese piano music from 1966-76. Particularly, Wang suggests a possible reason why many piano transcriptions emerged during the 1970s: the new international circumstance that China resumed its legal seat in the United Nations in 1971. Under this situation, revolutionary music as a cultural product was not able to fulfil the mission of this era. Western audiences could not understand the content and meaning of revolutionary music based on the history of China during the Second World War. Thus, piano transcriptions based on traditional music became a way to help Westerners identify and comprehend Chinese culture.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, Wang’s integrated study provides a coherent analysis of policies from the 1960s to the 70s. However, in that decade, while revolutionism was important, there were also other factors such as populism influenced by the policy in the 1940s that Wang does not discuss.

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<sup>50</sup> Richard Curt Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China: Middle-Class Ambitions and the Struggle over Western Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 128.

<sup>51</sup> All information of Wang’s view here comes from: Mei Wang, *Research on Chinese Music Culture and Piano Music (1949-1979)*, pp. 112-13.



International relations and other aspects still need to be explored in more depth to determine the reasons why piano transcriptions emerged at that time.

Arnold Perris interprets in his book, *Music as Propaganda: Art to Persuade, Art to Control*, the reasons why the CCP has taken political control of culture or music from the perspectives of history, philosophy and aesthetics.<sup>52</sup> However, when Perris refers to an example of a Chinese piano transcription arranged in the Cultural Revolution that has a programme-music quality, *Autumn Moon over a Silent Lake* (translated as *Autumn Moon over a Calm Lake* in this research), there is an error. He argues that when he heard this 1973 (actually 1975) Chinese piano transcription by the Chinese composer Chen Peixun, performed by the Chinese pianist Zhou Guangren at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing in 1980, foreign listeners could indeed perceive the content suggested by the title due to the musical effect of the programme music. At the same time, he considered it to be a work written for art's sake.<sup>53</sup> This piano transcription is chosen as one of the musical case studies for this research. After a thorough analysis of this work, it is found that firstly, Chen Peixun arranged this piece in the 1970s in response to the political environment, when the government vigorously promoted composers to adapt piano versions based on traditional instrumental works. Secondly, the direct reason for Chen to arrange this adaptation of this work also comes from an entrustment from Yin Chengzong (an important musician in the political sphere). Thirdly, throughout his life, Chen has been personally and strongly associated with Chinese politics. The evidence uncovered by this research therefore does not support Perris's view that this is a work entirely divorced from its political framework.

Based on previous studies on the topic of Chinese piano music in the Cultural Revolution Period, from the perspective of politics, the change in the political environment in the 1960s which turned piano music from the status of an enemy to a useful tool for governing the country has been observed. Also, the more enlightened situation of the 1970s has been reviewed to explain the reasons why numerous Chinese piano transcriptions emerged. From the perspective of music itself, the

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<sup>52</sup> Arnold Perris, *Music as Propaganda: Art to Persuade, Art to Control* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985), pp. 103-05.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106-07.

importance of two Chinese piano pieces arranged in the 1960s which opened the orthodox ideology realm for piano music in the government place has been realised and investigated. Even the musical materials in some piano transcriptions have been analysed to some extent. From the current situation in this research field, this research aims to conduct a more comprehensive investigation from both political and musical perspectives. It reviews more primary sources such as former reports by People's Daily and words from composers who were involved in this 'historical campaign'. More particularly, towards the musical analysis of the selected five case studies, it no longer presents in a way of synthetical evaluation but gives attention to more hidden details.

## Music in the Cultural Revolution era

Besides concentrating on previous studies related to Chinese piano music written during the Cultural Revolution, other sources exploring a broader field of art have been reviewed for this research to understand the political context in China during a particular history and comprehend the reasons for the mainstream development direction in music.

For instance, the book, *Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese*, written by Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, provides a general social context to reveal the particular musical activities conducted under the control of the Chinese government during the time of the Cultural Revolution. In Chapter 7, 'The Cultural Revolution', the book reviews and discusses in detail the creation of Model Operas under Jiang Qing's supervision. These include the ballet, *The Red Detachment of Women*, *The Red Lantern* and the *Shajiang Symphony*. When defining all these operas, the authors see them as a proletarian cultural focus embodied in musical innovation: a new government-mandated culture that includes the transformation of many art forms, most importantly realised in music and made into proletarian versions.<sup>54</sup> Compared to observing the enormous destructiveness of the artistic field at the time of the Cultural Revolution, this argument explains the existence of Model Operas from the opposite perspective. It contributes to this

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<sup>54</sup> Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red: How Classical Music Became Chinese*, p. 248.

study's understanding of the logic of the cultural reformation undertaken by the proletarian government. More broadly, it helps this research understand the general requirements of the Chinese government for cultural creation in the 1960s, including the political theories that cultural creation needs to obey, and the forms and content of artistic expression that are acceptable to the government.

A similar perspective—that the model works made in the Cultural Revolution become a symbol of the redevelopment of 'New Chinese Music' rather than destruction—is demonstrated in Barbara Mittler's book, *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution*. She states that while these revolutionary works reach the peak time of politicising music to serve the ultimate purpose of propaganda in the Maoist era, they are creations with 'the nature of synthesis between foreign [Western musical impact] and Chinese music heritage [national style]' which can be heard throughout the decade. Actually, the trend of absorbing Western and traditional Chinese styles of music to create this 'New Chinese Music' (which can also be described as Westernised or modernised Chinese music) is a continuous revolution, which continued from the late nineteenth century to the present in China.<sup>55</sup> Mittler's explanation of 'New Chinese Music' provides historical insights to help understand the dominant direction of Chinese music creation in modern times. Although she does not examine Chinese piano music made in the revolution period, it is definitely a genre of music falling into her defined category. This research first learns from Mittler's concept of 'New Chinese Music', which helps trace the roots of the way Chinese composers wrote Chinese piano pieces, and then uses it to understand Chinese piano transcriptions in the Cultural Revolution.

Some previous PhD theses have explored the field of Chinese music from the perspectives of Chinese politics and musical creations. Although the previous studies do not focus on the historical time of the Cultural Revolution, they provide relevant analysis, helping this research understand the context in a continuous history, rather than isolating that decade. For example, Jingdi Li has explored

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<sup>55</sup> Barbara Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Asia Centre, 2012), pp. 39-96.

‘Politically Influenced Music in Post-Reform China’.<sup>56</sup> Though this research is based on the time after the Cultural Revolution, it has some relevance to the legacies of that period. Yiwen Ouyang investigates ‘Westernisation, Ideology and National Identity in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Chinese Music’.<sup>57</sup> This thesis does not mention any political and social settings during the Cultural Revolution, but it provides discussions of political ideology from the 1930s to the 40s. This is useful for this research to discuss the political environment in the Cultural Revolution as the continuation of the political legacy of the Yan’an period.

## Theory and aesthetics of Chinese music

Understanding music in the context of traditional Chinese culture is another significant aspect of this research. Many sources concentrated on this topic and revealed solid research findings. For example, a Chinese book by Dai Baisheng, *Research on Chinese Piano Music* discusses several general characteristics of Chinese piano music. Especially, Chapter 3 focuses on ‘The Thematic and Programmatic Characteristics of Chinese Piano Music’ and provides valuable knowledge on titles of music pieces. In his conclusion, Dai believes that the phenomenon of having literary titles is prevalent in Chinese piano music. It is not only the key to understanding the cultural codes of a Chinese piano work, but more importantly, reflects the intrinsic connection between piano music and traditional Chinese culture.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, this conclusion point helps this research to understand the importance of programme music and its titles in Chinese piano music. With this theory in mind, this study confirms Dai’s view in one of the musical case studies. In Chapter 4, Dai discusses four approaches to demonstrate the ‘National Identity in the Composition of Chinese Piano Music’. These include the use of traditional melody, the exploration of national harmony, the application of traditional music

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<sup>56</sup> Jingdi Li, ‘Politically Influenced Music in Post-Reform China’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 2014).

<sup>57</sup> Yiwen Ouyang, ‘Westernisation, Ideology and National Identity in 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Chinese Music’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2012).

<sup>58</sup> Baisheng Dai, *Zhongguo gangqin yinyue yanjiu* [Research on Chinese Piano Music] (中国钢琴音乐研究) (Shanghai: Shanghai Conservatory of Music Press, 2014), p. 103.

forms, counterpoint techniques and national modern composition techniques used in piano music.<sup>59</sup> In explaining these methods in detail, Dai uses specific musical examples, and a part of the selected cases in this research also appear in his analysis. Therefore, understanding the specific explanations of the compositional methods in Chinese piano music that Dai explained to reflect the nationalised character helps this study to comprehend these fundamental theories in greater depth. Secondly, the musical examples in Dai's book also assist this research's initial understanding of the selected works. Beyond Dai's analyses, this research aims to provide a more comprehensive musical analysis of the selected cases in order to explore the national characteristics of each piano piece in its various aspects. Finally, the results of these theoretical analyses will also serve as the basis for the next step in the research to explore the approaches to piano performance.

More detailed and comprehensive explanations of programme music in the Chinese cultural context have been discussed in two articles, 'The Chinese Concept of Programme Music' and 'Titles And Programme Notes in Chinese Musical Repertories' (two articles have crossing repetitions in content) written by Kuohuang Han.<sup>60</sup> Han categorises programme music in his article as psychological, descriptive and imitative types. When speaking of descriptive type, he explains it usually demonstrate a story.<sup>61</sup> The selected piano transcription in this research, *The Story of a Cowherd* is an example of this type of programme music. Therefore, understanding Han's interpretation helps to analyse and explain this piano music in the context of Chinese culture. On the other hand, when explaining the imitative type, Han states 'all of them have one common feature... in imitation of natural sounds'.<sup>62</sup> Han's definition ignores imitation of instrumental sounds. The piano transcription, *Music at Sunset* is one typical evidence that Li tries to use the piano to evoke sound effects of other traditional instruments such as the *pipa*, drum, *zheng* and *xiao*. In general, this

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<sup>59</sup> Baisheng Dai, *Research on Chinese Piano Music*, pp. 106-38.

<sup>60</sup> Kuohuang Han, 'The Chinese Concept of Program Music', *Asian Music*, 10.1 (1978), 17-38; Kuohuang Han, 'Titles And Programme Notes in Chinese Musical Repertories', *The World of Music*, 27.1 (1985), 68-77.

<sup>61</sup> Kuohuang Han, 'The Chinese Concept of Program Music', p. 25.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

article provides an inside perspective, understanding Chinese music in the traditional context. This research makes use of Han's theory to analyse the selected case studies. It is possible that due to Han's articles being published during the 1970s-80s, some of his views are not comprehensive or accurate today. Therefore, this research will fill in the gap in Han's theory, beyond it, to add more details and aspects during the process of musical analysis.

Mittler's earlier book, *Dangerous Tunes: The Politics of Chinese Music in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China since 1949* not only researches Chinese music from the social context but implements analysis of music itself which combines the standpoints of sociology and musicology. Particularly, in the section of 'Stylization: piano music and orchestral music', Mittler specifically analyses some selected Chinese piano music to support her arguments of traditional and Western elements applied in 'New Chinese Music'. For example, when speaking of one method in stylising Chinese piano music, she discusses to 'pick up on instrumental techniques of Chinese instruments' onto the piano.<sup>63</sup> Even though the selected piano transcriptions are not presented in Mittler's musical examples, her focus is one aspect of the core research question that this research aims to investigate: how traditional elements from Chinese music inspire the arrangement and creation of Chinese piano transcriptions, but minimise the Western impact. Therefore, based on Mittler's explorations, this research learns from her methodology in musical analysis, to answer the research question of how these piano transcriptions demonstrate more evidence to make them as Chinese pieces.

A previous PhD study also examines a specific Chinese composer's piano pieces in the context of traditional Chinese culture. In Xiaole Li's thesis, 'Chen Yi's Piano Music: Chinese Aesthetics and Western Models', some concepts of Chinese aesthetic elements have been interpreted and discussed.<sup>64</sup> According to this, the understanding of these concepts in English helps this research to analyse how

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<sup>63</sup> Barbara Mittler, *Dangerous tunes: The politics of Chinese music in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China since 1949*, p. 305.

<sup>64</sup> Xiaole Li, 'Chen Yi's Piano Music: Chinese Aesthetics and Western Models'.

Chinese philosophy and musical aesthetics are applied or revealed in the selected piano transcriptions.

## Primary sources

One primary source in Chinese, *The Chronicle of Zhou Enlai* (1949-1976) *Volume III* is a thorough document of the work which he led in the 1970s in diplomatic affairs and the gradual restoration of cultural activities of the country. For instance, in May 1971, Zhou addressed his comments at the National Foreign Affairs Working Conference that too few works had been published since the Cultural Revolution and that more attempts should be made beyond the eight Model Operas.<sup>65</sup> Although Zhou Enlai's working diary does not concentrate on piano music, an understanding of these historical facts will help this study to understand the impact of the shift in China's political situation and foreign relations on the social environment for cultural activities and the creation of musical works from the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 to the 1970s. It was a succession of diplomatic and cultural efforts led by Zhou in the 1970s that allowed for a further opening up of the previously completely confined cultural sphere. The progress of these cultural endeavours mentioned in this book provides the premise and the basis for the core subject in this study, Chinese piano transcriptions being widely arranged in the 1970s.

Pentatonicism is an important theory in traditional Chinese music, and as an essential primary source to understand this theory, a Chinese theorist's book, *Chinese Modes and Harmony* by Li Yinghai has been reviewed. Li begins by explaining the theory of the pentatonic, hexatonic and heptatonic scales in the framework of pentatonicism. Next, the book explains in detail the development of the different modes in pentatonicism and the alternation between modes.<sup>66</sup> After

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<sup>65</sup> Literature Research Office of the Central Committee of the CCP, *Zhou Enlai nianpu (1949-1976) (xia)* [The Chronicle of Zhou Enlai (1949-1976) Volume III] (周恩来年谱 (1949-1976) (下)) (Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2007), pp. 459-60.

<sup>66</sup> All information of scales and mode in pentatonicism come from: Yinghai Li, *Hanzu diaoshi jiqi hesheng, xiudingban* [Chinese Modes and Harmony, the Revised Version] (汉族调式及其和声, 修订版) (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 2001), pp. 7-92.

explaining all the concepts of scales and modes in pentatonicism, Li creates a theory of pentatonic harmony based on the scales and modes. The main element of this is in the construction of chords. Understanding the concept of pentatonicism is the most fundamental and irreplaceable theory for the analysis of Chinese music in this research, and Li's book, therefore, provides significant theoretical support. Besides, Li's book of pentatonicism uses extensive Chinese musical terms, many of which have no English equivalents in Western music theory. Therefore, this research uses a journal article in English, 'On Chinese Scales and National Modes' written by Luting Ho and Kuohuang Han,<sup>67</sup> as a reference when explaining the pentatonic theory. Although the theory of pentatonic harmony was created by Li, his book only contains the opening chapter of the theory and does not develop it more systematically. Thus, in 2003, 44 years after Li's book was published (in 1959), his student, Fan Zuyin published the book *Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism*.<sup>68</sup> Further building on Li's theory, Fan's book more systematically classifies the chords constructed on scales, and also explains the different harmonic approaches. Because Li's piano transcription, *Music at Sunset*, selected as one of the case studies in this research, is totally accompanied by pentatonic harmony rather than Western harmony, the piano piece is analysed comprehensively in Chapter 4 of this research based on their theories.

Another type of primary source which helps to understand music in traditional Chinese culture is the articles written by the composers of the chosen Chinese piano transcriptions selected in this research. For instance, the article, 'The Chinese Spirit in My Piano Career – The Chinese Interpretations in Chopin's Music & Others' written by the composer, Dan Zhaoyi in 2019, reviewed the composer's musical life (as a performer and a composer) from the beginning to the year of 2011 when the book collection of his piano compositions, *Dan Zhaoyi's Selected Piano Works* was

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<sup>67</sup> Luting Ho and Kuohuang Han, 'On Chinese Scales and National Modes', *Asian Music*, 14.1 (1982), 132-54.

<sup>68</sup> Zuyin Fan, *Zhongguo wushengxing diaoshi hesheng de lilun yu fangfa* [Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism] (中国五声性调式和声的理论与方法) (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 2003).



published.<sup>69</sup> Meanwhile, Dan also shared his ideas of spreading Chinese piano compositions on the international stage.<sup>70</sup> Although, this article does not talk about much information of the selected case study, *The Story of a Cowherd*, the view that Dan devotes himself to promoting Chinese piano music and his personal feelings of performing and composing Chinese piano compositions provide valuable insights for this research as one example to understand Chinese composers' perspectives of expressing the national identity in piano music. Another example comes from two articles written by the composer Li Yinghai. In 'Please don't Say Traditional Music is "Old-Fashioned" – After Listening to the Concert from The Chengdu National Orchestra' written by Li in 1985, he talks about how traditional Chinese music can be developed in the future, and how to improve the performance of traditional music'.<sup>71</sup> Also, in his other article 'Aiming for the Revitalisation and Prosperity of Asian Music Culture' published in 1985 after Li spoke at the Conference of University Composers on Asian Traditional Music held in Manila in the same year, he introduced the outcomes of studies of traditional Chinese music first, and then raised some issues of the development of traditional music at the end, as well as sharing his views of how to improve the development of traditional music in the future.<sup>72</sup> Although, both articles do not mention anything related to his music selected in this research, reading and comprehending Li's ideas of traditional music helps better understand his motivations for writing Chinese piano music associated with traditional culture and researching on traditional Chinese music theory.

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<sup>69</sup> Zhaoyi Dan, 'Wo gangqin shengya zhong de zhongguo qingjie – xiao bang yinyue de zhongguo hun ji qita' [The Chinese Spirit in my Piano Career – The Chinese Interpretations in Chopin's Music & Others] (我钢琴生涯中的中国情结—肖邦音乐的中国魂及其他), *Chinese Music*, 2 (2019), 5-15 & 80 (pp. 5-7).

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., pp. 7-9.

<sup>71</sup> Yinghai Li, 'Qing buyao shuo chuantong yuequ "laodiaoya" – ting Chengdu minzu yuetuan yinyuehui yougan' [Please don't Say Traditional Music is "Old-Fashioned" – After Listening to the Concert from The Chengdu National Orchestra] (请不要说传统乐曲“老掉牙”——听成都民族乐团音乐会后感), *Chinese Music*, 11 (1982), 26.

<sup>72</sup> Yinghai Li, 'Zhengqu yazhou yinyue wenhua de zhenxing fanrong' [Aiming for the Revitalisation and Prosperity of Asian Music Culture] (争取亚洲音乐文化的振兴繁荣), *Chinese Music*, 7 (1985), 7-9.

For selecting the editions of piano music, this research mainly uses the book, *30 Famous Chinese Piano Pieces* edited by the Chinese musical researcher, Wei Tingge who especially studied Musicology of piano art. This book contains four of the five chosen Chinese piano transcriptions in this research, which are *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake*, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*, *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* and *Music at Sunset*. In the preface of this book, Wei explained that all piano music in his book had been published in other places, but those editions had certain problems to some extent, such as inaccurate notations or lack of fingerings. Those problems caused confusion for piano students. Therefore, when he edited this book, Wei contacted almost every composer whose piano works were included in this book (only two composers did not get in touch as Chu Wanghua had moved to Australia and Zhu Gongyi had passed away) and discussed and confirmed details with them;<sup>73</sup> finally this newly edited version was published in 1996. Additionally, Wei wrote two journal articles, ‘Some Recollections and Notes on the Editing of *30 Famous Chinese Piano Pieces* (Part 1 and Part 2)’ to explain piece by piece the revisions in his edition, based on piano composers’ intentions or suggestions he raised that were accepted by the composers.<sup>74</sup> According to all evidence, Wei’s edition provides reliable versions of musical sheets and presents authentic intentions by composers as much as possible. This is coherent with this research’s aim which attempts to find composers’ intentions through investigating primary sources. The fifth case study selected in this research, *The Story of a Cowherd*, uses the edition from the only published collection of the piano composer, *Dan Zhaoyi’s Selected Piano Works*.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Tingge Wei, ‘Qianyan’ [Preface] (前言), in *30 Famous Chinese Piano Pieces*, ed. by Tingge Wei (Beijing: People’s Music Publishing House, 1996), np.

<sup>74</sup> Tingge Wei, ‘Bianzhu zhongguo gangqin mingqu 30 shou de ruogan huiyi yu shuoming (shang)’ [Some Recollections and Notes on the Editing of *30 Famous Chinese Piano Pieces* (Part 1)] (编注《中国钢琴名曲 30 首》的若干回忆与说明(上)), *Piano Artistry*, 7 (2002), 18-20; Tingge Wei, ‘Bianzhu zhongguo gangqin mingqu 30 shou de ruogan huiyi yu shuoming (xia)’ [Some Recollections and Notes on the Editing of *30 Famous Chinese Piano Pieces* (Part 2)] (编注《中国钢琴名曲 30 首》的若干回忆与说明(下)), *Piano Artistry*, 8 (2002), 24-26, 33.

<sup>75</sup> Zhaoyi Dan, *Dan Zhaoyi gangqin zuopin xuanji* [Dan Zhaoyi’s Selected Piano Works] (但昭义钢琴作品选集), ed. by the editorial board of the series of Dan Zhaoyi (Shanghai: Shanghai

In relation to previous studies, this research aims to dig deeper, precisely concentrating on the time during the decade of the Cultural Revolution in both perspectives of theory and performance. It searches for more evidence based on primary sources to demonstrate how policy and 'traditional' piano transcriptions interact. Then, this research links the macroscopical discussions on social and political settings with four specific composers, Chen Peixun, Wang Jianzhong, Li Yinghai and Dan Zhaoyi, illustrating how exactly particular policy influences their musical compositions. Moreover, beyond the level of previous studies on the brief musical analysis of piano transcriptions, this research presents a comprehensive musical investigation of five selected piano transcriptions. The analysis intends to connect transcriptions with the original traditional music and also to present deeper insights into various aspects that the piano versions of music inherit from traditional music. Besides, based on the insufficient discussion on performance in existing studies, this research includes practical analysis associated with the theoretical discussions above that help to shape the interpretation of Chinese cultural identity in piano performance. The applied methodologies in this research also include interviewing the chosen Chinese composers. The primary sources are obtained from interviews to reveal undiscovered evidence that previous studies did not observe. Eventually, all dimensions of analysis aim to fill the gap in achieving more appropriate theoretical analysis and performance suggestions.

## Methodology

Beginning with the title of this thesis, *Piano Transcriptions of Chinese Traditional Music from the Cultural Revolution Period*, the core subject of this research is built on the main theme, 'piano transcriptions', while the two qualifiers surrounding this theme are 'Chinese traditional music' and 'the Cultural Revolution Period'. The research methods applied in this research, therefore, centre on the subject of this research and its qualifiers, which leads to the methodology of interdisciplinary

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Music Publishing House & Shanghai Literature & Art Audio-Visual Electronic Publishing House, 2011).

research method, the selection of musical case studies, understanding the selected cases in Chinese cultural context, musical analysis, an interview with one of the targeted composers and culturally informed performance.

## Interdisciplinary research method

To understand the historical period of the Cultural Revolution, it is necessary to acknowledge Chinese politics because, in essence, this revolutionary movement was not purely cultural, but rather ideological under the leadership of politics. Therefore, this research first uses the interdisciplinary concept to understand the historical development of Chinese piano transcriptions during the revolutionary period within the political system. In this concept, library research is first applied to investigate any existing secondary sources which have already discussed the relationship between Chinese politics and music in a broader context. Some of them have even concentrated on the time of the Cultural Revolution in the aspects of politics and many artistic creations produced in this historical time in China. Based on them, this research is allowed to gain an initial perception towards the research context and subject. Meanwhile, making new contributions beyond these sources, another research method of text analysis of primary sources is used in this research. The formulation of government policy or the direction of cultural creation is never accomplished in one action, it is a continuing historical trend. Therefore, in understanding the relationship between Chinese politics and art, this research does not limit the historical period to the decade of the Cultural Revolution only (1966-76), but also reviews the political orientation of art from Chairman Mao's 1942 Yan'an Talks to the period before the Cultural Revolution through analysing the primary sources including historical records and government documents. The purpose of this research to understand Chinese music from a political perspective using these research methods is then to discover the complete historical logic behind the flourishing of Chinese piano transcriptions in the 1970s. Thus, text analysis of the archive of People's Daily reports around the time of the Cultural Revolution is intensively involved in this research, to discover any raw materials which had been overlooked, and then to construct new research findings. In the course of their intertwining, this research also simultaneously intends to discover the relationship between politics and piano art and the historical reasons for their co-existence and

the two working together in the 1970s. Then, it leads to a more specific analysis direction of exploring the political influence on the genre, themes, compositional techniques and styles of piano transcriptions. In turn, the role and impact of these transcriptions on the realisation of political ultimate goals are examined.

Complementing these literature-based approaches, the interdisciplinary method includes a practice-based element as well. That is, the results of the theoretical analysis inform my assessment of existing recorded performances and contribute to my own interpretation of the repertoire in performance. This 'culturally informed' approach to performance is discussed in more detail at the end of the Methodology section and in retrospect in the Conclusion chapter.

## The selection of musical case studies

The number of Chinese piano transcriptions arranged during the Cultural Revolution period is very significant, and the reason for this research particularly to choose these five works as musical case studies is that they obviously often appear on the stage of piano performance and are familiar to audiences. Accordingly, a detailed theoretical analysis of them in a systematic way is necessary. More importantly, in selecting these five pieces, this research's consideration within them aims to choose the transcriptions based on different types of original piece. More specifically, *Autumn Moon over a Calm Lake* is based on a piece of *gaohu* (high-pitched fiddle) music; *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* is originally a traditional ensemble piece; *Music at Sunset* comes from a traditional piece of *pipa* (plucked lute) music. Even though *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* and *The Story of a Cowherd* both are arranged based on revolutionary songs, the songs themselves are in different styles: the original song of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* has a more complete length and form, but the revolutionary song of *A Cowherd Expecting the Red Army* that the piano version of *The Story of a Cowherd* is based on merely has six bars in total. The study aim of this research to investigate the chosen five piano transcriptions based on different original material sources is to discover and summarise possible commonalities among them in order to expose the style and characteristics of Chinese piano transcriptions during the Cultural Revolution.

## Understanding the selected cases in the Chinese cultural context

When recognising the musical identity of a particular nation or culture, modes with their scales are usually considered an important factor. From the perspective of the West, Chinese music is usually considered to be pentatonic. Indeed, pentatonic modes and scales have existed in the Chinese culture for thousands of years, and profoundly impacted the creation and development of Chinese music. Moreover, five-note scales establish the foundation in pentatonicism, whereas hexatonic and heptatonic scales are also applied and commonly used throughout history. Due to the melodies of the five selected piano transcriptions all coming from the traditional music of their original pieces, the music of these transcriptions is all written in the framework of Chinese pentatonic scales and modes. Therefore, it is especially essential to master the theory of pentatonicism for this research.

In Li Yinghai's research on Chinese pentatonic modes, he suggests naming the five pitches in a traditional way as *gong*, *shang*, *jue*, *zhi*, *yu*.<sup>76</sup> In the Chinese context, the definition of scales and modes are two subordinative concepts in the different levels: a scale means, in an octave, to organise several musical tones in ascending order; on the other hand, a mode refers to which musical tone is applied as a tonic to start a scale. The mode, thus, is the superior concept of the concept of the scale.<sup>77</sup> In accordance with this explanation, the theory of the pentatonic system is illustrated here: each of the five principal tones is able to be the core (tonic) of a pentatonic mode. In this way, *gong* mode becomes the first; by rotating the rest of the elementary notes, it forms the other four modes. These five modes construct a pentatonic 'system' sharing the same pitch set (see the example in notation in C *gong system*).

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<sup>76</sup> Yinghai Li, *Chinese Modes and Harmony, the Revised Version*, p. 7.

<sup>77</sup> This concept is explained by a Chinese music theorist, Tong Zhongliang. See: Zhongliang Tong, 'Ri zhong wusheng diaoshi de sidu yinlie jiqi dingliang fenxi' [Three Tone Row in a Fourth in Japanese and Chinese Pentatonic Modes: a Comparison with Quantitative Analyses] (日中五声调式的四度音列及其定量分析), *Music Research*, 1 (1997), 71-75 (p. 71).

Example I.1. The pentatonic scales and modes in C *gong* system

**C *gong* mode**  
*gong*      *shang*      *jue*      *zhi*      *yu*

**D *shang* mode**  
*shang*      *jue*      *zhi*      *yu*      *gong*

**E *jue* mode**  
*jue*      *zhi*      *yu*      *gong*      *shang*

**G *zhi* mode**  
*zhi*      *yu*      *gong*      *shang*      *jue*

**A *yu* mode**  
*yu*      *gong*      *shang*      *jue*      *zhi*

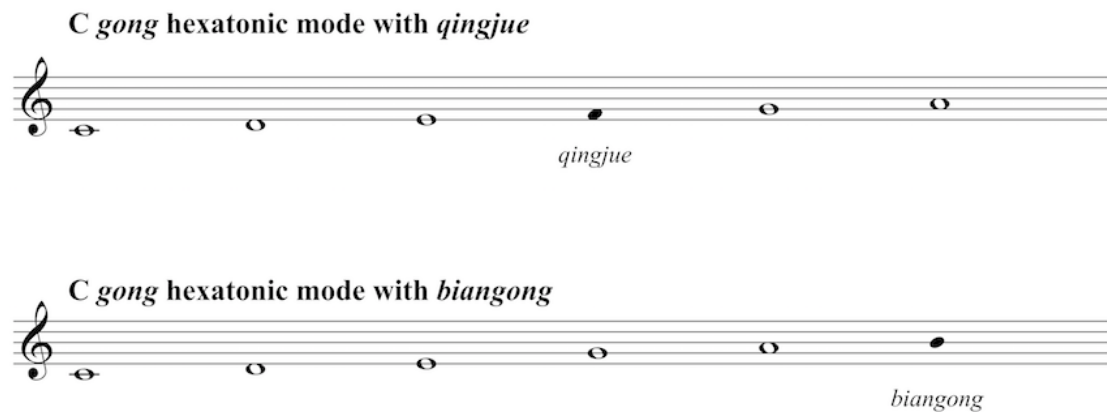
Although the *gong* note takes a predominant role in defining a system, in each pentatonic scale the foremost note must be the tonic, which confirms a particular mode. In the second place, the perfect fifth pitch below and above the tonic are the supporting notes in the mode to strengthen the stable position of the tonic (*gong* mode does not have the supporting note below the tonic; *jue* mode does not have the one above the tonic), then to consolidate the specific mode.<sup>78</sup> It is similar to the notes of subdominant and dominant in the Western scale. Nevertheless, each tone in the pentatonic system is principal and independent in nature,<sup>79</sup> as the supporting notes do not have the same technical function as in the Western scale where the subdominant and dominant always tend to resolve to the tonic.

<sup>78</sup> See Yinghai Li, *Chinese Modes and Harmony, the Revised Version*, p. 16; Zuyin Fan, *Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism*, p. 12.

<sup>79</sup> Luting Ho and Kuohuang Han, 'On Chinese Scales and National Modes', p. 137.

Adding a minor second note above the *jue* (*qingjue*) or below the *gong* (*biangong*) in a pentatonic scale constructs two types of hexatonic scales (see the scales below).<sup>80</sup>

Example I.2. The hexatonic scales in C *gong* mode



In addition, adding two second notes together above the *jue* or below the *gong* in a pentatonic scale establishes three different heptatonic scales (see the scales below). They are firstly named by Li as *Yayue* scale, *Qingyue* scale and *Yanyue* scale,<sup>81</sup> which has been evaluated as the biggest breakthrough in national pentatonic theory.<sup>82</sup> Because the pentatonic scale does not have a minor second interval, it does not have any tendency effect.<sup>83</sup> Applying added notes in the heptatonic scale enriches colour in pentatonicism; additionally, music written on heptatonic scales becomes more expressive.<sup>84</sup> However, the added notes cannot

<sup>80</sup> In Li's book (and many other resources), he does not consider these two as hexatonic scales, but heptatonic scales with one missing tone (the omitted form of heptatonic scales). See: Yinghai Li, *Chinese Modes and Harmony, the Revised Version*, p. 32. However, some sources do categorise them as hexatonic scales. See Chongguang Li, *Yinyue lilun jichu* [Basic Music Theory] (音乐理论基础) (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 1962), pp. 52-54.

<sup>81</sup> Yinghai Li, p. 28.

<sup>82</sup> Xiangpeng Huang, *Chuangtong shi yitiao heliu* [Tradition is a River] (传统是一条河流) (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 1996), p. 81.

<sup>83</sup> Yinghai Li, p. 15

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.



be principal but only ornamental. They usually serve as gracenotes in music, whereas only the five elemental tones can be emphasised. Therefore, hexatonic and heptatonic scales are still within the pentatonic framework.<sup>85</sup> After fully understanding the theory of pentatonic scales and modes in Chinese music, this research applies this theoretical system with its all terms to analyse the original versions and the piano transcriptions of the selected five music cases, regarding their melodies and musical development.

Example I.3. The heptatonic scales in C *gong* mode

I: *Yayue* scale

II: *Qingyue* scale

III: *Yanyue* scale

Another theory required to understand all selected piano transcriptions is the concept of programme music in the Chinese cultural context. Kuohuang Han's research has argued that from ancient to modern times, the majority of Chinese compositions have been identified with the characteristics of programme music because Chinese culture had established a non-rational but emotional manner in a long history.<sup>86</sup> The literary or poetic and descriptive titles of these works serve as the background to indicate the programmatic content in music.<sup>87</sup> Also, in Han's study, he categorised Chinese instrumental works into 'psychological, descriptive and imitative'

<sup>85</sup> Yinghai Li, *Chinese Modes and Harmony, the Revised Version*, pp. 22, 32.

<sup>86</sup> Kuohuang Han, 'The Chinese Concept of Program Music', p. 18.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

types of programme music.<sup>88</sup> The purpose of this research using this theoretical approach is to explore the connection between Chinese piano pieces and their titles from specific musical materials in the five selected transcriptions. At the same time, the research will continue to examine whether the transcriptions fall into the three types of programme music proposed by Han and how they reflect their characteristics. The goal of applying this methodology is to determine to what extent these piano pieces can be systematically analysed and interpreted within the theoretical framework of traditional Chinese aesthetics in order to realise the cultural identity of the chosen works.

## Musical analysis

In the research part of musical analysis, the first aim is to ascertain what the piano transcriptions inherit from the original versions of traditional music, by comparing their forms, tonality, melodic development, phrases, texture, rhythm patterns and composing techniques that help achieve similar sound effects of traditional instruments through pianistic writing. Then, from monophonic, heterophonic and vocally strophic music in Chinese culture to piano transcriptions with multiple voices originating from the Western culture, the music analysis moves to concentrate on the selected transcriptions, to what degree they depart from the original pieces and establish their own creativity through adding more musical materials. In this way, these 'transcriptions' are no longer the same as what this term would usually imply in Western music as the 'transcribers' have to add more notes to make the pieces work as piano pieces, which leads to more aspects to explore and analyse in this research. Meanwhile, the demonstration of traditional philosophy through these added materials in piano transcriptions will be examined. Another aspect that needs to be considered is any traditional composing techniques applied by piano composers in their transcriptions which are informed by traditional Chinese music but not present in the original versions of the music. The eventual goal of the musical analysis in this research is to assess the extent to which these piano transcriptions, while forming a repertoire of classical piano music, also realise a cultural identity as Chinese music.

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<sup>88</sup> Kuohuang Han, 'The Chinese Concept of Program Music', pp. 25-26.

## An interview with a targeted composer

This research involves piano music from four Chinese composers, Chen Peixun (1922-2006), Wang Jianzhong (1933-2016), Li Yinghai (1927-2007) and Dan Zhaoyi (1940-). As considering the situation that three of the targeted composers of the selected transcriptions died in recent years, their words quoted in this research come from their own written sources and interviews during their lifetime. Meanwhile, this research has been successful in approaching the composer, Dan Zhaoyi in August 2022 through a telephone interview. In terms of Dan's identity as a well-known piano educator, but being less famous as a piano composer, his piano transcription selected in this research, *The Story of a Cowherd*, has hardly been studied before. Therefore, by approaching Dan personally through an interview, this research obtains the most authentic, direct and accurate information about him as a composer, as well as gaining his personal perspective in order to bridge the gap between the current academic research results on this work. During the interview, Dan also provides some information on performing this piece, which helps to shape the practical interpretations in this research. The interview also reviews and summarises his musical career from his days as a piano student to the present, especially his musical activities during the Cultural Revolution, in order to reveal the specific influence of Chinese politics on musical creation, performance and other activities of a particular Chinese composer in a specific social context.

## Culturally informed performance

After discussing the selected piano transcriptions from a variety of perspectives, including political, traditional aesthetics and musical analysis, the final approach of this research is to realise the step from theory to practice, in other words, to achieve the theoretical illustration discussed earlier in the context of piano performance. Due to the influence of the aesthetic interpretation, for example in *Autumn Moon over a Calm Lake*, this research aims to suggest specific approaches to performance in order to realise the artistic expression of the title of the work in the accompanying voices. Based on musical analysis, such as *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* and *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon*, this research attempts to realise similar tempo settings of performing the original works in piano performance. In *Music at Sunset*, according to the self-explanation of the composer, then, to a certain extent, the

performance methods proposed in this research change the composer's notation. For example, the scales written in the score have been suggested as a glissando technique to play on the piano, to imitate the similar sound effect of the Chinese zither, *zheng*. Utilising this variation in performance aims to recognise the composer's awareness of his creativity that he intends to use his piano music to produce similar sound effects of traditional instruments. In *The Story of a Cowherd*, based on the primary source obtained from the interview, this research, therefore, focuses on the specific aspects of pedalling and dynamics, performance approaches to connection phrasing and tempo, using these detailed performance suggestions to develop the composer's dominant perception of his programme music.

In addition, this research discusses and compares contemporary recordings of various pianists, including Bao Huiqiao, Yin Chengzong, Lang Lang, Chen Jie, Li Yundi, Xu Lujia, Li Yun and Gu Jingdan who perform the selected piano music in their albums. The purpose of this research method is not to fully conform to the playing methods from these pianists, after analysing their recordings, but to select some of the applicable parts to support the performance suggestions demonstrated in this research. These performance suggestions recognise the different context and purpose of Chinese piano transcriptions from, for example, the use of transcriptions for educational purposes in Western classical music history (in late 18th-century Europe, transcriptions, including piano transcriptions, were widely arranged in society to support education for amateur performing musicians, as well as the aesthetic education of individuals morally and socially).<sup>89</sup> The purpose of presenting these performance suggestions in the context of a study on the Chinese social background of the music is not exclusively to provide piano students a pedagogy, but more broadly to suggest a viable option and a valid way of performing the chosen transcriptions for both amateur and professional pianists. These suggestions are not 'prescriptive' in the sense of proposing a particular way in which the music 'should' be played: they recognise that compositions are open to a variety of valid interpretations. But by investigating the intentions of the composers, the characteristics of the original music that they transcribed, and the philosophies and

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<sup>89</sup> See: Wiebke Thormählen, 'Playing with Art: Musical Arrangements as Educational Tools in van Swieten's Vienna', *The Journal of Musicology*, 27.3 (2010), 342-76.

aesthetics of traditional Chinese culture, the performance interpretations emerging from this research make available an alternative type of interpretation that can be described as 'culturally informed'. The goal is not simply to realise how the selected pieces can be better expressed on the piano, but rather, by following the research path of aesthetic and musical analysis to provide one way of expressing a Chinese cultural identity in piano performance.

## Chapter Overview

The main body of the thesis consists of four 'case-study' chapters on different composers, framed by an overview of the political context and a Conclusion. Chapter 1 provides a systematic overview of the complete historical causes and developments that led to the success of Chinese piano transcriptions in the 1970s, emphasising the interplay between Chinese politics and piano transcriptions. From the 1940s until the decade of the Cultural Revolution period, Chinese society continued to witness the ongoing close connection between proletarian politics under the leadership of the CCP and the corresponding culture. Chapter 1 therefore systematically discusses the historical period of politics by dividing it into two phases: from the 1940s to the time before 1966 and the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76. The specifics of the complete establishment of the cultural path of a proletarian nature (populism) in the 1940s are first reviewed. When history moved into the 1950s, as the PRC, a newly established socialist country, had been founded, the government held a relatively relaxed attitude towards the requirements of cultural creativity guidance in terms of nationalism and towards the use of Western art as a tool for the development of proletarian political needs. However, stepping into the pre-Cultural Revolution time in the 1960s, the ideology of political control over arts once again returned to the Yan'an period of the 1940s. The politically nationalised, revolutionary and popular demands for cultural creation and the political music policy of 'making the past serve the present and making foreign things serve China' continued until the period of the Cultural Revolution. The Chinese pianist, Yin Chengzong experimented with the piano and piano music which were defined as bourgeois products, in the context of the proletarian revolution, in the light of these ideological understandings. His brave initiative succeeded and was recognised by the government. With his

arranged piece The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern*, a pioneering work in Chinese piano music during the Cultural Revolution, and the transformation of Chinese society into the 1970s due to shifts in power structures within the government and in international relations, Chinese piano transcriptions flourished under the guidance of the government.

After understanding the context of Chinese politics and society in history, the next four chapters present the case studies that form the main body of the thesis. The order in which the selected five piano transcriptions are presented is based on the intensity of the relationship between politics and the chosen composers and the degree of faithfulness shown in the piano works relative to the original versions of the music. As we move through the analysis of these cases, this 'intensity' and 'faithfulness' decrease, and consequently the scope for the composer's freedom of self-expression and creativity increases.

Chapter 2 is devoted to a particular piano transcription arranged in 1975 by Chen Peixun, based on a solo *gaohu* piece in the style of 'New Cantonese Music' composed by Lü Wencheng in the 1930s, *Autumn Moon over a Calm Lake*. Chen's individual biography is first reviewed in detail in Chapter 2 in order to discover and understand his extremely strong personal connections to the Chinese revolution and politics. These connections become possible reasons and explanations for influencing his style in arranging this piano transcription. From a musical analysis perspective, this chapter analyses and explores the traditional Chinese compositional technique, *fangman jiahua* (adding more ornamented notes in an extended rhythm), embodied in the *gaohu* version of the traditional work. Then, this traditional technique is also applied to the piano version of the music. Afterwards, the musical analysis in this chapter further focuses on the transcription. From a monophonic *gaohu* piece to a multi-voice piano work, Chen's creative melodic arrangements on the piano and the addition of accompanying voices are discussed in detail. Chen's special arrangement of the arpeggiated texture throughout the whole piece successfully produces a programmatic effect that depicts a picture of water waving and responds to the artistic expression delivered by the title of this piece. These arrangements finally lead to the discussion of piano performance methods at the end of this chapter: how to realise the connection with the original

*gaohu* music on the piano and how to realise the artistic expression of the composer's newly added materials in piano performance?

Chapter 3 centres on two piano transcriptions arranged by the composer Wang Jianzhong in the 1970s: *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*, a revolutionary song arranged by Wang Jianzhong in 1973, based on a revolutionary song itself arranged by a group of practitioners from the recording group of China National Radio in 1971; and *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* arranged by Wang in 1975, according to a traditional ensemble piece composed by the Chinese composer Ren Guang in 1935. As a direct result of the change in politics that the Chinese government relatively accepted piano music in the 1970s, as well as after being instructed by the government in 1973 to arrange piano works based on music from different periods in history, Yin Chengzong invited Wang to arrange a number of piano adaptations. Musical analysis reveals that the presentation of these two piano pieces most typically corresponds to the structure of the original work to a large extent. Meanwhile, the local *xintianyou* style from northern Shaanxi in China in *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain's* original revolutionary music was also retained in the piano version. However, in terms of detail treatment, music analysis also compares the different arrangements made by Wang in the two piano transcriptions with the original music, which makes them more suitable for the expression on the piano. For example, in *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*, Wang arranges the melody of the piano music in different registers continuously; in *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon*, Wang modifies the ornamentation played by the traditional instruments in the piano version, due to the difference in the nature of performance between the piano and the traditional instruments. This chapter concludes with suggestions for piano performance, beginning with analysing recordings of the first versions of these two original works in their history performed by vocal singing and traditional Chinese orchestra, as well as contemporary recordings of performances by different pianists. Following the logic of the previous musical analysis, the suggestions for piano performance methods in both tempo and approaches to performance are also intended to reflect the extremely strong connection between the piano transcriptions and the original works.

Chapter 4 explores a piano transcription, *Music at Sunset* first arranged by Li Yinghai in 1975 based on a traditional *pipa* solo piece, and revised a second piano

version in 1981. The history of this *pipa* piece from ancient to contemporary times has been summarised in this chapter. Then the composing motive of Li arranging this piano transcription is discovered to comprehend the political force towards artistic production in the Cultural Revolution. Furthermore, it is discovered that Li believes his first version relies more on the traditional *pipa* music, but he aims to better express his piano music in the second version, such as by imitating more traditional timbres from various Chinese instruments on the piano. Thus, following the composer's individual sense, the musical analysis in this chapter concentrates on the second version of this piano transcription, investigating what particular techniques and musical materials are applied by the composer to achieve this aim. Meanwhile, as a theorist especially researching Chinese pentatonicism, Li constructs this piano music completely under his theory. Another aspect of musical analysis underlined in this chapter is to interpret Li's concepts by analysing harmony in pentatonicism, harmonic progression and composing techniques in the second version of the transcription. Based on the musical analysis, the performance suggestions at the end of this chapter provide creative methods in piano playing to achieve sound effects of traditional Chinese instruments. Further, for this aim, the performance analysis selects recordings from the pianists, Xu Lujia, Li Yun (the composer's daughter) and Chen Jie, to investigate applicable performance methods they used, which achieves to present traditional playing techniques of Chinese instruments and to illustrate traditional philosophy in piano playing.

Chapter 5 concentrates on a piano transcription, *The Story of a Cowherd* arranged by Dan Zhaoyi in 1973, based on a revolutionary song, *A Cowherd Expecting the Red Army* arranged in the 1930s under the guidance of the Chinese Soviet Government. In this chapter, Dan's personal experience in his music career and his activities of composition have been reviewed, especially the time from the 1960s to the Cultural Revolution. The review and analysis of Dan's background information evaluate the close connection between his creation and politics, and the strong impact that Dan received from the historical context to his composition. Particularly, Dan played as the timpanist in the orchestra of the Sichuan Conservatory of Music in many performances of the Model Operas, which led to his enhanced familiarity with revolutionary opera music, and then he arranged 15 piano etudes based on them in 1973. This intensive exposure to political context made him



follow the same path when he again chose a regime-friendly song to arrange on the piano as *The Story of a Cowherd*. The musical analysis in this chapter compares and explores this piano transcription with the revolutionary song through multiple dimensions of musical structure, tonality, rhythm and melodic development, to illustrate the prominent progress that Dan made in his transcription, departing from the original version of the song. Especially, Dan creates a comprehensive programme style in his transcription. In this way, the performance suggestions at the end of this chapter are based on the story of Dan's programme music. A piano performance recording from a Chinese pianist, Gu Jingdan who is one of Dan's piano students is invoked as solid evidence to support performance approaches suggested in this chapter.

The Conclusion chapter, finally, brings research findings from all the previous independent chapters together, with the aim of comprehending Chinese piano transcriptions from the perspectives of politics, music and performance. Firstly, due to the direct causal relationship between politics and the creation of these five piano transcriptions during the Cultural Revolution, the chapter reviews the consistent policy of advocating nationalism in artistic works under the CCP's authority through various periods of its influence. Then, the Conclusion chapter reviews the research findings exposed in the chapters of musical case studies that all the selected composers used materials of traditional Chinese music as compositional sources and techniques, such as the Chinese pentatonic theory and the expression of traditional aesthetics in Chinese culture, when arranging original versions of monophonic, heterophonic or vocally strophic music into piano transcriptions. This becomes the evidence of Chinese composers' self-expression of nationalism in their piano transcriptions. The Conclusion chapter extends the discussion of continuous self-expression of nationalism from all selected composers towards the time in modern China after the Cultural Revolution. In this way, this research also defines the composers' expression of nationalism in the ongoing history as a tradition of composition in Chinese music. But also, this leads to another discussion in the Conclusion chapter about whether all these Chinese piano transcriptions are recognised as one genre of piano music or merely one type of world music as showing its national identity of being Chinese music. Obviously, Chinese composers aim to bring their music into the mainstream of Western Classical music, whereas

they are actually located in the secondary position of peripheral composers. In addition, to reflect the complexities of arranging Chinese piano transcriptions, the Conclusion chapter discusses the three specific types of 'transplantation', 'adaptation' and 'creation' when arranging traditional music onto the piano. After all these theoretical analyses, the Conclusion chapter goes to the stage of confirming the approaches of culturally informed performance on the piano to play these five chosen transcriptions showing their national identity. Also, the limitations of using the methodology and the selection of only five piano transcriptions in this research have been mentioned in this chapter. Through all of the above, this research offers an interpretation of the selected Chinese piano transcriptions in their broader historical, political and cultural context, presenting this interpretation through practical piano performance.

# Chapter One: Historical Politics and Chinese Piano Transcriptions

From the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party in the 1920s, through the 1940s when it moved into the development of proletarian power, and then to the period of the socialist system and country established when the CCP became the government of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the CCP was consistently committed to promoting cultural and artistic productions that expressed the standpoint of the proletariat. Even though, before 1949, the Republic of China was mainly ruled by the Nationalist government rather than the CCP, this chapter focuses on the political guidance of the CCP in order to examine the substantial relationship between proletarian and socialist politics and the broader field of Chinese artistic creation. Then it moves towards the more specific topic of the essential connection between Chinese politics and the creation of Chinese piano music during the Cultural Revolution.

The research analysis is divided into two periods, the time before the Cultural Revolution and the decade of the revolution. During the years from the 1940s to the first half of the 1960s, in the process of its exploration, the government had always emphasised the link between cultural creation and people from the basic social stratum, but seemed to have wavered in its attitude towards considering the function of Western culture and art on the proletarian regime and later on the socialist country. This first section will review several periods of significant political influence on Chinese culture, art and music from 1942 when Mao Zedong delivered the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art, to the time immediately preceding the Cultural Revolution. The relationship between politics and culture is discussed in the context of a specific study of political content, and its role in artistic creation in terms of such aspects as content and style of musical creation, as well as creative direction, is examined. The cultural system established by the government during these 30 years was never abandoned because of the development of society, but rather it became the political reference and standard for the subsequent period of the Cultural Revolution. The understanding and analysis of the period before the Cultural Revolution in the first section will therefore set the scene for the cultural and musical

creative practices (composition of Chinese piano music) that occur in the next section, centred on the Cultural Revolution period.

When the time moved into the Cultural Revolution, numerous Chinese artists and pianists suffered from extremely severe censorship by politics. They never understood why their piano music was labelled as the artistic production of poisoning the minds of people and destabilising proletarian society. Thus, the second section in this chapter focusing on the Cultural Revolution period, firstly explores the realistic condition that those artists faced back in history. Then, the investigation concentrates on the Chinese pianist, Yin Chengsong who seemed to discover a way that piano music would survive in this social condition. He started to conduct an experiment on the piano, combining the socialist revolution and the composition of piano music. Surprisingly, his experiment was successful and the outputs were favoured by the government who even determined to place this bourgeois instrument and its music as a member of the just side in this proletarian revolution. Since then, piano music has gradually assumed an important role in national affairs after the 1970s. The last part of this chapter reveals a totally fresh situation in which Chinese piano transcriptions numerous emerged.

## **Art and Musical Creations within the Political and Social Context in China Before the Cultural Revolution**

Establishment of the fundamental direction of creating proletarian music – Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art in 1942

In 1942, when China was suffering through the Sino-Japanese War, numerous literary and artistic workers approached the central revolutionary base of the CCP in Yan'an from war zones and Nationalist-ruled areas. In order to define the class standpoint and orthodox ideology for their work, the CCP conducted the Yan'an

Rectification Movement in the field of literature and art.<sup>1</sup> Mao Zedong made two speeches at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art on 2 and 23 May, giving a comprehensive discussion on how to undertake proletarian literary and artistic development from multiple perspectives (more detailed information on Mao's talks is presented in the Appendix, Section 1.1):

Mao's talks address the relationship between politics, revolution and cultural activities in a comprehensive manner from a political perspective. He establishes that in the revolution of the proletariat, culture becomes a tool of class struggle, placed in a subordinate position to politics. Culture has the social attribute of serving politics to a certain extent, without independent artistic value. Instead, the embodiment of cultural content affects the functioning of politics. In Mao's thinking, the political function of an artistic work completely overrides the cultural value of the work itself; meanwhile, Mao's talks reject the expression of the individual will of artists in cultural creation. Mao also placed the cultural activities of the proletariat within a Marxist-Leninist framework in order to identify culture as an ideological component of the social superstructure, and cultural works become ideological products. More elaborately, when audiences receive particular cultural products, they embrace concrete ideas. By implanting the ideology of the proletariat into cultural products, literary and artistic works make audiences adopt the political ideology of the party with the expressive power of specific artistic images. Culture became a powerful weapon for the revolution to unify the minds of social groups and in this way to achieve a stable social structure and regime development. This process also reaffirms Mao's general ideological direction of setting culture in the service of politics. This political direction remained active in society under Mao's Communist government, more than 20 years later, culminating in the history of the Cultural Revolution.

Another significant aspect of Mao's talks is the establishment of the populist politics setting in the course of the proletariat's cultural development: cultural creation

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<sup>1</sup> Reform Data, 'Mao Zedong: zai Yan'an wenyi zuotanhui de jianghua' [Mao Zedong: the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art] (毛泽东: 《在延安文艺座谈会上的讲话》), *Reform Data*, 1943 <<http://www.reformdata.org/1943/1019/16718.shtml>> [accessed 18 November 2022].

must be based on the people, drawing materials for artistic creation from their lives in order to create works accessible and appreciated by the masses. In fact, the reason for populism towards culture is also to fulfil the purpose of culture in the service of politics: when the intellectuals who had received modern education and Western culture came to the revolutionary base in Yan'an, the Western cultural products they brought with them had no influence on the social base dominated by workers and peasants in Yan'an. The proletarian government wanted to achieve the cultural enlightenment of the masses. The activities of cultural creativity had to help politics achieve this goal, thus connecting with the masses themselves. In order to break the incompatibility between the intellectuals and the social base, politics demands that culture has to be populist, liberating and uniting the masses from the literary and artistic aspects and thus achieving revolutionary victory.

In a manner of speaking, the relationship between politics and culture in all aspects established by Mao in 1942 became the basis for the CCP's subsequent guidance of China's development thereafter, and even more, it became 'the oracle for artistic workers' during the era of Mao's leadership.<sup>2</sup>

## Political attitudes towards domestic tradition and Western culture – Chairman Mao's Talk to Music Workers on 24 August 1956

On 28 April 1956, at the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CCP, Mao Zedong proposed the policy of letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend, which became the mainstream ideology for the development of science and the prosperity of literature and art.<sup>3</sup> Under the influence of current politics, a relatively relaxing environment was created in the society to hold a certain tolerance for Western culture. On 24 August, Mao met

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<sup>2</sup> Arnold Perris, *Music as Propaganda: Art to Persuade, Art to Control* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985), p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> News of the Communist Party of China, 'Mao Zedong tichu "baihua qifang" "baijia zhengming" fangzheng' [Mao Zedong proposed letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend] (毛泽东提出“百花齐放”“百家争鸣”方针), *News of the Communist Party of China*, [n.d.] <<http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/33837/2534760.html>> [accessed 10 November 2022].

with comrades from the Chinese Musicians' Association.<sup>4</sup> During the conversation Mao stressed the need for the development of Chinese socialist culture to emphasise national characteristics in art, along with a specific attitude on how Chinese artists learned, understood and applied Western culture (the direct quotations of Mao's selected words are presented in the Appendix, Section 1.2).

Particularly, this political talk by Chairman Mao to Chinese music artists affirmed the value of traditional Chinese culture and underlined cultural development in China was required to demonstrate national style and forms. Meanwhile, the emphasis in the talk on the parts of Western culture that were useful for the development of Chinese art reflected Mao's relatively significant tolerance and receptiveness to it: there were no proletarian ideological deviations in learning and playing Western repertoires or in applying the compositional techniques of Western music. These Western musical materials were 'tools' and the fundamental essence was how the 'tools' were applied to the path of Chinese musical development. As in the case of the application of political ideology in China, the implementation of Marxism-Leninism by the Chinese Communist Party was based on the actual national conditions and social environment of China. The development of Chinese music required the same path. Thus, Chinese artists were asked to critically study Western cultural 'techniques', with the ultimate aim of combining bourgeois 'advanced techniques' with the national characteristics of Chinese tradition to create and develop a unique culture conducive to proletarian national construction. At least Western music was recognised and used in a reasonable way in 1950s China under the guidance of Mao's thought. Although Mao referred to artists studying Western music as intellectuals with a bourgeois ideology, Mao still asserted that they could be artists working for the proletarian revolutionary cause. The content of Mao's talk provided the political basis for Chinese musicians to use Western music theory to develop Chinese music and became the guiding ideology even throughout subsequent history.

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<sup>4</sup> Zedong Mao, *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao diliu ce* [Mao Zedong's Documents Since the Founding of the PRC Book Six] (建国以来毛泽东文稿 第六册), p. 183. Marxists Internet Archive.

Artists produced a series of achievements in Chinese music through Mao's political patronage. In 1958, for instance, He Zhanhao and Chen Gang who were still students at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, composed a Chinese piece, *The Butterfly Lovers Violin Concerto* (《梁祝》小提琴协奏曲), using the Western concerto form and Western instruments, with melodies based on traditional Chinese music. In 1959, Li Yinghai published his book on Chinese pentatonic harmony theory, which became the key to the evolution of traditional Chinese music from monophonic to polyphonic music with multi-voice texture.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the 1956 talk was not only a political statement for musicians but also, despite the highly intense social climate of the 1960s towards Western culture, Jiang Qing used Mao's 1956 talk as a political argument in her 1964's Talk to Musicians. The demand in her talk for Chinese musicians was not to hold an attitude of absolute isolation from Western art in the proletarian cultural revolution. More particularly, they were asked compulsorily to compose music not divorced from the content of the expression of the actual situation in Chinese society and not only to focus on the expression of composition in the use of Western musical forms and techniques. The essence of composition landed on the fact that both forms and techniques were meant to serve the content.<sup>6</sup> The direct positive attitude towards Western music and culture in the 1956 talk by Mao, as the highest political leader of China at the time, laid a solid historical and political foundation for the subsequent arrival of Western music and instruments on the stage of the proletarian Cultural Revolution in the later history.

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<sup>5</sup> Yinghai Li, *Hanze diaoshi jiqi hesheng* [Chinese Modes and Harmony] (汉族调式及其和声) (Shanghai: Shanghai Literature & Art Publishing House, 1959).

<sup>6</sup> Leningrad Printing Plant No. 3 Workers' Theoretical Group, *Jiang Qing tongzhi lun wenyi* [Comrade Jiang Qing's Discussion on Literature and Arts] (江青同志论文艺) (Made by CHM, 2016), p. 63, <[bannedthought.net/China/Individuals/JiangQing/](http://bannedthought.net/China/Individuals/JiangQing/)> [accessed 10 November 2022].



## Reinforcing the national pathway of development in socialist music (Zhou Enlai's talk and Mao's political directive in 1963-64)

On 16 August 1963, Premier Zhou Enlai participated in the symposium on music and dance convened by the Ministry of Culture and spoke on issues of nationalisation and popularisation of music and dance. Zhou indicated that: 'The arts must still be based on our country and developed on the basis of our nationality. Chinese art must be formulated with [millions of] people, and [among them] with workers, peasants and soldiers as the basis, with their delight as the main aspect'.<sup>7</sup> Zhou also commented at the conference on the ideological content (class, combativeness, nationalisation, modernisation) and criteria of artistic works, as well as on the forms of creative expression.<sup>8</sup> From 18 December to 7 January 1964, the Musicians' Association and the Dancers' Association, both affiliated with the Ministry of Culture, held the Symposium on Music and Dance Work in the capital city of Beijing.<sup>9</sup> On 7 March, the People's Daily reproduced the discussion of the symposium by the Xinhua News Agency and the Guangming Daily in an article entitled 'Putting Ourselves into the Fierce Struggle to Reflect the Spirit of the Revolutionary Era and Develop National Music and Dance'.<sup>10</sup> The report stresses the need for music and dance art in socialist China to embody the spirit of the times of realistic struggle (the revolution and construction of socialism); creation must have and express unique national forms and national style; artistic work is requested to be

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<sup>7</sup> Literature Research Office of the Central Committee of the CCP, *Zhou Enlai nianpu (1949-1976) (zhong)* [The Chronicle of Zhou Enlai (1949-1976) Volume II] (周恩来年谱 (1949-1976) (中)) (Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2007), p. 573.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Mei Wang, *Zhongguo yinyue wenhua yu gangqin yinyue yanjiu (1949-1979)* [Research on Chinese Music Culture and Piano Music (1949-1979)] (中国音乐文化与钢琴音乐研究 (1949-1979)) (Jinan: Shangdong University Press, 2016), p. 93.

<sup>10</sup> The available online access of the archive of People's Daily: Government Open Data, 'Touru huore de douzheng zhong qu fanying geming de shidai jingshen fazhan minzu de yinyue wudao' [Putting ourselves into the Fierce Struggle to Reflect the Spirit of the Revolutionary Era and Develop National Music and Dance] (投入火热的斗争中去 反映革命的时代精神 发展民族的音乐舞蹈), *Government Open Data*, [n.d.] <<https://cn.govopendata.com/renminribao/1964/3/7/2/>> [accessed 23 November 2022].

associated with the workers, peasants and soldiers, so that socialist cultural products are accessible and enjoyable to the masses. On the other hand, the report also criticised the tendency of some artists to blindly worship Western music and dance and to rigidly copy foreign experience.<sup>11</sup> By 1964, the political slogan and guidelines demanding that music and dance should be revolutionary, national and popular were fully established under the leadership of Zhou Enlai.

On 12 December 1963, Mao Zedong wrote a comment on the document, 'Report on the Situation of Literature and Art' from the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CCP. Mao stated: 'The various art forms - theatre, opera, music, art, dance, film, poetry and literature, etc.... are still ruled by "dead people"... Many communists enthusiastically promote feudalist and capitalist art, but not socialist art...'<sup>12</sup> Mao's instruction criticised that artists should not repeat the works of composers (both Western and Chinese) who had already passed away. The new development of socialism in the country's general environment at this time required corresponding new musical works to echo the politics.

Compared to the relatively relaxed political atmosphere and tolerance of Western music in the 1950s, socialist policies of the 1960s placed more radical emphasis on the class struggle and Chinese cultural identity. Thus, the political demands propagated by Zhou Enlai shifted the core of cultural creation to the socialist revolution by promoting national music, which drove cultural activities in a leftist direction in parallel with politics. The political instruction of Mao Zedong reaffirms the inevitability of the subordination of art to politics again. This political directive and the consolidation of populism demand from Zhou brought the direction of Chinese cultural development in the 1960s back to that of the Yan'an period. Also, the progressively hostile attitude of Chinese politics towards the Western bourgeoisie and capitalism in the early 1960s set the stage for the subsequent overall social

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<sup>11</sup> Government Open Data, 'Putting ourselves into the Fierce Struggle to Reflect the Spirit of the Revolutionary Era and Develop National Music and Dance'.

<sup>12</sup> Zedong Mao, *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao (10)* [Mao Zedong's Documents Since the Founding of the PRC (10)] (建国以来毛泽东文稿(10)), pp. 436-37. Marxists Internet Archive.

resistance to Western art, represented by Western music, during the Cultural Revolution.

## Mao's directive to 'make the past serve the present and make foreign things serve China'

In the early 1960s, the reform movement of modern Peking Opera was active nationwide, standing at the forefront of the literary and artistic revolution in China. In 1964, a student from the Department of Musicology at the Central Conservatory of Music, Chen Lian observed the new changes in modern Peking Opera in the context of the reform and revolution. In her perception, the 'new' Peking Opera focused on reflecting the reality of life in Chinese society at the time, distinguishing itself from the traditional Peking Opera with historical stories as its subject matter.<sup>13</sup> From this, she began to reflect on the direction and development of music in the frame of Chinese socialism: in her view, the field of Chinese music lacked repertoires that reflected the atmosphere of the times, as the pre-reformed Peking Opera demonstrated; meanwhile, teaching materials used by the Central Conservatory of Music were extensively filled with Western classical and traditional Chinese music. Chen faced a dilemma through the existing situation of education at the conservatory which was clearly incompatible with the political directives of social development. Premier Zhou declared the need for literary and artistic works to be revolutionary, popular and nationalistic. Chairman Mao's indications also demanded that artists should abandon the works of deceased Western and Chinese musicians, instead creating new musical works beneficial for the development of socialism. Thus, the problems that Chen observed led her to the idea of writing to Chairman Mao. Finally, on 1 September 1964, the letter was written.

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<sup>13</sup> All information of background story of Mao's instruction, 'making the past to serve the present and making foreign things to serve China' comes from Sun Guolin who was participating in relevant work at the conservatory after Chen's letter was responded by Mao and sent back to the conservatory. See: Guolin Sun, 'Mao Zedong "guwei jinyong yangwei zhongyong" pishi de lailong qumai' [The history of Mao Zedong's instruction, Making the Past to Serve the Present and Making Foreign Things to Serve China] (毛泽东“古为今用，洋为中用”批示的来龙去脉), *The Party's History (Documentary)*, 11 (2010), 42-43.

In her letter to Mao, Chen mentioned four specific conditions happening at the Central Conservatory of Music during the time:

1. As a result of the long and extensive uncritical study of Western music by teachers and students at the conservatory, such an atmosphere allowed bourgeois culture and ideology to begin to influence their political consciousness. They were reluctant to engage more with workers and peasants because the Western repertoires they performed were not understood.
2. The conservatoire was filled with students who studied music for individualistic purposes. They praised the piano as the 'emperor of music' and dreamed of winning international competitions and prizes.
3. There were some people obsessed with Western music and despising national music. They did not study the government's guidance on the requirements for the development of literature and arts.
4. Western music and fiction had a 'serious' effect on the minds of students.

In Chen's view, these situations at the conservatory were contrary to the development of socialism. They were the results of the school's education which only taught inheritance completely without criticism. With this letter, Chen hoped that the problems she perceived and understood would be solved. In this way, the field of music would be revitalised.

Chen's letter was not initially submitted to Mao himself, but was summarised by the Secretary's Office of the General Office of the CCP Central Committee in issue No. 79 of *Mass Reflections* on 16 September 1964, entitled 'Opinions at the Central Conservatory of Music'. Mao Zedong read the summary of this letter and agreed that the contents of the letter were in line with the direction of the socialist education movement conducted by him. On 27 September, Mao referred Chen's letter to Lu Dingyi, the Minister of the Central Propaganda Department, who was in charge of ideology, and wrote the following passages on the publication:

Comrade Dingyi:

Please review this letter. it is well written and the problem should be solved. However, it is important to seek the views of the public and to discuss them among teachers and students to collect their opinions.

Mao Zedong,

27 September.

Making the past serve the present and making foreign things serve China.

This letter expresses the views of one side of the people, and many may disagree.<sup>14</sup>

On 10 May 1967, People's Daily republished an editorial from the sixth issue of Hongqi magazine in 1967, *Celebrating the Great Victory of the Peking Opera Revolution*.<sup>15</sup> The article combined together the 1951 comment by Mao on the development of Peking Opera (whether to inherit or abolish all traditional Peking Opera), letting a hundred flowers bloom and new things emerging from the old (百花齐放, 推陈出新 — *Baihua yifang, tuicheng chuxin*),<sup>16</sup> with the passages from Chen's letter, making the past serve the present and making foreign things serve China (古为今用, 洋为中用 — *Guwei jinyong, Yangwei zhongyong*). It illustrated the achievement of Mao's political instructions in solving a fundamental problem of the opera revolution. The 1968 supplement to the ninth issue of China Pictorial published three arias of The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern*. These sixteen words of political instruction (in Chinese) were again published on the second page after the front cover (see Fig. 1.1).<sup>17</sup> Another direct effect of Chen Lian's letter was to lead the government to begin considering another Chinese piano revolutionary composition, *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* which was officially authorised in 1968 by Jiang Qing. More detailed information on the concerto's political and musical background is provided later in this chapter.

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<sup>14</sup> Zedong Mao, *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao (11)* [Mao Zedong's Documents Since the Founding of the PRC (11)] (建国以来毛泽东文稿(11)), p. 172. Marxists Internet Archive.

<sup>15</sup> Hongqi magazine, 'Huanhu jingju geming de weida shengli' [Celebrating the Great Victory of the Peking Opera Revolution] (欢呼京剧革命的伟大胜利), *People's Daily*, 10 May 1967, 1st section.

<sup>16</sup> News of the Communist Party of China, 'Mao Zedong proposed letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend'.

<sup>17</sup> MZDBL, 'Renmin huabao 1968 nian di 9 qi (zengkan)' [The 1968's Supplement to the Ninth Issue of China Pictorial] (《人民画报》1968年第9期(增刊)), *MDZBL*, [n.d.] <<http://www.mzdbl.cn/rmh/index.html>> [accessed 10 November 2022].

From the 1950s to the 1960s with the introduction of different policies, the CCP's apparent attitude towards Western music was changing and contradictory: the political attitude of the 1950s, which considered Western music as a source of benefit, turned only a few years later in the early 1960s into an almost entirely leftist consolidation of the conservatism of national music, and again in 1964 in response to the value of Western music as a tool to be used. But in essence, despite the different shifts in political attitudes towards Western culture, they were all in fact a consolidation of the ideology that Mao had proposed in the 1940s that music must serve the proletariat and, later, the socialist state and politics. In the orthodoxy of the early 1960s, the theory of a 'threat' from Western ideology identified by the government was intensively reinforced in society. Any ideologies that opposed the development of the proletarian Communist Party and the socialist country were substantially 'threatening' to undermine the development and stability of the class and the country itself. Highlighting and emphasising nationality in musical works became one possible solution to this political 'threat'. At the same time the political instruction raised in 1964, using Western music had equally revolutionary results in the service of Chinese politics. Thus, both the nationalism embodied in Chinese cultural productions and the utilisation of Western music were subjected to political scrutiny in order to achieve the ultimate goal of consolidating power. The fusion of Western compositional techniques with nationalism in Chinese cultural products to fulfil political objectives was a specific art form that was gradually and formally accepted by the government during the Cultural Revolution later and therefore came to the forefront of the historic stage. In turn, the government's acceptance of the form created a space for musicians to survive in such a particular environment.

Figure 1.1. The first two pages of the 1968 supplement to the ninth issue of *China Pictorial*



古为今用  
洋为中用

百花齐放  
推陈出新

毛泽东



## The Cultural Revolution

Enveloped in the darkest survival environment (Red Guards attack arts and music)

Between 1963-66, Jiang Qing, the spouse of Chairman Mao, launched a series of revolutionary campaigns to modernise and reform traditional Peking operas. 26 December 1966, the People's Daily referred to the Peking operas, *Shajiabang* (《沙家浜》), *The Red Lantern* (《红灯记》), *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* (《智取威虎山》), *On the Docks* (《海港》), *Raid on the White Tiger Regiment* (《奇袭白虎团》), two ballets of *The Red Detachment of Women* (《红色娘子军》) and *The White-Haired Girl* (《白毛女》), as well as one symphonic piece, *The Shajiabang Symphony*, collectively as 'Revolutionary Modern Plays' and the 'Revolutionary Modern Model Productions' under the direction of Jiang.<sup>18</sup> All of them embody the same theme: the heroic stories of active participation in the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat under the leadership of Mao Zedong. These eight revolutionary works were empowered and weaponised by politics, allowing Jiang to proceed from the cultural sphere and begin to gradually expand her personal power in the political struggle: Jiang became free to criticise anyone who went against her aims. The model works thus became the paradigm and benchmark for the cultural sphere during the Cultural Revolution, leading to an extremely long-term blockade of the performing arts scene and severe restrictions on the development of other art forms and works. Western art, as well as Chinese artists and musical works associated with Western culture, were subjected to serious political persecution and a range of historical tragedies at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

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<sup>18</sup> Government Open Data, 'Guanche Mao zhuxi wenyi luxian de guanghui yangban geming xiandai xi yi quanxin de zhengzhi neirong he qianglie de yishu ganranli xiying qianbaiwan guanzhong' [The Glorious Examples of the Implementation of Chairman Mao's Literary Line, Revolutionary Modern Plays with New Political Content and Strong Artistic Impact Appealing to Millions of Audiences] (贯彻毛主席文艺路线的光辉样板革命现代戏以全新的政治内容和强烈的艺术感染力吸引千百万观众), *Government Open Data*, [n.d.] <<https://cn.govopendata.com/renminribao/1966/12/26/1/#363312>> [accessed 30 November 2022].

On 1 August 1966, Chairman Mao personally wrote to Red Guards of the Tsinghua University High School, expressing his warm support for their writing of big-character posters, a handwritten form that was prevalent in China from the 1950s to the 1970s showing public opinions usually posted in public locations and developed into a political propaganda tool and weapon during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>19</sup> Mao also claimed: 'No matter in Beijing and anywhere else in the whole country, we give heartfelt endorsement to all those who adopt the same revolutionary attitude as you do in the Cultural Revolution'.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, one of the essential contents of the Decision of the CCP Central Committee on the Cultural Revolution (referred to as the Sixteen Points), established by the 11th Plenary Session of the 8th Central Committee of the CCP in Beijing (1-12 August 1966), was to affirm once again, in an official and formal setting, the positive and significant role of Red Guards in this proletarian revolution —

A wide range of otherwise unknown revolutionary youths become brave path-breakers...their general revolutionary direction is always correct ... [the Party leadership should] make full use of the forms of big-character posters and big debates...to expose all monsters and demons.<sup>21</sup>

Since then, the Red Guards' revolutionary activities, which were frantic but considered as a 'righteous mission', officially began their history and quickly spread throughout the country.

This revolutionary team, mainly consisting of teachers and students from all over the country, applied Chairman Mao's ideology as their core value in its campaign to eradicate the Four Olds (old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits), and at the same time went on a rampage to identify and criticise 'capitalists' in China. As a

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<sup>19</sup> For detailed introduction of Big-character Posters, see: Denise Y. Ho, 'Big-character Poster (大字报)', *The Mao Era in Objects*, [n.d.] <<https://maoeraobjects.ac.uk/object-biographies/big-character-poster-%E5%A4%A7%E5%AD%97%E6%8A%A5/>> [accessed 18 March 2023].

<sup>20</sup> Party History Research Centre of the CPC Central Committee, 'Zhongguo gonghandang dashiji 1966 nian' [The Memorabilia of the CCP in 1966] (中国共产党大事记 • 1966 年), *News of the Communist Party of China*, [n.d.] <<http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64164/4416081.html>> [accessed 23 October 2022].

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

result, Western music and everything related to it, including Western instruments, Western composers, higher music institutions and music professionals studying Western music at the time, became the typical targets. The city, Shanghai and the institution, the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, for example, suffered the worst of all. Tan Shuzhen, a violinist and the vice-president of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, was imprisoned in a basement for 14 months at the conservatory and then vilified as a Nationalist by Red Guards. Tan had been suffering physical abuse very often, frequently beaten by them.<sup>22</sup> The dark atmosphere surrounded the conservatory, according to Tan: 'The worst thing is many people committed suicide. 17 People from our conservatory committed suicide'.<sup>23</sup> Another pianist who worked at the conservatory as the Director of the Piano Department, Li Cuizhen, without any political power but with preference of dressing as a Westerner, was severely insulted by Red Guards – they painted ink on her face and required her to call herself some bad names. After experiencing all these nightmares, Li, eventually killed herself.<sup>24</sup>

Fu Lei, a literary translator living in Shanghai at the time, had been actively involved himself in the proletarian cause after Chairman Mao implemented the policy of letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend in 1956. He published a total of 12 articles on literature and publishing.<sup>25</sup> Merely after two years on 30 April 1958, Fu Lei was instead politically criticised as a rightist. His son, the famous pianist, Fou Ts'ong who graduated from the Warsaw Conservatory but abandoned his plan to go back to China and instead moved to the UK in

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<sup>22</sup> The story of Tan during the revolution period came from himself. See: Nursultan Tulyakbay, *Tan Shuzhen laisi shanghai de shenshi 1999* [Tan Shuzhen The Gentleman from Shanghai 1999] (谭抒真 来自上海的绅士 1999), online video recording, YouTube, 29 December 2020, <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVgHywku\\_m4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVgHywku_m4)> [accessed 23 October 2022]. Tan's story has also been discussed in: Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red: How Classical Music Became Chinese* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2004), pp. 231-33.

<sup>23</sup> Nursultan Tulyakbay, *Tan Shuzhen The Gentleman from Shanghai 1999*.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> The story of Fu Lei and the information followed by comes from: Pengyuan Xu, 'Zuwei shounanzhe, Fu Lei zhi si ba ta de yisheng dou fangda le' [As a Sufferer, Fu Lei's Death Magnified His Life] (作为受难者，傅雷之死把他的一生都放大了), *IFeng*, 2016 <[https://culture.ifeng.com/a/20160903/49893049\\_0.shtml](https://culture.ifeng.com/a/20160903/49893049_0.shtml)> [accessed 23 October 2022].

December because of the erratic political situation, made the situation of Fu Lei's political status as a rightist even more difficult. Fu Lei himself was not originally associated with the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. But because his wife, Zhu Meifu and Li Cuizhen had been classmates, Li had already been defined as a secret agent by Red Guards. The conservatory followed this relationship and accused Fu Lei as a secret agent. On 30 August 1966, his home was raided. After four days and three nights of criticism and penalty kneeling, the garden was overturned and the floor was pried apart to search for any possible evidence of Fu's crime in class struggle. Big-character posters were placed around the house. On September 3, Fu Lei and his wife hanged themselves. As an intellectual, Fu Lei used the end of his life to defend his inner beliefs, as he had written a letter home to Fou Ts'ong on 15 March 1955 and said, 'Only when the body is still can the activity of the spirit be most complete'.<sup>26</sup>

Gu Shengying, a former family friend and neighbour of Fu Lei, began her career as a piano soloist with the Shanghai Philharmonic when she was 17 years old (in 1954).<sup>27</sup> From 1957 onwards, Gu began to shine on the stage of international piano competitions: in 1957 she won the First Prize in the Sixth World Youth and Student Festival and the Second Prize in 1958 at the Geneva Tenth International Music Competition. Following both awards, the People's Music published an article acknowledging Gu's achievements as a Chinese pianist.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, the Xinhua News Agency reported Gu's success in Geneva as the only pianist winning a prize among 62 female pianists.<sup>29</sup> In the 1960s, she responded to the demand for cultural

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<sup>26</sup> Lei Fu, *Fu Lei jiashu* [Fu Lei's Letters Home] (傅雷家书) (Nanjing: Yilin Publishing House, 2016), pp. 76-77.

<sup>27</sup> This information comes from a Chinese composer and pianist, Ding Shande who wrote an article to cherish his memory of Gu in 1979. See: Shande Ding, 'Huiyi qingnian gangqinjia Gu Shengying tongzhi' [Memories of the Young Pianist Comrade Gu Shengying] (回忆青年钢琴家顾圣婴同志), *People's Music*, 6 (1979), 40-41 (p. 40).

<sup>28</sup> Shiji Hong, 'Cong Li Mingqiang Gu Shengying dejiang tanqi' [From the awards of Li Mingqiang and Gu Shengying] (从李名强顾圣婴得奖谈起), *People's Music*, 10 (1958), 30 (p. 30).

<sup>29</sup> The Xinhua News Agency, 'Woguo qingnian nv gangqinjia Gu Shengying huo guoji yinyue yanzou bisai erdengjiang' [The young Chinese female pianist, Gu Shengying winning the

politics of nationalism from the government: in 1963, the People's Music officially documented her piano concert of Chinese compositions at the Shanghai Concert Hall on 3 August. The repertoire include a performance of the revolutionary work, *Chairman Mao Coming to Our Village* (《毛主席来到了咱们村》) composed by Jiao Shuang.<sup>30</sup> But such a pianist who closely adhered to the government's policy and was featured in the People's Music, was physically assaulted by revolutionary militants from the Shanghai Philharmonic in January 1967.<sup>31</sup> Not bearing such humiliation, Gu ended her life at the age of only 30 and committed suicide by gas poisoning at home with her mother and brother on the 31st.<sup>32</sup>

The Chinese pianist Liu Shikun, who won the third place in the Franz Liszt International Piano Competition in Budapest, Hungary, in September 1956 and also the second place in the First Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition in April 1958, composed his *Young Piano Concerto* (《青年钢琴协奏曲》) in 1959.<sup>33</sup> This Chinese piano concerto was born when Liu was asked by the government and assigned the task to comply with the policy of nationalism in cultural works: Liu organised an orchestra consisting of traditional Chinese instruments based on the model of Western symphony orchestra, such as the *erhu* (two-string fiddle) corresponding to the violin and the *matou qin* (a horse head string instrument) to the

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Second Prize in the International Music Performance Competition] (我国青年女钢琴家顾圣婴获国际音乐演奏比赛二等奖), *People's Music*, 10 (1958), 30 (p. 30).

<sup>30</sup> Feng Jing, 'Gu Shengying, Bo Yibin juxing zhongguo zuopin yinyuehui' [The Concerts of Chinese Compositions Held by Gu Shengying and Bo Yibin] (顾圣婴、薄一彬举行中国作品音乐会), *People's Music*, 9 (1963), 63 (p. 63).

<sup>31</sup> Richard Curt Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China Middle-Class Ambitions and the Struggle over Western Music* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 141-43.

<sup>32</sup> People's Music, 'Qingnian gangqinjie Gu Shengying tongzhi guhui anfang yishi zai Shanghai juxing' [The Young Pianist, Gu Shengying's Bone Ashes Interred at a Ceremony in Shanghai] (青年钢琴家顾圣婴同志骨灰安放仪式在上海举行), *People's Music*, 3 (1979), 34 (p. 34).

<sup>33</sup> This information comes from Liu himself. See: Sohu News, 'Liu Shikun dangnian weishenme yu Ye Jianying de nv'er lihun' [Why Liu Shikun Divorced Ye Jianying's Daughter] (刘诗昆当年为何与叶剑英的女儿离婚), *Sohu News*, 2006 <<http://news.sohu.com/20060406/n242671146.shtml>> [accessed 24 October 2022].

cello.<sup>34</sup> A traditional orchestra is used to perform a concerto for the piano. As a result of this piece of Chinese piano music, Liu met Ye Xianzhen, the daughter of one of the ten Marshals, Ye Jianying. The two were married in 1962 in the presence of many CCP government leaders.<sup>35</sup> However, at the end of 1967, the pianist, who composed and performed for the proletariat, was imprisoned for five years and nine months in Qincheng, Beijing, because of his ostensibly safe but virtually dangerous family background with a government leader. The reason for this was that Jiang Qing and Ye Jianying were seriously at loggerheads and Liu Shikun became a political victim of the demand to imprison and expose Ye Jianying.<sup>36</sup> Liu himself recalled:

I was imprisoned for nearly six years during the Cultural Revolution, and my arm bones were broken in half by Red Guards... I was tortured in all kinds of ways and subjected to all kinds of penalties... I was starved and frozen every day. In winter, I was only given a single coat to wear... There was no heating in winter in Beijing, and a drop of water would freeze in a couple of minutes or two or three minutes when it fell to the ground. [I] wore a single coat for the winter. This was the way it was, and I was half dead.<sup>37</sup>

In 1973, Ye Jianying was gradually restored to his key position in the party and Liu Shikun's grievances were presented to Chairman Mao. He was finally released. At the same time Chairman Mao gave Liu new political instructions: let him write some national piano works and let him continue to play the piano. Liu Shikun was then sent to the Central Philharmonic to restart his piano career.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Sohu News, 'Why Liu Shikun Divorced Ye Jianying's Daughter'. And another interview with Liu, see: Huafa Group, "'Wo zhishi zai tanzou shi biao xian chule wo ziji de fengge" benbao jizhe zhuanfang chuanqi gangqinjia Liu Shikun' ['I just Show my Style When I Perform' Our Reporter Interviewed the Legendary Pianist, Liu Shikun] ("我只是在弹奏时表现出了自己的风格" 本报记者专访传奇钢琴家刘诗昆), *Huafa Group*, 2015 <<https://www.huafagroup.com/article/5065>> [accessed 24 October 2022].

<sup>35</sup> Sohu News, 'Why Liu Shikun Divorced Ye Jianying's Daughter'.

<sup>36</sup> This is according to Liu's own words. See: Ifeng, 'Yeshuai nvxu Liu Shikun: yinyue jiaozi de rensheng beiqing' [The Marshal Ye's Son-in-Law Liu Shikun: the Sadness of the Life of a Proud Musician] (叶帅女婿刘诗昆: 音乐骄子的人生悲情), *Ifeng*, 2008 <[http://phtv.ifeng.com/program/dajuyuan/200809/0912\\_2558\\_782023\\_1.shtml](http://phtv.ifeng.com/program/dajuyuan/200809/0912_2558_782023_1.shtml)> [accessed 24 October 2022].

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Sohu News, 'Why Liu Shikun Divorced Ye Jianying's Daughter'.

It was not until 1968 that the Red Guards' powerful proletarian revolutionary movement finally subsided, following the implementation of another political instruction from Chairman Mao (asking intellectual youths to the countryside). Those musical and literary artists who had been attacked by Red Guards and vilified as social reactionaries were rehabilitated. Tan Shuzhen was acquitted and released in 1972 and resumed his duties at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 1976.<sup>39</sup> In April 1979, the Shanghai Association of Literary and Art Circles and the Shanghai Branch of the Chinese Writers' Association held a memorial meeting for Fu Lei and his wife, announcing his rehabilitation.<sup>40</sup> In 1972, the People's Music published an article announcing the ceremony for the interment of the young pianist Comrade Gu Shengying in Shanghai.<sup>41</sup> Gu had been forced by Red Guards to kneel in front of Mao's portrait and admit her 'crimes'. However, Huang Yijun, the Vice-President of the Shanghai Musicians' Association and the conductor of the Shanghai Philharmonic, acknowledged Gu's status as a proletarian pianist in 1972: 'Comrade Gu loved the Party and Chairman Mao, studying hard in Marxism-Leninism and Mao's thoughts... [She] served the workers, peasants and soldiers with enthusiasm.'<sup>42</sup> In 1973, Liu Shikun received political instructions and assignments from Mao to compose Chinese piano works, to continuously perform on the stage.<sup>43</sup>

This particular group of professionals in the field of art, who worked in relation to Western culture and art, were defined by Red Guards in the late 1960s as 'sinners' who were against the main task of class struggle in society. They advocated *Mao's Quotations*, ignorant of music theory, compositional techniques and instrumental performance, but arbitrarily criticising the profession and life of work of these artists and considering any damage of personal abuse or property of others as 'righteous'. Contradictorily, in the 1970s, these cultural workers were politically accepted as

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<sup>39</sup> Nursultan Tulyakbay, *Tan Shuzhen The Gentleman from Shanghai 1999*.

<sup>40</sup> Pengyuan Xu, 'As a Sufferer, Fu Lei's Death Magnified his Life'.

<sup>41</sup> People's Music, 'The Young Pianist, Gu Shengying's Bone Ashes Interred at a Ceremony in Shanghai', p. 34.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Sohu News, 'Why Liu Shikun Divorced Ye Jianying's Daughter'.

proletarian artists. The fact that Red Guards' behaviours, a bottom-up political movement, made it to the stage of history and managed to last for a long time is a reflection of Mao's political core of starting with the masses and making a foundation with the people. The political proposition of populism was also central to Mao's 1942 Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art: composers were asked to integrate raw material from the lives of the people as the broadest field of sources, applying them as musical elements to produce musical compositions that the masses could understand. Indeed whether or not pursuing a career related to Western culture and art during the Cultural Revolution was against the interests of the proletariat and destabilised the communist country, conformity to social circumstances and service to politics became imperative to the survival of Western art in China. The Chinese pianist Yin Chengzong understood this ideology. Then starting in 1968, because of Yin's piano pieces, the piano, an instrument with Western origin, was accepted by the government as a 'beneficial weapon and tool'.

### Revolutionism on the piano (The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* and *The Yellow River Piano Concerto*)

Born in 1941 in the city of Xiamen on the small island of Gulangyu, a foreign concession in the 1940s with 13 foreign consulates, Yin was raised in an area where China and the Western world were in active collision. As a child, he was gradually influenced by Western music.<sup>44</sup> Then, at the age of three, Yin was introduced to piano playing and held his first concert when he was nine. In this 'Nine-year-old Yin Chengzong Piano Recital', Yin played several works by Schubert and Chopin and, surprisingly, some of his own piano transcriptions of revolutionary songs, including *The Sky above the Liberated Areas* (《解放区的天》). Three years later, Yin left his home island to study professionally in music in the middle school attached to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. As the PRC maintained close political ties with the Soviet Union in the 1950s, the Soviet Union also provided the Shanghai Conservatory with professional music teachers. Yin studied with D. M. Serov, A. G.

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<sup>44</sup> This biography and the information below comes from an interview of Yin's own words. See: Sanlian Life Weekly, 'Yin Chengzong: wo jingli de gangqin "geming" niandai' [My Experience in the Revolutionary Era for the Piano] (殷承宗: 我经历的钢琴“革命”年代), *Sohu*, 2007 <[https://www.sohu.com/a/253643490\\_276648](https://www.sohu.com/a/253643490_276648)> [accessed 31 October 2022].



Tatulyan and T. P. Kravtchenko.<sup>45</sup> In 1959 he made his debut at an international competition and won the first prize at the World Youth Gala Piano Competition in Vienna.<sup>46</sup> Thanks to Yin's outstanding performance, he was selected by the Soviet experts to join the preparatory department for his study in the Soviet Union later.<sup>47</sup> In 1960, Yin was assigned to the Leningrad Conservatory, and the original studying-abroad programme was designed to end in 1965. However, because of the changes in political relations between the Soviet Union and China, Yin had to return back to China in 1963 and transferred to the Central Conservatory of Music for studying continually (Yin's direct words are presented in the Appendix, Section 1.3.1).<sup>48</sup>

On 31 December 1963, the government arranged a small concert, the programme of which was personally selected by Jiang Qing at the Central Conservatory of Music. It included vocal and instrumental performances, with Yin Chengzong and Liu Shikun playing the piano.<sup>49</sup> Yin recalled his memory of this concert:

My performance on that day was scheduled for the last programme, one Chinese and one foreign piece each. The first one, [I] performed my own [Chinese] piano transcription, *Yangge Dance* [《秧歌舞》], and another one was Chopin's Scherzo No. 2 [in B-flat minor, Op. 31]. After the performance, Chairman Mao invited me to a seat beside him. His Hunan local accent was quite heavy and I barely understood what he was saying. It was only when the journalist next to me translated his words that I realised he was encouraging me to research [in music] based on national elements, to write more compositions and to express and present Chinese tradition on the piano.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> The Editorial Department of Dictionary of Chinese Music, Music Institute of China Academy of Art, *Dictionary of Chinese Music*, revised and enlarged edn (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 2016), p. 928.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Sanlian Life Weekly, 'My Experience in the Revolutionary Era for the Piano'.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

Figure 1.2. Yin Chengzong was received by Chairman Mao in the 1963 concert<sup>51</sup>



In the early 1960s, the piano, as a Western imported instrument, had always been unwelcome in Chinese society. The overall social trend defined the piano as bourgeois music that could not serve the revolution of the working class or even the proletariat.<sup>52</sup> From a historical perspective, although Yin Chengzong was given an

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<sup>51</sup> Xinghai Concert Hall, ‘Yin Chengzong: zhiyao hai keyi tan gangqin’ [Yin Chengzong: As Long as I can Still Play the Piano] (殷承宗: 只要还可以弹钢琴), *Xinghai Concert Hall*, [n.d.] <<https://www.concerthall.com.cn/newpage.php?id=6958>> [accessed 31 October 2022].

<sup>52</sup> Kraus provides a general discussion on ‘the piano was likened to a coffin, in which notes rattled about like of the bourgeoisie’ in the 1960s in China. See: Richard Curt Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China Middle-Class Ambitions and the Struggle over Western Music*, pp. vii-xi.

official opportunity to play the piano at a political event under such tense social conditions, being received by Chairman Mao neither brought a bright future life for Yin's piano career (in 1964, Yin was sent to Tong County, a rural area in Beijing to work and learn the orthodox ideologies of politics because of the Four Clean-up Campaign) nor reversed the difficult situation of this Western instrument in Chinese society.<sup>53</sup> From a macroscopic point of view, this was a successful attempt by the 22-year-old pianist to bring the piano to the communist government. At the same time, being received by the highest Chinese leader of the time gave Yin a more solid 'political background'. This paved the way for his later revolutionary activities on the piano, and for the piano's official acceptance by the government in 1968 as a powerful tool of the proletarian revolution.

In 1965 Yin graduated from the Central Conservatory of Music and was assigned to work in the Central Philharmonic. A year later, the Cultural Revolution officially started. As a representative of Western music, the piano received massive criticism and damage from the proletarian revolutionaries, the Red Guards. As a professional pianist, Yin could not understand why the piano as an instrument was not needed in China and even was crushed and confiscated or locked up in many places. He then had the idea to prove that the piano could be needed by Chinese society and serve the times (Yin's words of sharing his stories back to that history are presented in the Appendix, Section 1.3.2).

Indeed, Yin used his strengths to prove later that the piano can be needed by the masses and serve the socialist country. On 23 May 1967, the Central Government held a conference at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Mao's Talks at the Yan'an Forum. Yin recalled, 'On the 25th anniversary, everyone was participating in organising propaganda teams for Mao's ideology on the street... I was thinking of taking the piano to Tiananmen Square... I thought that as long as audiences in Beijing were still supportive of me, I would know something in my heart.'<sup>54</sup> So he and three other members of the Central

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<sup>53</sup> The Four Clean-up Campaign refers to clean up four areas of politics, economics, ideologies and organisations.

<sup>54</sup> Ifeng, 'Yin Chengzong: wo gao yanbanxi bingfei quyue Jiang Qing' [Yin Chengzong: I Did the Work for the Model Operas not to Please Jiang Qing] (殷承宗：我搞样板戏并非为取悦

Philharmonic loaded an upright piano onto a truck first, then carried it on their shoulders to Tiananmen Square. They even dressed up as Red Guards for this bold move. Yin played for three days in Tiananmen Square, initially playing only Chairman Mao's quotation songs and his own arranged compositions based on folk songs. The audiences grew increasingly large.<sup>55</sup> One of the audience members suggested that Yin could perform a Peking Opera on the piano, so Yin took the courage to try playing a piece of music from the Central Philharmonic's *Shajiang* Symphony on the piano. This brave move was enthusiastically cheered by the audiences at the square (the actual situation described by Yin when he performed the piano in Tiananmen Square was presented in the Appendix, Section 1.3.3).<sup>56</sup>

Figure 1.3. Yin played the piano in Tiananmen Square on 23 May 1967<sup>57</sup>



Certainly this time Yin's experiment was successful. He understood the first entry requirement for finding a pathway for the piano was to start with the people, to make the content of the piano music accessible, to the greatest extent, to the

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江青), *Ifeng*, 2013

<[http://phtv.ifeng.com/program/mrmdm/detail\\_2013\\_10/07/30098549\\_0.shtml](http://phtv.ifeng.com/program/mrmdm/detail_2013_10/07/30098549_0.shtml)> [accessed 2 November 2022].

<sup>55</sup> Xinghai Concert Hall, 'As Long as I can Still Play the Piano'.

<sup>56</sup> Sanlian Life Weekly, 'My Experience in the Revolutionary Era for the Piano'.

<sup>57</sup> Chengzong Yin, 'Performing Chinese Folk Song at Tiananmen Square' (Facebook post, Yin Chengzong 殷承宗, 21 February 2013).

grassroots. Thus, he would gain a solid mass base. Secondly, both he and the piano needed a piece of music that was closely linked to Model Peking Operas, and then would be fully accepted by the government. For arranging opera music on the piano, Yin especially went to the China Peking Opera Troupe for learning from May 1967.<sup>58</sup> Besides, instructed to compose more, Yin began work with the Central Philharmonic in preparation for the 1967 National Day performance. The compositions Yin composed included a Symphonic poem for the piano based on the theme of Red Guards (*Moving Forward! Chairman Mao's Red Guards* (《前进! 毛主席的红卫兵》)).<sup>59</sup> When Liu Changyu, a Peking Opera actress playing in the model opera, *The Red Lantern*, joined in the performance programme, Yin began to accompany Liu's singing on the piano. On 7 October 1967, at the National Culture Palace, Yin performed the first three sections of *The Red Lantern* with Liu. Yin said: 'Nothing in the programme was left, except this one performance, *The Red Lantern* with piano accompaniment, became sensational... people thought the form was very innovative... both the Peking opera and the piano were very authentic'.<sup>60</sup> Such an opera work was then turned into a form of piano accompaniment for singing. A recording was made of it and reported to Jiang Qing. On 20 November, Jiang gave her approval of the work, considering it a good start. She also asked Yin to continue to compose the rest of the sections, and to take a revolutionary path for the art form of the piano-accompanied Model Opera.<sup>61</sup> Jiang's direct and positive response offered Yin and his piano music a ticket to the revolutionary proletarian position. By

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<sup>58</sup> This information comes from Yin's article, published on People's Daily on 6 July 1968. See: Chengzong Yin, 'Yi Jiang Qing tongzhi wei guanghui bangyang, zuo yongyuan zhongyu maozhuxi de geming wenyi zhaoshi' [Taking Comrade Jiang Qing as a Shining Example and be a Revolutionary Literary Warrior who will always be Loyal to Chairman Mao] (以江青同志为光辉榜样, 做永远忠于毛主席的革命文艺战士), *People's Daily*, 6 July 1968, 2nd section.

<sup>59</sup> Sanlian Life Weekly, 'My Experience in the Revolutionary Era for the Piano'.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> The original words from Jiang Qing are documented in: Leningrad Printing Plant No. 3 Workers' Theoretical Group, *Comrade Jiang Qing's Discussion on Literature and Arts*, pp. 159-60. Also, Yin mentioned this information in his article. See: Chengzong Yin, 'Taking Comrade Jiang Qing as a Shining Example and be a Revolutionary Literary Warrior who will always be Loyal to Chairman Mao'.

May 1968, Yin had composed a total of eight arias for his piano-accompanied version of *The Red Lantern*, working with the two principal singers of the opera, Liu Changyu and Qian Haoliang, and the finished recording was again submitted to Jiang Qing for review.<sup>62</sup>

The first Model Opera, *The Red Lantern*, was a revolutionary Peking Opera version that Jiang began working on after watching the Shanghai opera version of *The Red Lantern* in February 1963.<sup>63</sup> It tells the story of Li Yuhe, a Communist Party member whose public identity is that of a railway worker during the time of the anti-Japanese war. After he was discovered by Japanese gendarmes when he used a red lantern to pass secret codes and information for the guerrillas, Yuhe, his mother Grandma Li, and his adopted daughter Li Tiemei were arrested. Grandma Li retold the origins of the three generations in her family. Tiemei's biological parents had died in the revolution.<sup>64</sup> After Yuhe and Grandma Li were later tortured to death, the Japanese gendarmes released Tiemei and attempted to use surveillance to obtain information she conveyed to the guerrillas. Eventually, Tiemei escaped from the enemy with the help of the crowd and inherited the red lantern to deliver the secret codes to the guerrillas.<sup>65</sup> The main theme of this revolutionary opera is to show a family of three generations loyal to the revolution despite their unrelated blood ties, thus fulfilling the theme of loyalty to the revolution as conveyed in the Cultural Revolution.

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<sup>62</sup> Chengzong Yin, 'Taking Comrade Jiang Qing as a Shining Example and be a Revolutionary Literary Warrior who will always be Loyal to Chairman Mao'.

<sup>63</sup> Yonggang Shi, Qiongiong Liu and Yifei Xiao, 'Diyi bu yanbanxi Hongdengji beihou de gushi' [The Background Story of the First Model Opera, *The Red Lantern*] (第一部样板戏《红灯记》背后的故事), *Reading Digest*, 4 (2013), 60-63 (p. 60).

<sup>64</sup> Tiemei's biological father and Yuhe were both the students of Grandma Li's husband. Her husband and Tiemei's biological father died in the revolution. After that, Grandma Li, Yuhe and Tiemei formed the three generations of a revolution family by themselves.

<sup>65</sup> The complete recording of this Model Opera can be found online. See: Bang, 1970 *Hongdengji (xiandai jingju bayi)* [*The Red Lantern Recorded in 1970 (Modern Peking Opera, One of the Eight)*] (1970.红灯记(现代京剧.八一)), online video recording, YouTube, 17 Aug 2020, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1uHhIPjDdls&t=1s>> [accessed 15 January 2023].

On the late night of 30 June 1968, Jiang Qing, Chen Boda and Kang Sheng summoned revolutionary artists from the programme of this piano-accompanied version of *The Red Lantern* to a meeting in the Great Hall of the People. Yin was among them, along with the two Peking Opera singers, Liu and Qian. At the meeting, Jiang officially informed the decision and offered some unexpected instructions about the programme:

Tomorrow will be 1 July, the 47th birthday of the Party. We have decided to dedicate The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* [(钢琴伴唱《红灯记》)] as the special cultural programme for celebrating the anniversary. And I would like to start broadcasting it nationwide from tomorrow. [Meanwhile], we have just been considering this for a while, and we think it's better to name it as The Piano Accompaniment [to *The Red Lantern*]. Thus, the piano is highlighted and we can break the superstition. The piano is placed at the start [of the programme's name], and then the piano will be liberated. The piano is always a big issue in Western instruments [a problem of being a Western instrument in China] This is a way of pushing the boundaries: so to speak, the music work breaks the first hurdle and the performance becomes the re-creation... This time when I listened to it, I think it is entirely possible to use the piano to achieve its full potential in national operas (referring to Peking Operas). The piano has such a wide range of sounds and is quite expressive. I listened to the recording and felt that it was really good, that it sounded very good, that the whole range is quite wide and majestic... I am very satisfied with the results so far. The development of this instrument [in China] has a bright future. Whether it is possible to say that this programme produces great significance for the revolution of Western instruments and for the embodiment of the Chairman's thought of using foreign things to serve China, this has opened up a new path for Western instruments, for symphonic music, and for projects of [Western instrumental] accompaniment to national operas. This is a new genre of proletarian revolutionary art.<sup>66</sup>

Jiang Qing's personal reception of this piano version of the opera shifted the social status of the piano which was completely criticised in China at the time: the use of the Western instrument no longer represented the class enemy of the proletariat, the bourgeoisie; instead, Jiang commented positively that the piano had great scope for development in Chinese society and culture. Perhaps Jiang never loathed the piano. She even had taken piano lessons in the music department at the Experimental Arts Academy (a Westernised institution) in 1929-30.<sup>67</sup> For the

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<sup>66</sup> Leningrad Printing Plant No. 3 Workers' Theoretical Group, *Comrade Jiang Qing's Discussion on Literature and Arts*, pp. 164-65.

<sup>67</sup> Ross Terrill, *The White-Boned Demon: A Biography of Madame Mao Zedong* (London: Heinemann, 1984), p. 34.

communist government and its adherents, Red Guards, the piano became a strong object of attack during the early days of the Cultural Revolution solely because of the unacceptability of Western repertoires performed on it. When this Western instrument began to place itself within the framework of the government's orthodox ideology, playing revolutionary works preferred by the government, Jiang began to praise its wide range and rich expressiveness. In reality, this instrument's functional capability never changed. More significantly, Jiang directly demanded that the mode of performance, piano accompaniment, is placed before the name of the model opera, *The Red Lantern*, when the work was named officially. Not only that, but Jiang also suggested in this meeting that Yin's name could be situated before the names of the two Peking Opera performers, Liu and Qian.<sup>68</sup> *The Red Lantern* was the first revolutionary Peking Opera directed by Jiang. Meanwhile, Model Operas were the fruit of Jiang's proud cultural productions, the main ground of her revolution, the domain in which Jiang demonstrated her political authority. The piano was able to precede the model opera at this moment, representing the government's acceptance and recognition of its political value in the service of the proletarian and socialist revolution. Some studies translate the name of this work as *The Red Lantern with Piano Accompaniment*.<sup>69</sup> To reflect the political status the piano earned in this meeting, this research interprets it as *The Piano Accompaniment to The Red Lantern*. If the first positive response from Jiang's censorship to *The Piano Accompaniment to The Red Lantern* in 1967 was its ticket for the piano to the great proletarian Cultural Revolution, after this meeting it officially found its political place in the socialist revolution and became a powerful 'tool and weapon' of the proletarian revolution.

Early on 18 November 1964, in her 'Talks on Working in Music', Jiang had identified the practicality of Western instruments in the proletarian revolution. She stated that because the capitalist industrial revolution had developed earlier in

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<sup>68</sup> Leningrad Printing Plant No. 3 Workers' Theoretical Group, *Comrade Jiang Qing's Discussion on Literature and Arts*, p. 166.

<sup>69</sup> See: Richard Curt Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China Middle-Class Ambitions and the Struggle over Western Music*, pp. 144-47; Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red: How Classical Music Became Chinese*, pp. 261-62.



history, Western-made instruments would be more advanced than national instruments made by the traditional handicraft industry in China: the *erhu*, for example, a traditional string instrument, is more limited in its expressive function than the violin.<sup>70</sup> Jiang also specified that the problem regarding the piano was not its Western-born background, but the fact that the compositions it played were incomprehensible to the proletariat's constituent base, the workers' community, and that the piano suffered from a lack of repertoires that the masses could appreciate.<sup>71</sup> The problem of the ideological perception of Western instruments was again corrected in Jiang's 'Instructions for Working in Music' on 14 January 1965: instruments are merely tools to serve politics; both Western and national instruments could be used as vehicles.<sup>72</sup>

Thus, from a political perspective, Yin's composition of *The Piano Accompaniment to The Red Lantern* became a model of successful cultural production during the Cultural Revolution, not precisely because of the superb composing skills of Yin as the composer and his virtuoso piano playing, but rather because of the role of the piano as a medium and the role this work played in sustaining the development of political thoughts and the stability of the regime. On the one hand, as Richard Curt Kraus put it, 'Yin's experiments in writing Chinese music for the piano coincided with the musical interests of the woman who would become his most important patron, Jiang Qing'.<sup>73</sup> At the same time, Yin's spontaneous and purposeful choice of a 'politically correct' compositional path demonstrates the ideologies of the ruling government that the work embodies: the insistence on populism in cultural activities; the domestication of Western instruments (making foreign things serve China) and the revolutionization of the work. All contributed to its success.

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<sup>70</sup> Leningrad Printing Plant No. 3 Workers' Theoretical Group, *Comrade Jiang Qing's Discussion on Literature and Arts*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>73</sup> Richard Curt Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China Middle-Class Ambitions and the Struggle over Western Music*, p. 133.

On 1 July 1968, the premiere performance of the completed work of The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* was presented at an evening concert held at the Great Hall of the People, organised by the Central Cultural Revolutionary Group to celebrate the 47th anniversary of the founding of the CCP.<sup>74</sup> Except this, the concert also featured another Model 'Opera' (work), the *Shajiabang* Symphony. Many top leaders of the Central Committee, led by Chairman Mao, attended the concert, including Vice-President Lin Biao, Premier Zhou Enlai, Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, Li Fuchun, Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan, as well as Zhu De, Chen Yi and Ye Jianying, members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CCP. After the performance, Mao and senior government figures approached the stage to meet all the revolutionary 'warriors' in the performance. As in the 1963 performance, the young 'revolutionary' pianist once again stood beside Chairman Mao and celebrated the occasion happily with the other performers, holding a book of *Quotations from Chairman Mao* [see Fig. 1.6].

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<sup>74</sup> The information of the performance comes from the original report of Xinhua News on 1 July 1968, published on People's Daily on 2 July. See: Xinhua News, 'Weida lingxiu Mao zhuxi he tade qinmi zhanyou Lin fu zhuxi chuxi qingzhu zhongguo gongchandang chengli sishiqi zhounian wanhui guankan he lingting zai wenhua da geming zhong xin chuanguo de gangqin banchang hongdengji yiji jiaoxiang yinyue Shangjiabang' [Great Leader Chairman Mao and his Close Comrade Vice- President Lin Attended the Evening Concert for Celebrating the 47th Anniversary of the Founding of the CCP Watching and Listening to the Newly Composed The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* and the *Shajiabang* Symphony during the Cultural Revolution] (伟大领袖毛主席和他的亲密战友林副主席出席庆祝中国共产党成立四十七周年晚会 观看和聆听在文化大革命中新创作的钢琴伴唱《红灯记》以及交响音乐《沙家浜》), *People's Daily*, 2 July 1968, 1st section.

Figure 1.4. Yin accompanied on the piano for Qian Haoliang who played the character Li Yuhe in the opera, *The Red Lantern*<sup>75</sup>



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<sup>75</sup> The picture was taken and published by People's Daily. See: People's Daily, 'Yangguang yulu yu xinhua – gongnongbing, geming wenyi zhanshi relie zanyang gangqin banchang hongdengji' [Sunshine and Rain Nourish New Flowers - Enthusiastic Praise from Workers, Peasants and Revolutionary Literary Soldiers on The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern*] (阳光雨露育新花 – 工农兵、革命文艺战士热烈赞扬钢琴伴唱《红灯记》), *People's Daily*, 4 July 1968, 3rd section.

Figure 1.5. Yin accompanied on the piano for Liu Changyu who played Li Tiemei in the opera, *The Red Lantern*<sup>76</sup>



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<sup>76</sup> People's Daily, 'Sunshine and Rain Nourish New Flowers - Enthusiastic Praise from Workers, Peasants and Revolutionary Literary Soldiers on The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern*'.

Figure 1.6. The three players with other performers received by Chairman Mao's and the central government's endorsement on the stage (Yin was standing to the left side of Mao, and his right side was Qian. Liu was standing next to Jiang Qing)<sup>77</sup>



After that, The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* spread throughout China. According to Yin's own recollections, at the height of his fame, his images were on matchboxes, cigarette cases, glasses and towels, and there were stamps and postcards issued specifically for this work, also including posters on buses.<sup>78</sup> In the following week, the success of the work was extensively reported in the People's Daily (the quotations from the People's Daily have been generalised and summarised here. More detailed paragraphs have been placed in the Appendix, Section 1.4):

The report from Xinhua News announced that The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern*, cooperatively created by the Central Philharmonic and China Peking Opera Troupe, was guided by Mao's populism that cultural works needed to serve

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<sup>77</sup> The picture was taken by Xinhua News, published on People's Daily. See: Xinhua News, 'Great Leader Chairman Mao and his Close Comrade Vice- President Lin Attended the Evening Concert for Celebrating the 47th Anniversary of the Founding of the CCP Watching and Listening to the Newly Composed The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* and the *Shajiang* Symphony during the Cultural Revolution', 1st section.

<sup>78</sup> Sanlian Life Weekly, 'My Experience in the Revolutionary Era for the Piano'.

the people and by Mao's 1964 political instruction (making the past serve the present and making foreign things serve China). Meanwhile, the report praised The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* illustrating the performing style of Peking Opera singing and the expressive features of the piano as a Western instrument. This attempt to absorb cultures from the East and the West was a new path for the Cultural Revolution.<sup>79</sup>

A review by Wang Wenyue, a worker from a factory, claimed after listening to this piano version of the Model Opera, that finally people believed that the piano started to perform music for them, rather than showing foreign things. 'Under the light of Chairman Mao's revolutionary literary line, under the leadership of Comrade Jiang Qing, a new genre of proletarian literature and art has been created.'<sup>80</sup>

Words by Yang Bofang from People's Commune confirmed that The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* helped Chinese people know, understand and appreciate piano music which was alien to them. 'A foreign instrument, but today can serve the workers, peasants and soldiers and contribute to socialist construction'. Again, this is another success of Mao's ideology guiding the direction of Chinese society.<sup>81</sup>

Similarly, comments from Li Jiefu, a contemporary Chinese composer and social revolutionist, present the belief that 'The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* achieved the unity of revolutionary political content and perfect artistic form'. This

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<sup>79</sup> Xinhua News, 'Zai zhanwu busheng de Mao Zedong sixiang de guanghui zhaoyao xia wuchan jieji geming wenyi de xin pinzhong gangqin banchang hongdengji dansheng zhongyang wenhua geming xiaozu tongzhi jiejian yanchu renyuan' [Under the Light of the Invincible Mao Zedong's Thoughts a New Genre of Proletarian Revolutionary Literature and Art with The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* Created, Comrades of the Central Cultural Revolutionary Group Meeting the Performers] (在战无不胜的毛泽东思想的光辉照耀下 无产阶级革命文艺的新品种钢琴伴唱《红灯记》诞生 中央文化革命小组同志接见演出人员), *People's Daily*, 2 July 1968, 2nd section.

<sup>80</sup> Wenyue Wang, 'Sunshine and Rain Nourish New Flowers - Enthusiastic Praise from Workers, Peasants and Revolutionary Literary Soldiers on The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern*', 3rd section.

<sup>81</sup> Bofang Yang, *ibid.*

was a successful witness of Mao's 1964 policy, and a new direction for the revolution.<sup>82</sup>

The People's Daily reports cover positive feedback on The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* from government officials, artists, workers and peasants who constitute the main class of society. All of them highly emphasise the political role this work constructs and the guidance of Mao's thoughts in the composition: The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* opens the ground for Western instruments to participate in the proletarian revolution; it is a cultural piece that could be appreciated by the masses and a practice of Mao's ideology of making the foreign things serve China. However, the artistic value and contributions of Yin Chengzong and the two Peking Opera performers to the creation of the work have been almost disregarded. This has led to the contemporary reception that distorts the original motivation for the creation of the work, suggesting that it was the government's demand that preceded the artists' creative intention. Although Yin's own article, published in the People's Daily on 6 July 1968, describes the process of the work from its conception when Yin was a composer to its eventual arrival on stage when he became the piano accompanist, Yin likewise devotes considerable space to highlight that through the work the piano is finally liberated by the proletariat and serves socialism. In history, within the framework of a proletarian society where class struggle was the main task, the piano was, in any case, finally accepted by society in its entirety and granted a space to survive and develop on the road to revolution.

If The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* became an open sesame for piano music in the context of socialist China in the 1960s, it was immediately followed by another project of Chinese piano music also led by Yin Chengzong, *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* which made piano music a pioneering representative of mainstream works in this socialist Cultural Revolution. Unlike The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* which was originally composed by Yin Chengzong spontaneously and completed independently, *The Yellow River Piano*

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<sup>82</sup> Huiyong Yu, 'Huanhu Mao zhuxi geming wenyi luxian de xin shengli' [Celebrating the New Victory of Revolutionary Literary Line Built by Chairman Mao] (欢呼毛主席革命文艺路线的新胜利), *People's Daily*, 6 July 1968, 2nd section.

Concerto was produced by a formal group of composers, including Yin Chengzong, Chu Wanghua, Sheng Lihong and Liu Zhuang, assisted by Xu Peixing and Shi Shucheng. In the meantime, this work is shrouded in political frame from its creation, revision and completion to its final journey to the stage.

According to the recollections of the composer Chu Wanghua, this concerto sprang from a big-character poster displayed at the Central Conservatory of Music (the detailed words from Chu when he saw this poster and began to work with Yin are presented in the Appendix, Section 1.5.1): When Chen Lian received the response from Chairman Mao in September 1964, she was received by Jiang Qing in October. During the meeting, Jiang told Chen that she thought *The Yellow River Cantata* could be written as a piano concerto. So in October 1968, Chen put Jiang's words in a big-character poster and showed them on the wall of the Central Conservatory of Music. After seeing this poster, Chu Wanghua contacted Yin Chengzong and they began to work on arranging the piano concerto. Yin then formally reported the plan to Jiang who agreed and stated: '*The Yellow River Cantata* was very good and powerful, and the music could be preserved without the original lyrics'.<sup>83</sup>

In February 1969, the composition team was officially established. The team was headed by Yin Chengzong who supervised all the work. After all the members discussed their respective proposals of composition, the final decision would be made by Yin. The solo piano part of the concerto was discussed between Yin and Chu Wanghua. After repeated experiments on the piano, Chu would finally write the music down on paper.<sup>84</sup> The assisting member Shi Shucheng recalls, 'Chu was

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<sup>83</sup> According to the composer Chu's explanations, the reason why Jiang asked to abandon the original lyrics but only retain the music by Xian Xinghai is because of the political status of the lyricist, Guang Weiran who was considered as a revisionist. Chu's words come from his online masterclass, 'The Little-known Story of the Birth of *The Yellow River Piano Concerto*', on 23 May 2021.

<sup>84</sup> See Shucheng Shi, 'Gangqin xiezouqu huanghe de chuangzuo ji xiugai' [Composition and Revision of *The Yellow River Piano Concerto*] (钢琴协奏曲《黄河》的创作及修改), *Music Lover*, 5 (1998), 76-78 (p. 77); Wanghua Chu, 'Huanghe gangqin xiezouqu shi zenyang dansheng de?' [How was *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* Created?] (《黄河》钢琴协奏曲是怎样诞生的?), *People's Music*, 5 (1995), 4-8 (p. 6).



always on the front line of composition from start to finish. If the entire draft and manuscripts can still be found, over 90% of them are Chu's notes.<sup>85</sup> Sheng Lihong, a composer from the Central Conservatory of Music, was responsible for the orchestration, weighting the balance and relationship between the piano and orchestra. Liu Zhuang was involved in the structure of the whole piece and assisted with the group's 'political studies'.<sup>86</sup>

The reason why *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* could occur in the course of the Cultural Revolution was not an accidental choice of Chinese politics and Chinese musicians, but a fit in several dimensions that became the cornerstones of this piano work's possibilities in history. The original version of this piano concerto was *The Yellow River Cantata* composed by the Chinese musician Xian Xinghai in 1939 during the Second World War, to inspire Chinese people to fight against the Japanese invaders. In his composition notes, Xian explains his intentions:

The Yellow River appeared on the Asian plains with its heroic vigour, symbolising the great spirit of the Chinese nation. From the top of the mountains, the song of the times emerged. It represents that the heroic sons and daughters of the motherland sing the praises of the Yellow River and want to follow its spirit, to be as great and strong as it is... 'The Roaring Yellow River' is a battle call to the oppressed people of China and the oppressed people of the whole world.<sup>87</sup> We speak on behalf of our 40 million compatriots for the ultimate victory of our country.<sup>88</sup>

After completing his studies at the Paris Conservatory of Music in 1935, Xian returned to China and took an active participation in the anti-Japanese movement in Shanghai. During that time, Xian composed numerous revolutionary songs with fighting and infectious power. At the end of 1938, Xian arrived in Yan'an, the revolutionary base of the Chinese Communist Party, and continued to create works, always using his music to devote himself to political activities and the national

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<sup>85</sup> Shucheng Shi, 'Composition and Revision of *The Yellow River Piano Concerto*', p. 77.

<sup>86</sup> Wanghua Chu, 'How was *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* Created?', p. 6.

<sup>87</sup> *The Yellow River Cantata* has a total of eight movements with its subtitles. 'The Roaring Yellow River' is the last movement.

<sup>88</sup> Xian's notes were collocated and selected by the editor of *People's Music*, published in 1955. See: Xinghai Xian, 'Xian Xinghai chunagzuo zhaji [Xian Xinghai's Composition Notes] (洗星海创作札记), *People's Music*, 8 (1955), 12-16 (p. 15).

movement for salvation. In June 1939, he joined the CCP. Because of his remarkable lifetime achievements for the party and the country, when he died in October 1945, Chairman Mao honoured him with an inscription as ‘the people’s musician’.<sup>89</sup> Thus, the background and intention of this composition of *The Yellow River Cantata*, as well as the extremely high status of the composer himself in Chinese politics and the whole society, made the cantata as the perfect choice for politicians and musicians to arrange it into a piano concerto later.

Politically, in addition to Jiang Qing's personal meeting with Chen Lian in which she mentioned her affirmation of the work, *The Yellow River Cantata* and the value of the political use of piano music, on 18 November 1964, in her public ‘Talks on Working in Music’, Jiang again mentioned the political demand that *The Yellow River Cantata* could be adapted to a piano work. She said: ‘The piano has expressive power, but there are no repertoires popular with the masses... Why not use Xinghai's *Yellow River Cantata*... I suggest you to arrange this’.<sup>90</sup> In terms of staffing the composition group, Yin Chengzong specifically employed Sheng Lihong on the team not only because of his professionalism in orchestration, but also particularly due to his membership in the Chinese Communist Party. ‘We need a member of the party so that things can be done easier’, he said.<sup>91</sup> Meanwhile, the political connections and social status that Yin himself earned after composing *The Piano Accompaniment to The Red Lantern* also lent support to the historical possibilities of this piano concerto. Chu Wanghua's interpretation confirms this. He said:

Yin had already written *The Piano Accompaniment to The Red Lantern* before this. He had already been a leading figure in Chinese piano composition and had a major influence. It was then he wrote a report to Jiang to apply this project and get approval. So he had the [politically] administrative leadership and the

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<sup>89</sup> All Xian's biography information comes from: China Youth Daily, ‘Renmin yinyuejia – Xian Xinghai’ [The People's Musician, Xian Xinghai] (人民音乐家—洗星海), *China Youth Daily*, 2009 <[http://zqb.cyol.com/content/2009-08/18/content\\_2809146.htm](http://zqb.cyol.com/content/2009-08/18/content_2809146.htm)> [accessed 8 January 2023].

<sup>90</sup> Leningrad Printing Plant No. 3 Workers' Theoretical Group, *Comrade Jiang Qing's Discussion on Literature and Arts*, p. 62.

<sup>91</sup> Wanghua Chu, ‘How was *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* Created?’, p. 6.

ability to do the business [of music composition]. I would say that if he didn't take the lead on this, there might not be *The Yellow River Piano Concerto*.<sup>92</sup>

From a musical point of view, Yin's initial personal will to arrange *The Yellow River Cantata* as a piano concerto was due to the fact that the Chinese public was introduced to piano music after The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* was released. But the piano's role as a mere accompaniment did not give it prominence. For the piano to truly take the stage, a piano concerto was certainly needed. A concerto foregrounded the solo piano performance accompanied by an orchestra. This was a real step forward in the piano revolution.<sup>93</sup>

In June 1969, the first draft of the concerto was auditioned and the core of the Central Philharmonic was invited to participate, including the conductors Li Delun and Yan Liangkun (the authoritative conductor of *The Yellow River Cantata*), the composer Du Mingxin and various principal players of the orchestra. Almost everyone was delighted to hear it, as it had been a long time not hearing a newly composed work since the Cultural Revolution started. Li Delun, however, raised a different objection: he thought that the first movement, written in sonata form, was excessively Western, and that Chinese audiences would not understand it. The 'stereotypical' pattern of composition had to be broken (Chu's recollection of the first version of the concerto is presented in the Appendix, Section 1.5.2).<sup>94</sup>

As the leader of the Revolutionary Symphony *Shajiabang* (one of Jiang's eight Model Opera programmes), Li knew exactly what kind of works were needed by Chinese politics and society and what kind of programmes Jiang preferred to see at the time. In the first few years of the 1960s, the Central Philharmonic was struggling to stay alive as the orchestra was banned from playing the Western orchestral classics on which it relied for its survival. As the conductor of the orchestra, Li, after many approaches to Jiang, realised that symphonic music had to be politically correct, accessible to the general public and join the revolution in order to save the

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<sup>92</sup> From Chu's masterclass.

<sup>93</sup> Yin's intention comes from his own interpretation, and Chu's article also confirmed this idea. See: Xinghai Concert Hall, 'As Long as I can Still Play the Piano'; Wanghua Chu, 'How was *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* Created?', p. 5.

<sup>94</sup> From Chu's masterclass.

orchestra. On 1 October 1965, the Revolutionary Symphony *Shajiabang* was premiered successfully. As a result, both the orchestra and Li became exemplary representatives of this socialist Cultural Revolution.<sup>95</sup> In 1968, Li was even recognised by Jiang as a 'Model Opera contributor'.<sup>96</sup> The successful precedent of the symphony provided the basis and efforts for Western instruments to join this Cultural Revolution subsequently. Thus, when Li suggested that *The Yellow River* Piano Concerto needed to be accessible to the masses so that people could understand and follow the populist line of politics, his idea was accepted by the composition team. Chu said, 'After we returned from the audition, we reflected on the issue properly and rectified our creative thinking... The second version [heard nowadays] is no longer arranged based on the Western convention [of a piano concerto], but is more like a suite in its structure'.<sup>97</sup>

Another revision of the concerto came from a comment by a political person to reinforce the artistic and literary requirement advocated by politics: the need for nationalisation of cultural works. Chu said:

At the end of 1969, Jiang sent Yu Huiyong, [a political official with a professional background in Chinese music], to 'guide' our composition team. According to Yu's suggestion, we adapted some of the piano parts from the accompaniment texture of broken chords commonly used in classical sonatas to imitate the traditional instrument, *guzheng* [the Chinese zither], performed by two hands. We also added several traditional Chinese instruments, such as the bamboo flute and *pipa* to the orchestra in order to strengthen the national style and character of this piano concerto.<sup>98</sup>

If these were two reasonable adjustments to the compositional arrangement due to direct political instruction, then 'the real redundancy, especially for political and utilitarian purposes', Chu Wanghua explained, 'was the direct intervention of Jiang

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<sup>95</sup> The information on the Revolutionary Symphony *Shajiabang* is summarised from: Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red: How Classical Music Became Chinese*, pp. 256-61; Yunyun Luo, *Li Delun zhuan* [The Biography of Li Delun] (李德伦传) (Beijing: Writers Publishing House, 2001), pp. 361-65.

<sup>96</sup> Yunyun Luo, *The Biography of Li Delun*, pp. 392-95.

<sup>97</sup> From Chu's masterclass.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

Qing on several occasions by the late stages of the composition'.<sup>99</sup> In December 1969, the recording was sent to Zhongnanhai (the government) for censorship. Jiang then summoned Yin Chengzong to a meeting in the Great Hall of the People to discuss the composition of the concerto. Jiang specifically mentioned that in many Model Operas, if the Central Committee of the Party and Chairman Mao were mentioned in the lyrics, the phrase, 'The East is Red' immediately followed. Jiang felt that such a mere 'labelling' approach was not good enough. Instead, *The Yellow River Concerto* could explicitly include a whole section of the music of *The East is Red*.<sup>100</sup> Yin immediately passed Jiang's comments to Chu and Sheng Lihong. The composition team then quickly adjusted the arrangement, placing the entire music of *The East is Red* at the climax near the end of the fourth movement.<sup>101</sup> Afterwards, Jiang also conveyed a comment made by a soldier who had listened to the recording: the Cultural Revolution led by Chairman Mao was part of the whole world revolution. The Chinese nation should not only pursue the great proletarian Cultural Revolution to the end, but also the world revolution. So it was suggested that the *Internationale* should be included in *The Yellow River Piano Concerto*.<sup>102</sup> Shi Shucheng interpreted: 'These words that came from the mouth of Jiang could not be regarded as unimportant... [Finally we] foisted in the last line of the *Internationale* on the trombone and played it together with the music of *The East is Red*, inserting the label of Chairman Mao's thoughts reaching towards the world'.<sup>103</sup>

In February 1970, *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* was performed for the first time before the leaders of the Central Government in the small auditorium of the

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<sup>99</sup> Wanghua Chu, 'How was *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* Created?', p. 7.

<sup>100</sup> *The East is Red* was originally a folksong in Northern Shaanxi created by Li Youyuan. Later, this folksong was revised by a cultural worker in Yan 'an, Ma Ke, and published this new version in the Liberation Daily in 1944. The main theme of this song is to praise the greatness of Chairman Mao. See: Yanjun Li, 'Shanbei mingge dongfanghong yanbian chulun' [The Evolution of the Folksong, *The East is Red*] (陕北民歌《东方红》演变刍论), *Journal of Yanan Vocational & Technical Insititute*, 26.6 (2012), 8-9.

<sup>101</sup> The information of adding the music of *The East is Red* in the concerto comes from Chu's masterclass.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Shucheng Shi, 'Composition and Revision of *The Yellow River Piano Concerto*', p. 77.

Great Hall of the People, with Yin Chengzong as the piano soloist and Li Delun conducting the Central Philharmonic orchestra. In order to indicate the content that the music intended to express, Chu Wanghua was responsible for projecting slides. Among the leaders of the Central Government, Premier Zhou Enlai, Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing, Huang Yongsheng and other members of the Political Bureau of the CCP Central Committee attended the concert. The performance achieved a great success. After the concert, Premier Zhou stepped on stage to congratulate the performers. He waved his hand and shouted: 'Xian Xinghai has come back to life'!<sup>104</sup> In April 1970, Jiang assigned the concerto to be performed at the 'China Guangzhou Commodities Fair'. At that time, China's window of opening to the Western world was extremely limited. This was the only fair where foreign businessmen could come. it became the first international exposure of *The Yellow River Piano Concerto*.<sup>105</sup> In particular, at Jiang's request, a picture of Mao Zedong wearing an octagonal military cap was displayed in the centre of the stage, specially painted for the performance. As Chu Wanghua recalled, 'Under Mao's gleaming eyes and pleased demeanour, a musical work [to the people of the world] was released which presented both Western and Chinese style, with conventional and fresh compositional techniques, and illustrated both artistic and political appeal'.<sup>106</sup> In May 1970, it was officially premiered to Chinese domestic audiences at the National Culture Palace in Beijing.<sup>107</sup> On 23 May 1974, the People's Daily published an article on 'The Further Popularisation and Development of Revolutionary Model Operas in China', in which The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* and *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* were recognised as revolutionary Model Works, along with the eight previous Model Operas.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> The concert memoir came from Chu's words recalled in his masterclass.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Wanghua Chu, 'How was *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* Created?', p. 8.

<sup>107</sup> From Chu's masterclass.

<sup>108</sup> Government Open Data, 'Woguo geming yangbanxi jinyibu puji he fazhan' [The Further Popularisation and Development of Revolutionary Model Operas in China] (我国革命样板戏进一步普及和发展), *Government Open Data*, [n.d.]

In response to Jiang's politically motivated comments on music composition, Chu Wanghua believed that Jiang's 'care' went beyond political leadership. 'I personally would have preferred to remain faithful to Xian Xinghai's original work and to remove all these imposed things from the Cultural Revolution. *The Yellow River Cantata* does not contain any music of *The East is Red*'.<sup>109</sup> Shi Shucheng showed a more critical attitude towards Jiang's political guidance. He argued:

Jiang's dominant idea was to transform *The Yellow River Cantata*, a classic masterpiece, into an autocratical tool that served her own political ends. She replaced Xian Xinghai's work with her [revolutionary] *Yellow River Piano Concerto*. She complacently once said that among the Model Works, only *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* was personally initiated by her from the beginning.<sup>110</sup>

Jiang also provided a large picture of Mao Zedong, which had to be placed on the stage at every performance. In this way, the work should not be called *The Yellow River* [Piano Concerto], but rather 'Mao Zedong'. This definitely changed the central idea of the work. This is a sort of way of 'head-switching'. To put it more rudely, it 'raped' Xian Xinghai's original work. In my opinion, this is not a minor problem.<sup>111</sup>

Both Chu and Shi's interpretations suggest that they, as composers on the team, had to adapt the work to the need of serving political demands in the face of the constraints of political pressure. But there is no denying that this programmatic work, which combines the East and the West, Chinese politics and culture, succeeded in its difficult history. It made a place for the piano, a Western instrument, in the political context of Chinese history and in the realm of mainstream culture. Secondly, it also provided an opportunity for the various composers in the composition team to be able to create musical works in a particular political period. According to Shi Shucheng, 'It was rare that we had the opportunity to compose music when everyone else had gone to the countryside to work. So we were all very

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<<https://cn.govopendata.com/renminribao/1974/5/23/1/#449700>> [accessed 10 January 2023].

<sup>109</sup> From Chu's masterclass.

<sup>110</sup> Shucheng Shi, 'Composition and Revision of *The Yellow River Piano Concerto*', p. 77.

<sup>111</sup> Shucheng Shi, 'Qie'er bushe jinshi kelou – Shi Shucheng xiansheng fangtan lu' [Perseverance is the Key to Success - Interview with Mr. Shucheng Shi] (锲而不舍 金石可镂 – 石叔诚先生访谈录), *Piano Artistry*, 4 (1999), 4-8 (p. 6).

involved and contributed our [professional musical] talents in a completely selfless manner'.<sup>112</sup> Chu Wanghua offers a more dialectical view of this type of 'collective creation'. He sees it as a mode of artistic creation arising from China's particular political and social conditions, and emphasises democratic centralism. 'If the work is successful, the achievement is the party's, the collectivity's. If it is under the names of authors, it can be a hotbed of reactionary individualism and the conspiracy of fame and fortune. But if the work is once deposed, authors are picked out by name and criticised'.<sup>113</sup>

Indeed, Chu's views proved the truth: when The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* succeeded, the People's Daily report emphasised that it was a glorious work created under the guidance of Chairman Mao's ideology and conducive to the revolutionary development of the whole Chinese nation; when *The Yellow River* Piano Concerto succeeded, the report again emphasised that it was another new achievement of the proletarian revolution under the guidance of Chairman Mao's proletarian line of literature and art.<sup>114</sup> The underlying reasons for this mode of collective creation can be traced back to the fundamental nature of Chinese society and the Chinese Communist Party. The economic base determines the superstructure of power, country and society. In 1956, under the leadership of the CCP, China completed three major reconstructions in the economic sphere (agriculture, handicraft industry and capitalist industry and commerce), marking the formalisation of the socialist system in the People's Republic of China and the establishment of the dominant position of the publicly owned economy in the national economy. Therefore, socialist China emphasises a public ownership economy, while the capitalist regime develops private ownership. On a different economic basis,

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<sup>112</sup> Shucheng Shi, 'Perseverance is the Key to Success - Interview with Mr. Shucheng Shi', p. 6.

<sup>113</sup> Wanghua Chu, 'How was *The Yellow River* Piano Concerto Created?', p. 7.

<sup>114</sup> On 20 May 1970, the People's Daily published four articles about the success of *The Yellow River* Piano Concerto and its contribution to the revolution on the fourth section. See: Government Open Data, '1970 nian 5 yue 20 ri renmin ribao di 4 ban' [The Fourth Section of the People's Daily on 20 May 1970] (1970 年 5 月 20 日人民日报 第 4 版), *Government Open Data*, [n.d.] <<https://cn.govopendata.com/renminribao/1970/5/20/4>> [accessed 10 January 2023].



China needs to build a collectivist superstructure, while Western society constructs its individualist-centred worldview. Accordingly, in Chinese society where class struggle is highly charged at the time, the embodiment of individual values and the idea of independent individual creativity represented by the bourgeoisie in society are completely unacceptable to the proletarian government. The first aim of underlining collectivism in contrast to individualism is to 'educate' and reform Western arts and the minds of artists who study Western music. Based on that, artists are required to emphasise in their work the subordination of the individual to society and that individual interests need to serve the development of the class as a whole.

Figure 1.7. The group of composers working together when arranging *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* (the pictures are provided by the composer, Chu Wanghua for this research)





## Piano transcriptions within the 1970s social and diplomatic environment in China

The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* and *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* enabled the Western-born art of piano to rapidly spread throughout China during the highly intensified and proletarian Cultural Revolution of the 1960s: from its initial political acceptance, it moved towards a positive situation in which this imported musical genre won the awareness and appreciation of the Chinese masses. These two revolutionary works created a prime opportunity and a new historical chapter in the development of piano music in Chinese society. When the 1970s came, the changes in China's internal political situation and the re-examination of China's international relations in its diplomatic environment provided additional support for piano transcriptions based on traditional Chinese music to 'blossom' in Chinese society during the latter part of the Cultural Revolution.

On 13 September 1971, a horrifying incident in the history of the Chinese Communist Party occurred. Lin Biao, who had been elected Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee of the CCP in April 1969, proceeded to plan and conduct a series of power-seeking and rebellious activities from 1970 to 1971. Lin even planned the assassination of Mao Zedong in September 1971. After the armed coup attempt was exposed, Lin fled China by plane on 13 September, which eventually crashed in Mongolia.<sup>115</sup> Lin's exit from the political scene at the time of his death, led to a change in the distribution of power within the party. As a strong political friend of Jiang Qing during the Cultural Revolution, Lin's death weakened Jiang's power in her dominated cultural sphere. Premier Zhou Enlai began to gradually regain more political initiative, giving important instructions on cultural and diplomatic work. This brought the reconstruction of literary and artistic work in China. Zhou commenced a significant amount of diplomatic activities associated with classical music between China and the Western world in the 1970s.

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<sup>115</sup> Communist Party Website, "'Jiu yi san" shijian' [The "September 13" Incident] ( "九一三" 事件), *Communist Party Website*, 2013  
<<https://fuwu.12371.cn/2012/06/06/ARTI1338963650289736.shtml?isappinstalled=0>> [accessed 17 February 2023].

From the 1960s onwards China's relations with the Soviet Union gradually deteriorated, and in the 1970s Zhou's diplomatic policy made him 'the strongest and most visible proponent of [a] friendly policy towards the US'.<sup>116</sup> On 21 April 1971, Premier Zhou addressed a verbal invitation to President Nixon to visit China, and Nixon replied positively on 29 April. Nixon also proposed that before his official visit, Henry Kissinger, the US National Security Advisor, could hold a preliminary meeting with Premier Zhou or another appropriate senior Chinese official.<sup>117</sup> Before Kissinger's arrival, Zhou proposed to Li Delun that the Central Philharmonic should give a performance for him. In particular, Zhou suggested a piece by Beethoven, as Kissinger was born in Germany.<sup>118</sup> Afterwards, Jiang Qing, Yu Huiyong and Li Delun had a discussion about which one of Beethoven's compositions to choose for the performance. Li first proposed Beethoven's Symphonies No. 5 in C minor and No. 3 in E-flat major, both of which Yu rejected. He personally considered both symphonies as non-absolute music and the fatalism presented in the No. 5 Symphony and the No. 3 Symphony associated with Napoleon were unacceptable to the proletariat. Finally, Yu suggested the sixth symphony, the *Pastoral* Symphony, as the work was only about nature. Obviously, Li was not convinced by Yu's perception towards Beethoven's symphonies with programmatic meanings, because while Yu believed that the *Pastoral* Symphony was merely about nature, Li thought to himself that if following Yu's logical thinking, did not Symphony No. 6 eulogise landlords' manorialism? Of course, Li did not speak his 'ironic' question aloud.<sup>119</sup> When Kissinger visited in October, the Central Philharmonic hosted a private concert in his honour. As the orchestra had to abandon Western repertoires to survive after the

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<sup>116</sup> Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red: How Classical Music Became Chinese*, p. 266.

<sup>117</sup> Literature Research Office of the Central Committee of the CCP, *Zhou Enlai nianpu (1949-1976) (xia)* [The Chronicle of Zhou Enlai (1949-1976) Volume III] (周恩来年谱 (1949-1976) (下)) (Beijing: Central Party Literature Press, 2007), pp. 458-59.

<sup>118</sup> This was the second time in October 1971 when Kissinger came to China for preparing President Nixon's official state visit. The first time was in July 1971. See: Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red: How Classical Music Became Chinese*, pp. 265-66.

<sup>119</sup> All the information about proposing particular repertoires from Beethoven in this political meeting is shown in: Yunyun Luo, *The Biography of Li Delun*, p. 406.

start of the Cultural Revolution and could only accompany the Model Operas, the 'rustiness of the business' made Li unhappy with the quality of the performance.<sup>120</sup> But from the point of view of this political censorship, the decision to perform a Western classical work at a national diplomatic event was the first time since the Cultural Revolution that a window had been opened to the confined cultural sphere.

In February 1972, Nixon made his official visit to China. Although he did not hear a symphony from Beethoven again during this diplomatic event but was taken by Jiang Qing to see a performance of a Model Opera, *The Red Detachment of Women*,<sup>121</sup> this series of meetings between China and the United States prompted the Chinese government to reconsider its approach to cultural exchange with the world in the light of the new national demands for diplomatic exchange and development.

The year 1973 saw a wider opening up of Chinese politics in terms of diplomatic activity. On 20 March, the People's Daily reported on the first performance of the London Philharmonic Orchestra in Beijing. The concert was attended by Chinese government officials from the Cultural Group of the State Council, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, while Li Delun and Yin Chengzong attended the concert as important figures in the music field.<sup>122</sup> The report especially mentioned that the London Philharmonic Orchestra specialised in Classical music. And they performed *Cockaigne (In London Town)*, Op. 40 by the British composer Edward Elgar, the Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 77 by Brahms and Beethoven's Symphony No.7 for audiences in the capital city. The orchestra also performed an additional music excerpt from one Model Opera

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<sup>120</sup> Yunyun Luo, *The Biography of Li Delun*, p. 406.

<sup>121</sup> Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red: How Classical Music Became Chinese*, p. 267.

<sup>122</sup> Xinhua News, 'Yingguo lundun aiyue guanxian yuetuan zai Beijing shouci yanchu Wu De Qiao Guanhua deng chuxi yanchu shoudao qunzhong de relie huanying' [London Philharmonic Orchestra Made its Premiere Performance in Beijing, Attended by Wu De and Qiao Guanhua, Well Received by the Masses] (英国伦敦爱乐管弦乐团在京首次演出 吴德乔冠华等出席 演出受到群众的热情欢迎), *People's Daily*, 20 March 1973, 4th section.

*The Red Detachment of Women*, as a friendly gesture to the Chinese people.<sup>123</sup> Immediately afterwards, from 11-14 April, the Austrian Vienna Symphony Orchestra visited Beijing for performances in China. The report from People's Daily showed a nearly identical configuration of Chinese government officials in attendance at the performance as during the London orchestra's visit.<sup>124</sup> In this tour, the Vienna Orchestra performed Mozart's Symphony No. 41 in C major, K. 551, the *Jupiter* Symphony, Beethoven's Symphony No. 3 in E flat major, Op. 55, the *Eroica* Symphony,<sup>125</sup> as well as a collaboration with the Chinese pianist Yin Chengzong on performing *The Yellow River* Piano Concerto.<sup>126</sup> Although the visit of the two Western orchestras was still shrouded in the shadow of the political environment of the Cultural Revolution, as what repertoires they could play had to be censored in advance by the Chinese government,<sup>127</sup> Li Delun believed that the performances of both orchestras were generally well received by the Chinese public audiences. It was significant that since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the leading

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<sup>123</sup> Xinhua News, 'London Philharmonic Orchestra made its premiere performance in Beijing, Attended by Wu De and Qiao Guanhua, Well Received by the Masses'.

<sup>124</sup> Xinhua News, 'Aodili weiyena jiaoxiang yuetuan zai jing jixu yanchu Wu De Qiao Guanhua Luo Shuzhang he youguan fangmian fuzeren chuxi yinyuehui' [The Austrian Vienna Symphony Orchestra Continuing its Performance in Beijing, Wu De, Qiao Guanhua and Luo Shuzhang with Relevant Officials Attending the Concert] (奥地利维也纳交响乐团在京继续演出 吴德乔冠华罗叔章和有关方面负责人出席音乐会), *People's Daily*, 14 April 1973, 3rd section.

<sup>125</sup> Xinhua News, 'Aodili weiyena jiaoxiang yuetuan zai beijing shouci yanchu yanchu shoudao tingzhong de relie guzhang huanying' [The Premiere of the Austrian Vienna Symphony Orchestra in Beijing, Greeted by Enthusiastic Applauses from Audiences] (奥地利维也纳交响乐团在北京首次演出 演出受到听众的热情鼓掌欢迎), *People's Daily*, 12 April 1973, 4th section.

<sup>126</sup> Xinhua News, 'The Austrian Vienna Symphony Orchestra Continuing its performance in Beijing, Wu De, Qiao Guanhua and Luo Shuzhang with Relevant Officials Attending the concert'.

<sup>127</sup> The Western orchestras first provided their programme, and Li Delun organised the Chinese side to study it before sending the preliminary views to the Central Committee, and finally through the Politburo of the Central Committee to decide. See: Yunyun Luo, *The Biography of Li Delun*, p. 410.

Western orchestras were invited to perform in China and openly play Western classical music to the public.<sup>128</sup>

On 12 September, the Philadelphia Orchestra of the United States visited China. Li Delun was directly instructed by Premier Zhou to hold a welcome party for them. Li chose the choir of the Central Philharmonic to sing a favourite American song, *America the Beautiful*, in English for the Western friends. The Philadelphia Orchestra was shocked; they had not expected that Chinese artists who had been isolated for many years could sing this foreign piece. Although the Cultural Group of the State Council, led by Jiang Qing, was not happy with Li's arrangement, they had nothing to say as Li had direct instructions from Premier Zhou.<sup>129</sup> On the afternoon of 16 September, the Philadelphia Orchestra conductor Eugene Ormandy visited the Central Philharmonic's rehearsal. After conducting the orchestra in the first movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Li invited Ormandy to conduct the second movement. He was so excited that he immediately accepted the baton. Although this was his first time conducting a Chinese orchestra and his style was very different from Li's, the whole performance was very smooth. The orchestra and Ormandy immediately worked in an excellent partnership after a few bars. Ormandy praised Li for being able to train such a good orchestra.<sup>130</sup> On the evening of the 16th, according to the People's Daily, the Philadelphia Orchestra's final day in Beijing featured Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 in F major, the *Pastoral* Symphony, *Pines of Rome* by the Italian composer Ottorino Respighi and *Adagio for Strings* by Samuel Barber.<sup>131</sup> In particular, Jiang Qing also attended and listened to the concert.<sup>132</sup> According to Li Delun's memories, when Ormandy was informed of the presence of

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<sup>128</sup> Yunyun Luo, *The Biography of Li Delun*, p. 410.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 410-11.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 412-13.

<sup>131</sup> Xing Chen, 'Youhao de qingyi jingcai de biao'yan – huanying meiguo feicheng jiaoxiang yuetuan' [Friendly Camaraderie and Wonderful Performance – Welcome the Philadelphia Orchestra] (友好的情谊 精彩的演奏 — 欢迎美国费城交响乐团), *People's Daily*, 19 September 1973, 3rd section.

<sup>132</sup> Jiang did not attend the concerts of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra.



Jiang Qing and several senior Politburo members, he improvised the programme and decided to perform *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* with Yin Chengzong.<sup>133</sup> The concert was followed by a banquet, and Ormandy was very pleased with the trip to China this time. He explained, 'The orchestra has been happier than any other trip it has ever made'.<sup>134</sup> Harold Schonberg, who was the music critic from *The New York Times* travelling along with the orchestra to China also confirmed Ormandy's sincere pleasure with his visit to China:

Mr. Ormandy was not merely saying polite things. The general feeling among players is that this indeed was the greatest trip the orchestra has ever made. The hospitality has been 'positively overwhelming,' [and] many friendships have been made.<sup>135</sup>

Li was also delighted. For him, the orchestra's visit was a rare opportunity since the Cultural Revolution to interact with top industry colleagues, not only enhancing the exchange between musicians of the two countries, but also helping the Chinese public to embrace Western orchestral music and gradually spread it in China. More importantly, it was an effort to further diplomatic exchanges between the two countries following the restoration of diplomatic relations between China and the United States in 1971.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Yunyun Luo, *The Biography of Li Delun*, p. 414.

<sup>134</sup> Harold C. Schonberg, 'Philadelphians Play Committee Music', *The New York Times*, 18 September 1973, p. 37.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Yunyun Luo, pp. 411, 413.

Figure 1.8. The Philadelphia Orchestra performing in Beijing in 1973<sup>137</sup>



This was a great advance for Li Delun and his Central Philharmonic, and indeed for the entire Chinese musical field in the 1970s, an unforeseen change in the type of social and cultural activities in which Chinese people could participate (from only being able to see Model Operas to having access to classical music performances in public), an unimaginable joy since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, and fruitful achievements of Premier Zhou's musical diplomacy. It can be said that this was the beginning of an era of classical music diplomacy by Zhou and the Central Philharmonic who defended and supported him in the new national trend. The piano along with *The Yellow River* Piano Concerto found its place and made its own contribution to the construction of this more open social moment. But it was no surprise to observe the problem that piano music faced in such an environment. The appearance of *The Yellow River* Piano Concerto in both the Vienna Symphony Orchestra's and the Philadelphia Orchestra's performances exposed the serious limitation in the choice of repertoire by Western orchestras when it came to showing their friendship to the Chinese side. This was because the concerto was the only

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<sup>137</sup> The picture was taken by the Xinhua News Agency and published on People's Daily. See: Xing Chen, 'Friendly Camaraderie and Wonderful Performance – Welcome the Philadelphia Orchestra'.

Chinese piano composition available to perform in a formal and large-scale concert at this time. However, it is undeniable that the advent of the era of classical music diplomacy allowed the Chinese government to increase its tolerance of classical music in China's socialist society and proletarian government. At the same time, in this climate of closer cultural exchange between China and the West, Jiang Qing sensed that her Model Operas no longer held all the power in the cultural sphere. In the series of utilitarian attitudes that followed in the service of her political aims and also the requirement from Chairman Mao, the situation of lacking music for piano in China would be changed.

Jiang delivered Mao's will and gave some clear instructions for the development of the musical field when she received several Chinese musicians, including Liu Shikun, Yin Chengzong and Li Delun on 5 August 1973. She said:

The meeting was to convey Chairman [Mao]'s concern for him [Liu Shikun] and his desire [that he] hopes Liu to work on something related to previous masterpieces. *Fighting the Typhoon* (《战台风》) can be arranged for a piano and orchestra [version]. He [Mao] wanted Liu to recover his basic [performance] skills and gave Liu a piano to go to Japan with the orchestra.

Music part: [we need] to find musical pieces from various historical periods, nicely processing and arranging them, and make a collection of programmes [performed] (abroad). [This] should be a long river of history, including masterworks from all dynasties, from the most ancient to revolutionary songs, to the present revolutionary works. [We need] to make a collection of musical works from ancient to modern times, to produce materials in music. [We also must] collect the history of Western music. This has to be done... *Fighting the Typhoon* is well worth advocating to become a piano transcription, with Liu Shikun taking part in composition.<sup>138</sup>

Under Jiang's direct orders, Li organised a 'Western music history group' to engage in the work of the project, 'The Long River of the Music History'.<sup>139</sup> Li considered it was necessary to process and study the history of Western music, whether it was a political requirement or a need for musical development. But soon afterwards, Jiang asked Li to withdraw from this work and sent another person to run

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<sup>138</sup> Leningrad Printing Plant No. 3 Workers' Theoretical Group, *Comrade Jiang Qing's Discussion on Literature and Arts*, pp. 180-81.

<sup>139</sup> The information here and the following comes from: Yunyun Luo, *The Biography of Li Delun*, p. 408.

it, as Jiang found that Li did not share the same purpose of the work as her. Jiang was imposing her personal preferences on the criteria when she asked for the history of Western music to be collated. She disliked Schumann, whose works she found obscure, and Brahms, who she said sounded like the music was crying. Jiang also raised the principle that music from the bourgeois uprising periods could be used, and that works from the decline periods, including their compositional techniques, had no value at all. Jiang later asked Li to undertake critical work on Soviet music. Li was asked to hand in all Tchaikovsky recordings and scores because she wanted to criticise Tchaikovsky. Li did not mind too much. He thought Jiang could criticise anything she wanted to, such as Einstein's theory of relativity. Every time a big campaign was launched but ultimately unsuccessful. Jiang's criticism had no effect on these crystallised works of human wisdom.

Meanwhile, for Chairman Mao's instruction to Liu Shikun to arrange *Fighting the Typhoon*, a solo *guzheng* piece composed by Wang Changyuan in 1965, a more detailed introduction of Liu's arrangement of this traditional instrumental piece to a piano transcription was presented at the 'Art Concert of Glorifying Chairman Mao, Angrily Denouncing the Gang of Four, Greeting the New Year and Celebrating our Victory' co-sponsored by China National Radio and Beijing Television in 1977:

*Fighting the Typhoon* was arranged by Liu Shikun and Guo Zhihong. This work was started by Liu Shikun and other comrades following the instruction of the great leader and mentor Chairman Mao in 1973. [Mao asked] Liu should produce some national and piano works. Then [the arrangement was] approved by Chairman Mao himself. The beloved Premier Zhou gave specific care to the composers of this work, deeper into their lives and provided them with amiable concern regarding its creation. Because of this, the Gang of Four and their cronies in the Ministry of Culture, suppressed it in every way. Difficulties were created and obstacles were placed. Long delays were made [by them] in an attempt to stifle this work.<sup>140</sup>

Also mentioned in Jiang's talk about preparing a piano for Liu and sending him to Japan with the orchestra was also directly linked to the diplomatic era founded by Premier Zhou. In September 1972, a member of the Japanese House of

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<sup>140</sup> The online recording of this concert can be found: Bilibili, 'Gangqin duzou qu zhan taifeng Liu Shikun yanzou' [The Piano Solo *Fighting the Typhoon* Performed by Liu Shikun] (钢琴独奏曲《战台风》刘诗昆演奏), *Bilibili*, 2021 <<https://www.bilibili.com/video/av721584672>> [accessed 17 February 2023].

Representatives, the representatives of the Liberal Democratic Party and the Japanese Prime Minister, Kakuei Tanaka, visited China successively by invitation of Zhou in order to re-establish the normalisation of diplomatic relations between China and Japan.<sup>141</sup> Zhou mentioned that President Nixon also had a constructive part to play in the normalisation of Sino-Japanese relations, as he came first and then Kakuei followed. Times were always moving on.<sup>142</sup> It would be fair to say that Zhou's classical-music diplomatic policy first prompted an improvement in Sino-American relations, and then helped to rebuild the continuation of international relations that was the normalisation of diplomatic relations between China and Japan, thus inspiring a renewal of the ideological system in international politics. In October 1973, the Central Philharmonic continued this classical-music diplomacy with a plan of visits to Japan. Although the Chinese and Japanese sides did not agree on the scale of the orchestra, the visit was ultimately unsuccessful.<sup>143</sup> However, it is clear from the history of Chinese diplomacy in the 1970s that the Chinese government had fully adapted and mastered that piano music was capable of playing a pivotal role in the development of the country, because the piano performed a genre of music that was recognised and understood by both China and the West. The performance of *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* played at diplomatic events was a demonstration of Chinese musical culture and fulfilled a political purpose that the Chinese government wanted to achieve in this new period of its history

In addition, based on Jiang's conversation, Yin Chengzong invited Wang Jianzhong from Shanghai to arrange some traditional Chinese music compositions into piano versions. Wang's transcriptions of Chinese piano works during this period include such as *Hundreds of Birds Worshipping the Phoenix* (《百鸟朝凤》), *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* (《彩云追月》) and *Ambush from Ten Sides*

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<sup>141</sup> Literature Research Office of the Central Committee of the CCP, *The Chronicle of Zhou Enlai (1949-1976) Volume III*, pp. 550-55.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 556.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 628.

(《十面埋伏》).<sup>144</sup> A selective list of piano transcriptions arranged in the 1970s is presented below:

Table 1.1. A selective list of Chinese piano transcriptions arranged during 1970-1976

Composer	Piano transcription title	Year
Wang Jianzhong (王建中)	<i>Liuyang River</i> (《浏阳河》)	1972
	<i>Song of The Broad Road</i> (《大路歌》)	1972
	<i>Hundreds of Birds Worshipping the Phoenix</i> (《百鸟朝凤》)	1973
	Three Variations on the <i>Plum Blossoms</i> (《梅花三弄》)	1973
	<i>Song of Emancipation</i> (《翻身道情》)	1973
	<i>Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain</i> (《山丹丹开花红艳艳》)	1973
	<i>Soldiers and Villagers in the Big Production Drive</i> (《军民大生产》)	1973
	<i>Embroidering Banners with Golden Thread</i> (《绣金匾》)	1973

<sup>144</sup> Yunyun Luo, *The Biography of Li Delun*, p. 409.

	<i>Ambush from Ten Sides</i> (《十面埋伏》), arranged by Wang with Yin Chengzong and Liu Zhuang	1973
	<i>Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon</i> (《彩云追月》)	1975
	<i>Butterfly Loving Flowers</i> (《蝶恋花》)	1976
Chen Peixun (陈培勋)	<i>Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake</i> (《平湖秋月》)	1975
	Part 2 of a Symphonic Poem, <i>the Flowing Water</i> (音诗之二 《流水》)	1976
Chu Wanghua (储望华)	<i>The Moon's Reflection on the Spring</i> (《二泉映月》)	1972
	<i>Variations of the Little Pine Tree</i> (《小松树变奏曲》)	1973
	<i>The Red Star Shining Brightly</i> (《红星闪闪放光彩》)	1974
	<i>The Fishboy of the South Sea</i> (《南海渔童》)	1974
Du Mingxin (杜鸣心)	Three Sections Selected from the Ballet, <i>The Red Detachment of Women</i> (芭蕾舞剧《红色娘子军》选曲)	1975

Gan Bihua (甘璧华)	<i>Variations of the Song of the Communist Children's League</i> (《共产儿童团歌变奏曲》)	1972
Yin Chengzong (殷承宗)	<i>Colourful Clous Chasing the Moon</i> (《彩云追月》)	1973
	<i>Ambush from Ten Sides</i> (《十面埋伏》), arranged by Yin with Wang Jianzhong and Liu Zhuang	1973
Tan Luqian (谭露茜)	<i>The North Wind Blowing</i> (《北风吹》)	1976
Li Yinghai (黎英海)	<i>Music at Sunset</i> (《夕阳箫鼓》)	1975
Li Qi (李淇)	<i>The Train towards Shao Mountain</i> (《火车向着韶山跑》)	1971
Li Ruixing (李瑞星)	<i>The East is Red</i> (《东方红》)	1976
	<i>Dance of Children Presenting Flowers</i> (《儿童鲜花舞》)	1976
Dan Zhaoyi (但昭义)	<i>The Story of a Cowherd</i> (《放牛娃儿的故事》)	1973
Liu Zhuang (刘庄)	<i>Ode to the Plum Blossom</i> (《三六》)	1972
	<i>Ambush from Ten Sides</i> (《十面埋伏》), arranged by Liu with Wang Jianzhong and Yin Chengzong	1973



Huang Huwei (黄虎威)	<i>The Joyful Cowherd</i> (《欢乐的牧童》)	1972
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Although Jiang's exclusive control in art and harsh censorship of music in the early stages of the Cultural Revolution made her revolutionary Model Operas the central focus and the only artistic expression and standard in her authoritarian political environment, other art forms were governed by Jiang's 'dogmatic' political ideology. When the Model Operas become the only justification and truth for artistic development, their contents also actually make much use of materials of Western art forms, such as ballet and symphonic music. This government-sanctioned use of Western music as tools and techniques to support political ideological propaganda seems to signal a direction for the development of Chinese music: the combination of classical and traditional Chinese music. At the same time, the use of traditional Chinese music as a basis for the transcriptions of Chinese piano works, which represents a nationalisation of Western music and the modernisation of traditional art, reached its peak in the 1970s, in the context of the rise of Classical-music diplomacy and the direct instructions from the top political leader. Even so, the Chinese piano transcriptions arranged in the 1970s are never divorced from the sacred agenda of politics which unifies the nation in all its dimensions (including the economic base and superstructure). They are not pure works of art for art's sake, but still serve the national goals and support political purposes. It is more appropriate to interpret, as Paul Clark does, that 'the piano joined modern artillery, the blast furnace, and modern military organisation in a century of useful borrowing made to serve China's quest for wealth and power'.<sup>145</sup>

Another fact is that, besides the piano transcriptions based on traditional works arranged in this period, there are still new pieces composed, such as Piano Suite – *Remembering Grandmother's Words* (组曲《记住祖母的话》) by Li Yinghai in 1972, the Chinese Rhapsody, No. 2, Prelude and Dance (《中国畅想曲第二号—序曲与舞曲》) by Huang Anlun in 1974 and two piano preludes by Chu Wanghua in 1975,

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<sup>145</sup> Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution A History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 184.

*Sound of Valley* (《幽谷潺音》) and *Memorial* (《纪念碑》). It was possible to write new music in this particular historical time. But the actual situation was that the number of transcriptions was much larger than newly composed pieces. One possible reason that can be easily understood is that because The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* and *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* were both arranged from previous works, the creative style for Chinese piano compositions in the 1970s continued this, to a certain degree, conservative path. Another explanation is associated with the differences in the aesthetic values of Western and Chinese cultures. According to Mittler's research, one of the criteria that defines a 'true artist' in Western culture is whether he is an innovator and the degree of originality of his works. Imitation, therefore, has become a vice in Western aesthetic value standards. In traditional Chinese culture, however, the definition of virtue in the first place does not emphasise originality. At the same time, imitating and borrowing from traditional works in the creation of new works is considered to be a sign of respect for ancestors and a recognition of the quality of their works. Therefore, imitation of traditional works, including the adaptation and rewriting of ancient content, as well as borrowing old techniques, are all seen as positive qualities. One of the criteria for testing the artistic value of Chinese cultural works is not the degree of newness, but the new way in which traditional symbols and elements are used.<sup>146</sup> In the context of such cultural value criteria, the reliance on traditional works to arrange numerous piano transcriptions during the Cultural Revolution can be understood as a reason for Chinese composers to create new versions while drawing on traditional cultural materials. Not only is this a way for modern artists to identify with traditional works, but also these new versions that reproduce older works can breathe new life into traditional culture and adapt it to the conditions of existence in modern society.

Besides arranging piano transcriptions based on traditional Chinese music, another type of transcriptions is based on revolutionary works. And indeed, the original versions of these revolutionary works almost all derive from traditional

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<sup>146</sup> Barbara Mittler, *Dangerous tunes: The Politics of Chinese music in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China since 1949* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997), pp. 269-301.

Chinese music as well. The point here is to observe that making piano transcriptions in the 1970s was still part of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and political framework. From Mao's talk to musicians in 1956, in which he confirmed and emphasised the value of traditional Chinese culture, to Premier Zhou's demands for demonstrating nationalisation in literary and artistic creation in the early 1960s, to Mao's political slogan in 1965, 'making the past serve the present and making foreign things serve China', the embodiment of nationality in cultural and musical works has always been an important topic in the political arena and a criterion for political judgement of art. In addition, due to the Western bourgeois threatening theory instituted by the government during the highly strained proletarian revolutionary struggle of the Cultural Revolution, they believed that any products from Western society incompatible with socialism and proletarian ideology endangered the stability and unity of the country. Therefore, the emphasis on the national characteristics in cultural works in the superstructure of the cultural sphere can counter and eliminate the threat from the West.<sup>147</sup> The expression and conveyance of musical content of a national nature on the piano became at this time one of the most powerful political weapons in the proletarian revolution. Meanwhile, the populism identified by Mao in 1942 and Premier Zhou's requirement in 1963 for the popularisation of cultural creation also provided the political and theoretical basis for the production of a large number of piano transcriptions. These piano works, created by relying on previously familiar music, were easily accessible to a society that had not been exposed to the piano as a Western instrument. In this way, on all levels of politics, the piano adaptations were perfectly suited to a class-driven society.

In general, one of the indirect effects of populism and collectivism advocated by politics on cultural development during the later time of the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s is to provide a possible philosophical explanation for the massive number of these recreations of traditional works, in other words, piano transcriptions in Chinese society. Bourgeois individualism emphasises individual freedom and personal benefit. Especially, in Western culture, the focus is on such things as the outstanding

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<sup>147</sup> Similar points are discussed in: Barbara Mittler, *Dangerous tunes: The Politics of Chinese music in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the People's Republic of China since 1949*, pp. 278-80.

skills of individual composers and the original works they produce. In a proletarian society, cultural products such as musical works are not used as personal property. The 1970s Chinese history witnessed the emergence of numerous piano transcriptions based on traditional Chinese music, or different arrangements of the same work, as a collective sharing of original resources in a socialist society under collectivism. Another advantage of recreating previous works is that social audiences have a familiarity and acceptance of the materials of the artworks themselves. In this way, artistic creation returns to the populism demanded by the government, allowing the masses to appreciate the new cultural products of reinvention.

## **Conclusion**

In the more than 30 years leading up to the Cultural Revolution from the 1940s towards the 1960s, the Chinese Communist Party under Mao's leadership made continuous and numerous discussions for the establishment of a culture belonging to the proletarian government and the socialist country, but the requirements and results of the political establishment of cultural policies were not complicated. They can be summarised in three aspects. First is the establishment of a cultural populism based on the constitution of the Chinese social class as the basis of the conditions: the masses are dominant. Second is the need for cultural works to reflect nationalism. And third is the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship culture that embraces the Chinese Communist government and the implementation of the socialist system in China under its leadership. There is no contradiction in the demand for the establishment of a dictatorial culture, the source of which is the party system with Chinese characteristics established by the CCP when it founded the People's Republic of China. Under the conditions of the political system of leadership of the CCP and multi-party cooperation and political consultation, the basic structure is the dictatorship of the CCP in power. The establishment of the political system makes it necessary for the culture that matches it to follow the same pattern. From this summary, it can be considered that the Chinese cultural policy has been based on the constituent dominant part of the social class and the support for the regime and the stability and unity of the country. However, during the Cultural Revolution,

there was a high degree of blockade of all forms of culture except for the Model Operas. This is also due to changes within Chinese politics: political demands led China in the 1960s towards the formation of a society in which the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie became the primary objective and Jiang Qing used her control of culture to achieve her personal political aims. Thus any arts, musical instruments, music and its works associated with Western capitalism were vetoed and any genres of art that Jiang personally disliked or that she could not control had to be subjected to political censorship.

The Chinese pianist Yin Chengzong once said: 'One cannot be divorced from history. One could only do what one could do and what was meaningful in those days'.<sup>148</sup> His experiments in combining the piano with the Model Opera therefore allowed the piano to be integrated into this historical revolution of the social mainstream. He chose to nationalise the piano in line with political demands in order for it to retain its right to survive in a class-struggling Chinese society while still being able to make its further way in the community. Fortunately, all of Yin's efforts have been rewarded. The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* and *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* composed and led by Yin became a powerful force in this proletarian cultural revolution and fully achieved the government's political goals. This view is confirmed by the fact that *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* could be performed in national diplomatic events in the 1970s. In this more enlightened 1970s, which was totally unforeseeable at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, the stage was finally opened for Chinese piano transcriptions.

These transcriptions began in the context of politics, because in history, it was the government who firstly used politics to construct and transform the values of artistic and musical creations, requesting that cultural works needed to be national and populist. When Chinese composers had to receive and accept this orthodox ideology, afterwards, in the creation of these piano transcriptions, they started to reflect political concepts in their music. The approaches or paths to do this were

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<sup>148</sup> Xianxiu Lü, '2009 02 03/ Yin Chengzong: gangqin bugai zai tiyuchang tan' [Yin Chengzong: The Piano Should not be Performed At the Stadium, Interviewed on 3 February 2009] (2009 02 03/殷承宗: 钢琴不该在体育场弹), *Jackjia Blog*, 2009 <<https://blog.jackjia.com/?p=9679>> [accessed 22 January 2023].

such as: 1) choosing particular raw materials for their piano transcriptions, such as using original music from traditional and revolutionary works; 2) demonstrating Chinese traditional composition techniques in piano transcriptions; 3) imitating Chinese traditional instruments in piano transcriptions; 4) showing national characteristics in piano transcriptions. Eventually, Chinese piano transcriptions with those features would reinforce the status of the political ideology as well. In this way, it became a closed cycle. Therefore, in the following analysis chapters, this research will look closely at the selected piano transcriptions and examine how they show all these approaches in their music.

## Chapter Two:

# *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake*

### ( 《平湖秋月》 )

Chen Peixun (1922-2006), a celebrated Chinese composer and a patriot, actively participated in revolutionary events. Accordingly, most of his musical compositions, politically, show the strong influence of orthodox ideologies, and musically, are related to traditional Chinese culture to express his national pride. Thus, Chen's output provides an example of piano transcription that is closely tied to its political context and relatively faithful to the original music, and this is why Chen's piano transcription is placed as the first case study in this thesis. The case studies in the subsequent chapters show a gradual decrease in the closeness of the relationship between politics and the chosen composers, and in the degree of faithfulness of the selected piano transcriptions in relation to the original traditional music, while the relative freedom of self-expression and creativity of the composers progressively increases.

This chapter selects Chen's piano transcription, *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* arranged under the political environment and invitation in 1975 during the Cultural Revolution period. The music originally comes from a *gaohu* piece composed by a Cantonese musician, Lü Wencheng, in the 1930s. Musicians of Lü's generation created a new genre of music, 'New Cantonese music', and Lü was prominent in promoting the development of this new genre. This *gaohu* piece illustrates how 'New Cantonese Music' absorbed the style of Jiangnan Silk and Bamboo music. The traditional composing technique of *fangman jiahua* (extending the original rhythm and adding more passing notes) influenced by Jiangnan music is evident in this *gaohu* piece. Later, when it was transcribed as a piano version, to a certain degree, *jiahua* technique was again applied. Meanwhile with almost the same musical structure that the piano version inherits from the original *gaohu* music, the piano composer used a relatively strict approach to produce his transcription. Both

these aspects of the piano transcription show faithfulness to the ‘New Cantonese music’ style and the musical form of the *gaohu* piece.

Besides these, the musical analysis in this chapter also concentrates on the creative changes and newly added musical materials in the piano transcription. One typical characteristic is the application of the arpeggiated accompanying voice during the whole musical development, which reflects the composer’s intention of depicting the scenery of a placid lake as described in the title . In the analysis of performance, therefore, the approach of this accompanying voice is also examined particularly. Through comparing different recordings from four pianists, as well as two *gaohu* performance versions, the final decisions on approaches to piano performance aim to establish a connection between piano performance and the performing style of the original *gaohu* music and to achieve the effect of the accompaniment intended by the piano composer.

## **Background Information on the Composer, Chen Peixun**

The Chinese composer Chen Peixun occupies a vital place in the history of composing Chinese piano and orchestral music, his whole artistic journey being inseparable from Chinese politics. Chen’s musical life was germinated from the learning of the piano. Born in Hong Kong in 1921, when he was seven years old Chen started to sing in the choir of St Paul’s Church, under the influence of Western culture.<sup>1</sup> In 1933, struggling with difficult living conditions, Chen and his mother moved to his uncle’s home. Chen’s uncle, Chen Deguang taught the piano and guitar at the St Paul’s School, also organising an orchestra in which he played the

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<sup>1</sup> This information comes from the preface written in the book, *Chen Peixun’s Selected Works for the Piano* by Chen’s student, Liang Maochun. See: Maochun Liang, ‘Chen Peixun gangqin zuopin xuanji xu’ [Preface of the Selected Piano Pieces by Chen Peixun] (《陈培勋钢琴作品选集》序), in *Chen Peixun gangqin zuopin xuanji* [Chen Peixun’s Selected Works for the Piano] (陈培勋钢琴作品选集), ed. by Daojin Tong (Beijing: People’s Music Publishing House, 2002), pp. 7-15.



double bass.<sup>2</sup> From that time, Chen had the chance to learn the piano with his uncle and often went to see orchestra rehearsals. Chen also learnt to practice the music of Beyer with the flute player in the orchestra, Huang Quancheng who played the piano as well.<sup>3</sup> Later during his teenage years in 1936, Chen enrolled at the La Salle School (English School), Hong Kong. Because of his talent in performing the piano, Chen acquired numerous opportunities there. He first had the chance to study with the organist, L. Lafford, then was selected to perform the piano at the school's church. Later on, Chen studied the piano with the famous musician at St John's Cathedral, J. Smith.<sup>4</sup> Chen was regarded highly by the principal of the school who recommended Chen to apply to study organ performance at the Royal College of Music in the UK. In order to pass the entrance examination requirements, Chen was taught by Smith Western theories such as harmony and counterpoint, and eventually Chen began to compose fugues.<sup>5</sup> For complex reasons, however, Chen never went to the college in London. Instead, he came to mainland China, and entered the Department of Composition at the Shanghai National Institute of Music in 1939, learning Western compositional theory such as harmony, musical forms and counterpoint with Li Weining.<sup>6</sup>

After the outbreak of the Second World War, in 1940, the institute had to move to Chongqing. Chen, however, decided to stay in Shanghai until 1941 and then went back to Hong Kong.<sup>7</sup> On 8 December 1941, the Pacific War broke out. Under the social environment in which the whole country was full of determination against Japanese aggression, Chen dedicated himself to being involved in Sino-Japanese

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<sup>2</sup> This information comes from Chen himself, documented in a journal article written by Chen's student, Chang Jingyi. See: Jingyi Chang, 'Xin chao zhu lang gao – Chen Peixun jiaoshou fangtanlü' [The Surging Emotions – An Interview with Professor Chen Peixun] (心潮逐浪高 – 陈培勋教授访谈录), *Piano Artistry*, 3 (2000), 4-8 (p. 4).

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> The source identifies these musicians only by their surnames and initials. See: Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

war activities. He was invited to the 4th chorus of the Army Aid Group of the Young Men's Christian Association.<sup>8</sup> Chen himself recalled:

I conducted several choirs in Hong Kong, engaging in anti-Japanese propaganda activities. I started to compose choral works. Even though the lyrics presented and delivered the Anti-Japanese expression, they were accompanied by music with Western melody and harmony in Mendelssohn's style.<sup>9</sup>

Before Hong Kong was occupied by Japan on 25 December, Chen had left Hong Kong with the army aid group, returning to the mainland.<sup>10</sup> During the years from late 1941 to the victory of the war in 1945, Chen transferred from city to city, but his musical life never stopped. For example, he taught the piano at the Canton Provincial Arts College in 1942 when he composed a 45-minute piece for the dance drama, *Pagoda and Archway*, Op. 4 (《宝塔与牌坊》); he also played the double bass and timpani for a year from 1943-44 at the Chongqing Chinese Symphony Orchestra.<sup>11</sup> Chen said: 'I got to know numerous musicians during the war, such as Li Ling, Du Mingxin... The concern from the [Chinese Communist] underground Party to our progressive youth at that time would never be forgotten'.<sup>12</sup>

After the victory of the Sino-Japanese war, Chen returned back to the Shanghai National Institute of Music in 1947, continuing his professional path in composition. Chen was taught by Professor Tan Xiaolin, specialising in Paul Hindemith's modern composing theory and techniques.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, Chen never abandoned his identity as a progressive youth. In 1948, incidentally impacted by his girlfriend, Zhang Yue (becoming his wife later) who, as a member of the Chinese Communist Underground Party, was persecuted by the authority of the Chinese Nationalist Party, he

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<sup>8</sup> Jingyi Chang, 'The Surging Emotions – An Interview with Professor Chen Peixun', p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Jun Li, *Chen Peixun jiqi yinyue chuangzuo yanjiu* [Research on Chen Peixun and his Musical Creations] (陈培勋及其音乐创作研究) (Beijing: China Social Sciences Press, 2020), p. 178.

<sup>11</sup> Jingyi Chang, p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Maochun Liang, 'Preface of the Selected Piano Pieces by Chen Peixun', p. 8.

participated in the New Music Association organised by Li Lin.<sup>14</sup> After the establishment of the PRC, the Ministry of Culture conducted the adjustive arrangement for colleges and universities, consolidating the Nanjing National Conservatory of Music, the Music Department of Beijing Normal University, the Music Department of Yenching University and the Music Department of Lu Xun Academy of Arts, to establish the Central Conservatory of Music.<sup>15</sup> Chen was one of the members of the preparatory group.<sup>16</sup> In June 1950, the Central Conservatory of Music was founded. Chen and Zhang were assigned to Beijing. He started his life at the conservatory by teaching counterpoint, then moved to orchestration.<sup>17</sup> From 1952 to 1955, his greatest achievement in composing was that Chen completed his collection of *Piano Compositions based on Folk Melodies of Cantonese Music* (《广东小调钢琴曲集》). This contains: *Selling Sundry Goods* (《卖杂货》) and *Longing for Spring*, Op. 5 (《思春》) which were entrusted by the request from Zhu Gongyi, a professor of the piano department at the Central Conservatory of Music, *Bolt of Thunder in Drought*, Op. 6 (《旱天雷》) and *A Pair of Butterflies Flying*, Op. 7 (《双飞蝴蝶曲》).<sup>18</sup> In 1956, according to Chen's recollection: '[I] became an associate professor and served as the director of the Teaching and Researching Office of Orchestration, then was promoted as a professor'.<sup>19</sup>

From 1956, Soviet musicians including Arabov, Gullov and Barashev arrived at the conservatory and taught Western compositional theory, harmony and

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<sup>14</sup> Jingyi Chang, 'The Surging Emotions – An Interview with Professor Chen Peixun', p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> Yuhe Wang, *Zhongyang yinyue xueyuan yuanshi* [The History of the Central Conservatory of Music (1950-1990)] (中央音乐学院院史 1950-1990) (Beijing: Editorial Department of the History of Central Conservatory of Music, 1989), p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Jingyi Chang, p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> This information comes from Chen himself. He wrote a chapter to introduce his piano pieces. See: Peixun Chen, 'Guanyu jishou gangqin qu de jian dan jieshao' [A Brief Introduction to Several Piano Pieces] (关于几首钢琴曲的简单介绍), in *Chen Peixun gangqin zuopin xuanji* [Chen Peixun's Selected Works for the Piano] (陈培勋钢琴作品选集), ed. by Daojin Tong (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 2002), pp. 16-19.

<sup>19</sup> Jingyi Chang, p. 6.

orchestration.<sup>20</sup> In addition to tutors and senior students from the Department of Composition at the Central Conservatory of Music, other music colleges and music associations in China also assigned some young teachers and composers to attend the classes delivered by them. Chen studied in the class of orchestration. Because of his outstanding performance in the class, he assumed the position of the orchestration group's leader.<sup>21</sup> During the three years of learning from the Soviet teachers, Chen appreciated their teaching contributions. He stated:

The Soviet experts have played an important role in cultivating talents in composition and teaching in China. Their contributions cannot go unnoticed... They are extremely rigorous in their research attitude, high in their teaching level, and very concerned about students, which is intensively related to the growth of the first and second generation of Chinese composers and teachers after liberation.<sup>22</sup>

After 1958, Chairman Mao's poems were published. To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the National Day, in 1959, Chen composed his orchestral pieces, *Ode to Snow* (《咏雪》) and *Loushan Pass* (《娄山关》) based on Mao's poems.<sup>23</sup> In 1960, entrusted by Li Ling from the Central Philharmonic, he completed the symphonic poem, *The Surging Emotions* (《心潮逐浪高》) also based on Mao's work.<sup>24</sup>

In 1964, merely two years before the Cultural Revolution, in accordance with the requirement of the Beijing Municipal Party Committee, all staff and students of the Central Conservatory of Music participated in the *Si-Qing* Movement, and all courses were terminated.<sup>25</sup> According to Bao Yuankai's memories, who was a student of

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<sup>20</sup> This information is collected based on the interview with Huang Zanrong who was the classmate of Chen at that time. See: Jun Li, *Research on Chen Peixun and his Musical Creations*, p. 16.

<sup>21</sup> This comes from the words based on Chen himself. See: Jingyi Chang, 'The Surging Emotions – An Interview with Professor Chen Peixun', p. 6

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Jun Li, p. 181.

<sup>25</sup> *Si-Qing* Movement (四清运动), from 1963-66, was a socialist education movement to overhaul the fields of politics, economy, associations and ideological issues.

Chen and assigned to the same group with Chen at that time, besides the political work, Chen continued to take unfinished courses in composition and orchestration in between. Bao had continuous private lessons with Chen for eight months.<sup>26</sup> After the end of the movement in May 1965, Chen and Bao were assigned to the countryside. The orchestration lessons left unfinished in the movement were continued there. Although Chen could not implement teaching according to his own intentions, the mimeographed teaching examples were completely changed to *The Red Detachment of Women* (《红色娘子军》), *The White-Haired Girl* (《白毛女》), *The Monument to the People's Heroes* (《人民英雄纪念碑》) and other Chinese revolutionary works which were approved by the government. Bao once claimed:

However, the orchestration assignments Mr. Chen gave us were all Western music because they didn't have to go public, different from the open pieces used in class. What impressed me most was the first movement of Beethoven's Sonata No. 1, the first movement of Sonata No. 5, the first and second movements of Sonata No. 8, Grieg's *Norwegian Dance* Op. 35, No. 2, Chopin's *Polonaise in A major*, Op. 40 No. 1, *By the Hearth: January* and *Snowdrop: April* from Tchaikovsky's *The Seasons* Op. 37, as well as Debussy's *La fille aux cheveux de lin* and *Clair de Lune*.<sup>27</sup>

In June 1966, with the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, the 'secret' orchestration lessons had to be stopped.

Guided by the orthodox ideology that musicians were required to compose music to serve political purposes during the revolution, Chen composed and arranged three works. One was that Chen worked with another composer, Chu Wanghua, to compose the piano concerto, *The International Ode* (《国际歌颂》).

Chu once wrote:

Around the time of the September 13 Incident [in 1971], we heard Chairman Mao Zedong's instructions to sing *The Internationale*. The Central Conservatory of Music... was under the leadership of the military-political commissaire during that time when Chen Peixun and [I] composed the piano concerto, *The International Ode* with the melody of *The Internationale* as the theme... I was responsible for the structure writing of the piano solo part (consisting of four movements). Chen Peixun was in charge of the orchestration. At that time, Chen

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<sup>26</sup> Yuankai Bao, 'Huainian enshi Chen Peixun xianshang' [Cherishing the Memory of My Teacher, Mr. Chen Peixun] (怀念恩师陈培勋先生), *People's Music*, 2 (2008), 54-55 (p. 54).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

Peixun was an associate professor in the Composition Department. He was good at arranging the orchestra with various techniques, which greatly enriched the colour of the work and also inspired me. The song... was performed numerous times in Hebei province, and introduced to the local army and civilians.<sup>28</sup>

Another two musical works were arranged by Chen based on traditional Chinese music during the Cultural Revolution. In 1975, Chen arranged the piano transcription, *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* (《平湖秋月》) based on an original *gaohu* solo piece with the same name. In the following year, he arranged another piano transcription, *Flowing Water* (《流水》) derived from a piece of ancient music.<sup>29</sup>

With the end of the Cultural Revolution, Chen Peixun's creative music career blossomed. From 1976, Chen's orchestral pieces started to flourish. In 1977, he arranged the orchestration for the traditional music, *A Night of Flowers and Moonlight by the Spring River* (《春江花月夜》) as a piece of orchestral music, *New Arrangement for Ancient Music Op. 20, No. 2* (《欢乐的春江花月夜》).<sup>30</sup> Chen's first symphony, *My Country* (《我的祖国》) with two movements was originally composed during 1960-64. However, the full music score was lost during the Cultural Revolution. In 1976, he rewrote the first and the second movements, adding the third movement in 1989 to finish the whole piece.<sup>31</sup> In addition, in 1980, Chen composed his second symphony, *Ritual for Martyrs Op. 22* (《清明祭》) for dedication to the warriors who gave their lives for the truth during the Cultural Revolution.<sup>32</sup>

In 1981, Chen decided to return to his birthplace, Hong Kong,<sup>33</sup> where he continued his teaching at the Music College of Hong Kong Baptist University until his

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<sup>28</sup> Wanghua Chu, "'Jiti chuangzuo" de niandai' [The Age of "Collective Creation"] ("集体创作的年代), *Piano Artistry*, 4 (1999), 11-13 (p. 12).

<sup>29</sup> Peixun Chen, 'A Brief Introduction to Several Piano Pieces', p. 17.

<sup>30</sup> Maochun Liang, 'Preface of the Selected Piano Pieces by Chen Peixun', p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Yuankai Bao, 'Cherishing the Memory of My Teacher, Mr. Chen Peixun', p. 55.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> According to the explanations of Chen's son (Chen Dagang), Chen moving back to Hong Kong in 1981 was for personal and family reasons: Chen's mother had been living in Hong Kong alone, and he also wanted to help his children build careers there and continue

retirement in 1986. Liang Maochun, one of Chen's pupils at the Central Conservatory, commented: 'We may describe Mr. Chen's later years' activities by using the old Chinese saying of "a weathered steed in his stable aiming to reach a destination of a thousand miles away".<sup>34</sup> Indeed, Chen did not give up composition at all when he moved back to Hong Kong. For example, in 1984, Chen composed his concerto work, *Theme on Cantonese Music* (《广东音乐主题》) for the Chinese traditional instrument, *gaohu*. In 1987, entrusted by the Hong Kong Municipal Council, he created the Chinese traditional ensemble music, *Motherland Ode* (《祖国颂》).<sup>35</sup> In 2007, after dedicating his whole life to music, Chen reached the end of his life.

Chen's son Chen Dagang evaluates him as a musician who was unsociable but strict in composing with a rigorous attitude.<sup>36</sup> Chen's student Liang Maochun considers that Chen was better able to express himself by using the language of music rather than words.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, reviewing Chen's whole life, including his life of music study, music teaching at a professional music institution and music creation as a composer, he completely expressed his concepts of the world around him through music. On the one hand, Chen followed a path from learning piano performance, to exploring a colourful world in Western music with rich resources. The learning of Western music theory in composition laid a solid foundation for Chen to teach and start to create his own music later. Western music became the first tutor to introduce and guide Chen, entering the gate of the field of music. Then, Chen himself as Chinese, and his cultural background rooted in his nationality, led him to compose music in a Chinese way. From his early music creations in Mendelssohn's style to the five piano pieces in the style of Cantonese music and other traditional Chinese

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teaching after his retirement from the Central Conservatory. During the holiday periods, based on Chen's daughter's (Chen Wei) memory, Chen frequently returned back to Beijing to visit his old friends, and lived in Guangzhou some time as his wife still lived there. See: Jun Li, *Research on Chen Peixun and his Musical Creations*, pp. 25-27.

<sup>34</sup> Maochun Liang, 'Preface of the Selected Piano Pieces by Chen Peixun', p. 14.

<sup>35</sup> Jun Li, p. 183.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

ensemble and orchestral music, Chen absorbed Western knowledge and blended its composing techniques with Chinese culture and traditional elements to create new compositions with a Chinese flavour. In his piano works, Chen still maintained numerous techniques of Western classical music, showing a rigorous attitude in sinicizing Western music. Chen once explained: 'It is far from enough to learn Western harmony and counterpoint. [We] must learn to use it flexibly. In turn, only applying [elementary notes from] a pentatonic scale without added notes, the music must be unconsolidated and restricted'.<sup>38</sup> In Chen's attitude, he balanced the application of techniques from Western and Chinese music, not simply following the composing tradition of Western classical music but also respecting the traditional mindset in Chinese culture, showing his unique national characteristics in music.

On the other hand, Chen's entire musical life was bonded tightly with politics. At an early stage, during the time of the Second World War, he actively participated in patriotic activities, making contributions to the survival of the Chinese nation by using his musical talent. Chen admitted that his wife, who became a member of the Chinese Communist Party in the 1940s, had a profound influence on his musical career:

She was already an underground member of the Chinese Communist Party when I was studying at the Shanghai National Institute of Music. Under her influence, I joined the New Music Movement. In 1949, I moved to the north with her to teach at the Central Conservatory of Music. Another time, I had the idea of returning to Hong Kong because I was unhappy at work. It was also because I accepted her advice, and then decided to stay. My third symphony, Symphony No. 3 Op. 25, *Ode to Plum and Pine Trees* (《第三交响乐—梅松赞》) is dedicated to her.<sup>39</sup>

Besides the direct influence from his wife which made Chen have a close connection with politics, his musical compositions also demonstrate orthodox ideology. Chen spares no effort to compose music based on traditional Chinese culture and music. In his creations, he wants to arouse resonance with his audiences. Chen explained his intention:

I believe that composing should not be divorced from people's lives and should not be incomprehensible to people. I think it will not succeed to emphasise

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<sup>38</sup> Jingyi Chang, 'The Surging Emotions – An Interview with Professor Chen Peixun', p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



modernity and show off skills... However, the music from some of our young composers has no definite content, which does not meet the requirements of our party and society. I think we should maintain the tradition of creating works that combine realism and romanticism.<sup>40</sup>

Chen's explanations show that his concept of composing music adhered to the political ideology that Mao announced in his Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art in 1942. In Mao's talk, he required literary and art workers not to isolate themselves from the masses but conscientiously to study the language of the masses. Paving the road from the masses, literature and art in the people's lives are the raw materials for artists' creations. In turn, the creations serve the people. Mao also demands that artistic creations select and inherit heritage and critically absorb all beneficial things from it. Finally, creations are based on the position of the proletariat, and music serves politics.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, Chen's music composing aims to approach the Chinese people, which illustrates the political ideology published in the 1960s by Premier Zhou Enlai: 'Musical creations and performing arts must be revolutionary, national and popular'.<sup>42</sup>

From both the cultural and political perspectives, Chen indeed established an image as a fervent Chinese patriot: the national style he presents in his musical compositions demonstrates his devotion to traditional Chinese culture. For the Chinese government, following political guidance is one demonstration of patriotism. Thus, Chen's active participation in political events and showing political ideologies through his music become the obvious evidence of his patriotism.

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<sup>40</sup> Jingyi Chang, 'The Surging Emotions – An Interview with Professor Chen Peixun', p. 8.

<sup>41</sup> Zedong Mao, 'Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art', *Marxists*, 1942 <[https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3\\_08.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_08.htm)> [accessed 20 October 2022].

<sup>42</sup> Editorial Department, 'Guyu yinyue geminghua, minzuhua, qunzhonghua wenti de taolun qingkuang' [Discussion on Music Creations being Revolutionary, National and Popular] (关于音乐革命化、民族化、群众化问题的讨论情况), *People's Music*, 9 (1964), 43-48.

## Background Information on *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake*

The original solo version of *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake*, performed on the traditional Chinese instrument *gaohu*, was composed by the Chinese composer, Lü Wencheng in the 1930s.<sup>43</sup> Lü, a musical innovator and instrument reformer, was born in 1898 in Guangdong Province. In a turbulent social environment, his father brought him to live in Shanghai in 1901.<sup>44</sup> However, life in Shanghai was never easy for them. Lü had to do several part-time jobs, helping his father maintain their living even though he was still a child. When he was 10 years old in 1908, Lü acquired the chance, to study at the Guangzhao Free School founded by a church.<sup>45</sup> In the period of the late Qing Dynasty and the early Republic of China, Shanghai was a melting pot of cultures, and music activities frequently happened there. Lü eagerly accepted the music learning opportunities, including the influence of Lingnan culture, especially Cantonese music from the Cantonese musicians in Shanghai, as well as Jiangnan Silk and Bamboo music and Western music. Since his childhood love of folk music, Lü had a part-time job in a traditional Cantonese orchestra, responsible for organising musical instruments and other chores. During this period, he attentively observed musicians playing and singing, and found time to learn the *erhu* and the *yangqin* (Chinese dulcimer) and to sing Cantonese operas. Before he was 20, Lü had already mastered Cantonese music and won great praise from his

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<sup>43</sup> The first recording of this piece was made in 1933, and the earliest version of the music sheet appeared in 1934. See: Tingyao Huang, 'Minguo Shanghai de Guangdong xin shengyin – Guangdong yueren yu Jiangnan yueren de jiaoliu' [New Cantonese Music in Republic of China in Shanghai – Communications between Cantonese Musicians and Jiangnan Musicians] (民国上海的广东新声音—广东乐人与江南乐人的交流), *Music Research*, 27 (2017), 1-48 (p. 35).

<sup>44</sup> Weiyin Yin, 'Lü Wencheng: degao yizhong de yidai yueyue zongshi' [Lü Wencheng: A Respectable Master in Cantonese Music] (吕文成: 艺高德重的一代粤乐宗师), *Net of the Quintessence of Chinese Culture*, 2011 <[http://www.51zheng.com/Article\\_Show.asp?ArticleID=36904&ArticlePage=1](http://www.51zheng.com/Article_Show.asp?ArticleID=36904&ArticlePage=1)> [accessed 25 October 2021].

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

peers.<sup>46</sup> Lü once said: ‘I admit to having developed an inexplicable interest in musical art, especially Chinese music. So I choose *erhu* and *yangqin* as my lifelong musical companions’.<sup>47</sup>

In 1919, at the age of 21, Lü Wencheng joined the China Music Association in Shanghai. He met numerous musicians there, and they exchanged their skills and interpretations about music, which intensively improved Lü’s level of performance.<sup>48</sup> After becoming a master of performing traditional Chinese music, Lü met Situ Mengyan, a naval architect, violinist and violin producer who had returned to Shanghai after studying in the United States. Lü learned violin and Western music theory from him.<sup>49</sup>

In the 1920s, Lü’s explorations revolutionised Cantonese music: by combining his beloved Cantonese music from his hometown with Peking Opera and Jiangnan Silk and Bamboo music, he created a unique style of ‘New Cantonese Music’ (*xin Guangdong yinyue*, 新广东音乐) that combined the traditional characteristics of Cantonese music with the lyric style of Shanghai traditional music. This ‘New Cantonese Music’ was spread quickly all over China.<sup>50</sup> After achieving reformation in Cantonese music, in the 1930s, Lü, as an *erhu* player, made a bold change. As he often performed the *erhu*, he noticed that the instrument’s narrow range limited the performance of the music, while the violin’s wide range fascinated him. Therefore, he attempted to apply the techniques of performing high notes on the violin to the *erhu* and the range of the *erhu* was rapidly expanded.<sup>51</sup> Lü did not stop there but

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<sup>46</sup>Weiyin Yin, ‘Lü Wencheng: A Respectable Master in Cantonese Music’.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Banxia, ‘Buduan jinqi de yinyue ren – woguo zhuming zuoqujia Lü Wencheng xilie Gushi (er)’ [A Progressive Musician – Stories of the Famous Chinese Composer, Lü Wencheng (Part Two)] (不断进取的音乐人——我国著名作曲家吕文成系列故事(二)), *Little Musician*, 8 (2016), 18-19 (p. 18)

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Weiyin Yin, ‘Lü Wencheng: A Respectable Master in Cantonese Music’.

<sup>51</sup> Banxia, ‘Yigao dezhong “erhu wang” – woguo zhuming zuoqujia Lü Wencheng xilie gushi (san)’ [A Respectable Master of Erhu – Stories of the Famous Chinese Composer, Lü

continued with his research. He determined to replace the outer silk string of the *erhu* with the steel string of the violin. The sound of the steel string is bright and metallic, with the loud high pitch, which clearly shows the bright tone colour in high pitch register. Meanwhile, Lü raised the tuning of the *erhu*'s strings by a perfect fourth.<sup>52</sup> The effect was more obvious and intense than before. All innovations made by Lü on this revised instrument, finally, changed the expression in music performance of the *erhu*. In 1949, this modified instrument, the *erhu* with high pitch was named *gaohu* (*gao* in Chinese means high).<sup>53</sup> Lü's revolutionary changes in musical instrument-making greatly altered the timbre, volume and range of the traditional *erhu* in Jiangnan Silk and Bamboo music. As a result, the *gaohu* became the principal instrument in 'New Cantonese Music'. It had great significance in promoting the development of performance forms of Cantonese music in a new style.

*Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* is an example of Lü's 'New Cantonese Music'. In the 1930s, Lü once visited the enchanting environment of West Lake;<sup>54</sup> touched by the charming natural scenery, he composed this piece with the new musical style combining Cantonese music and traditional Shanghai music, performed as *gaohu* solo.<sup>55</sup> The title of this piece, *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake*, comes from one of the celebrated ten views of the West Lake in Hangzhou (see Fig. 2.1 ).<sup>56</sup>

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Wencheng (Part Three)] (艺高德重的“二胡王”——我国著名作曲家吕文成系列故事(三)), *Little Musician*, 8 (2016), 20-21 (p. 20).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>54</sup> The West Lake is a famous natural landscape in China, located in Hangzhou City next to Shanghai.

<sup>55</sup> Tingyao Huang, 'New Cantonese Music in Republic of China in Shanghai – Communications between Cantonese Musicians and Jiangnan Musicians', p. 35.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

Figure 2.1. The view of the Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake<sup>57</sup>



The history of this view can be traced back to the Tang Dynasty (618-907). Then, the Kangxi Emperor of the Qing Dynasty (1636-1912) named this location and the charming view of the Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake. It depicts a natural scene at the time of an invigorating autumn night, when the lake is calm as a mirror with a bright autumn moon in the sky, and the moon is reflected in the lake.

In 1975, because of a political request from the government, entrusted by Yin Chengzong from the Central Philharmonic Composing Group and professor, Zhou Guangren from the Central Conservatory of Music, Chen Peixun arranged this *gaohu* solo piece as a piano transcription,<sup>58</sup> together with his four other piano pieces, *Selling Sundry Goods* and *Longing for Spring*, Op. 5, *Bolt of Thunder in Drought*, Op. 6 and *A Pair of Butterflies Flying*, Op. 7, named as *Five Piano Pieces of Cantonese*

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<sup>57</sup> Hangzhou Government Net, '[Xihu shijing] pinghu qiuyue' [[Ten Views of the West Lake] Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake] ([西湖十景]平湖秋月), *Hangzhou Government Net*, 2020 <[http://www.hangzhou.gov.cn/art/2020/11/21/art\\_1229497234\\_59030061.html](http://www.hangzhou.gov.cn/art/2020/11/21/art_1229497234_59030061.html)> [accessed 25 October 2021].

<sup>58</sup> In Chen's own words, he did not explain why Yin and Zhou wanted Chen particularly to arrange this piece. See: Peixun Chen, 'A Brief Introduction to A Few Piano Pieces', p. 16.

*Music*.<sup>59</sup> When Chen returned back to Hong Kong in the 1980s, he again arranged it as a *gaohu* concerto.<sup>60</sup>

## Musical Analysis of the Original *Gaohu* Version and the Piano Transcription

*Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* is a typical composition with the style of ‘New Cantonese Music’ which includes absorbing the musical characteristics of Jiangnan Silk and Bamboo music. The following analysis, therefore, firstly examines the evidence to demonstrate the relationship between the *gaohu* piece *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* and Jiangnan music. Then the analysis moves to the elements that the piano piece inherits from the *gaohu* version. Finally, through the compositional arrangement in texture, dynamics and other aspects, the transcription is not merely a piano version of the piece of traditional *gaohu* music but develops into a mature piano work with Chen’s creation.

### The style of ‘New Cantonese Music’

#### — the performing instrument and the traditional composing technique

Cantonese music (*Guangdong yinyue*, 广东音乐) is a music genre formed in the early twentieth century. Some research defines Cantonese music merely as instrumental music.<sup>61</sup> Other research considers it as including more categories such as Cantonese opera music (both in Mandarin and Cantonese), Cantonese folk and

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<sup>59</sup> This information is written in Chen’s pupil, Bao Yuankai’s article. See: Yuankai Bao, ‘Cherishing the Memory of My Teacher, Mr. Chen Peixun’, p. 54.

<sup>60</sup> This information comes from Chen himself. See: Jingyi Chang, ‘The Surging Emotions – An Interview with Professor Chen Peixun’, p. 6.

<sup>61</sup> Jingyi Chang, ‘Chen Peixun wushou yuediao gangqinqu pingxi’ [Analysis on Chen Peixun’s Five Piano Compositions in Cantonese Style] (陈培勋五首粤调钢琴曲评析), *Piano Artistry*, 6 (1999), 10-14 (p. 13).

ballad music, as well as Cantonese solo instrumental and ensemble music.<sup>62</sup> ‘New Cantonese Music’ in this research refers to the type of traditional Cantonese music that absorbed musical elements and styles from other musical genres in the first half of the twentieth century when Cantonese musicians lived in Shanghai.<sup>63</sup> Lü Wencheng was one of the inventors of ‘New Cantonese Music’, and his compositions illustrate such compound colours. For example, *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* shows elements of Jiangnan Silk and Bamboo music popular in the Shanghai area. The first evidence comes from the performing instrument of this piece. *Erhu* is one of the principal instruments in Jiangnan Silk and Bamboo ensemble music. Lü mastered the *erhu* in Shanghai in the 1920s and was recognised as the ‘doctor of *erhu*’.<sup>64</sup> His invented instrument, *gaohu* is a derivative of *erhu*. Therefore, *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* as a *gaohu* solo, to a certain degree, produces similar sound effects to the *erhu*, both being types of bowed string instruments.

The creation of the melody of *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* was also impacted by the traditional composing technique in Jiangnan music. The eight famous pieces in Jiangnan music repertory are developed from musical materials of smaller units known as *qupai*,<sup>65</sup> also interpreted as skeleton melodies or mother tunes.<sup>66</sup> Witzleben interprets this concept as follows:

If we understand a ‘piece’ to be a self-contained musical unit that is performed as an entity and a ‘tune’ to be a smaller archetypal musical unit that is the

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<sup>62</sup> Tingyao Huang, ‘New Cantonese Music in Republic of China in Shanghai – Communications between Cantonese Musicians and Jiangnan Musicians’, pp. 8-9.

<sup>63</sup> See: *Ibid.*, pp. 1-48.

<sup>64</sup> Weiyin Yin, ‘Lü Wencheng: A Respectable Master in Cantonese Music’.

<sup>65</sup> The eight famous pieces in Jiangnan music repertory include *Zhonghua Liuban* (中花六板), *Sanliu* (三六), *Xingjie* (行街), *Huanle Ge* (欢乐歌), *Yunqing* (云庆), *Shihe Ruyi* (四合如意), *Man Liuban* (慢六板), *Man Sanliu* (慢三六). See: J. Lawrence Witzleben, “*Silk and Bamboo*” *Music in Shanghai: the Jiangnan Sizhu Instrumental Ensemble Tradition* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1995), pp. 58-60.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

source of various pieces or portions of pieces, *qupai* usually function as tunes in *Jiangnan sizhu*.<sup>67</sup>

A *qupai* can be a piece of itself or a section of a complete piece or the basis of even a whole musical piece.<sup>68</sup> When a *qupai* develops into an independent music piece, a traditional composing technique is applied as *fangman jiahua* (放慢加花): making the *qupai* melody slower in tempo and adding more ornamental notes in the melodic line. This kind of transforming process is also explained as expansion, either strict (in which each beat in a new piece metrically responds to it in an original *qupai*) or free (in which some sections from an original *qupai* have been revised or even deleted in a new piece) way.<sup>69</sup> This composing process, additionally, involves a high degree of improvisational arrangement, which makes it difficult to identify the archetypal tune of a new piece by listening.<sup>70</sup>

According to Xiang Zuhua's research, Lü's piece is inspired by one of the eight famous pieces of Jiangnan music, *Zhonghua Liuban* (《中花六板》).<sup>71</sup> The following analysis (Ex. 2.1) compares the details between *Zhonghua Liuban* and *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake*. Another perspective from Yang Weijie, however, claims that Lü's piece is based on the melody of another Jiangnan music piece, *Huanle Ge* (《欢乐歌》, see Ex. 2.2).<sup>72</sup> Although only some of the same notes appear in the

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<sup>67</sup> Witzleben, "Silk and Bamboo" *Music in Shanghai: the Jiangnan Sizhu Instrumental Ensemble Tradition*, p. 70.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid, p. 72.

<sup>71</sup> Xiang Zuhua is a student of the master of Jiangnan Silk and Bamboo music, Ren Huichu who had a close interaction with Lü living in Shanghai during the 1920s. See: Zuhua Xiang, 'Guoyue guibao cuican duomu – jinian Lü Wencheng danchen 105 zhounian' [The Treasure of Traditional Chinese Music, Lustrous and Brilliant – In Memory of the 105th Anniversary of Lü Wencheng's Birth] (国乐瑰宝 璀璨夺目—纪念吕文成诞辰 105 周年), *Chinese Music*, 1 (2004), 97, 125 (p. 97).

<sup>72</sup> Weijie Yang, 'Jiangnan sizhu yu Guangdong yinyue' [Jiangnan Silk and Bamboo Music and Cantonese Music] (江南丝竹与广东音乐), in *Zhongguo yinyue daoshuang* [Listening to Chinese Music] (中国音乐导赏), ed. by Quanfeng Huang (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 2009), pp. 46-71.



analysis of the first eight bars in *Zhonghua Liuban* and in *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake*; the melodic motions and developments contain less similarities. The first four bars in *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* are regarded as transforming the tune from *Huanle Ge* in a free arrangement (not strict in metre and melody) with more newly added ornamentation notes (the next four bars in *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* present several of the same notes as the last five bars in *Huanle Ge*). Through the detailed comparison with two pieces of Jiangnan music thought to be related to *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake*, the musical analysis in this research confirms that both of these Jiangnan pieces are sources of Lü's music in that Lü's composing technique is influenced by the melody from both. Lü selects Jiangnan music tunes, and then by his innovative treatment of adding more passing tones and revising some original phrases, he creates his new Cantonese music piece. This interpretation is consistent with Lü's own explanation that *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* was arranged by adding ornamentation notes and variations to Jiangnan music tunes (even though no specific Jiangnan music pieces are indicated by Lü).<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Qiwei Yu, 'Guanyu yueyue de yixie "huo shiliao" – He Huang tan Lü Wencheng ji qita' [Some "Living Historical Materials" about Cantonese Music – He Huang's Talk on Lü Wencheng and Others] (关于粤乐的一些“活史料” – 何晃谈吕文成及其他), *Guangdong Arts*, 3 (2002), 43 (p. 43).

Example 2.1. Comparing the first eight bars in *Zhonghua Liuban* (a)<sup>74</sup> and in the *gao*hu music of *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* (b)<sup>75</sup>

a)  $\overset{2}{\underset{\text{tr}}{\text{3}}} - - - \overset{4}{\underset{\text{tr}}{\text{4}}}$  |

b) 3 3 5 3̇2 |

a)  $\overset{2}{\text{3}} \cdot \overset{2}{\text{2}} \overset{5}{\text{5}} \overset{3}{\text{3}} \overset{5}{\text{5}} \overset{7}{\text{7}} \overset{6}{\text{6}} \overset{1}{\text{1}} \overset{5}{\text{5}} \overset{7}{\text{7}} \overset{6}{\text{6}} - - - \overset{1}{\text{1}}$  |

b) i 3̇6 i 2 3̇5 7 6 i 5 | 0 3̇2 i 3̇6 i 2 3̇ 7 6 i |

a)  $\overset{5}{\text{2}} \overset{7}{\text{5}} \overset{6}{\text{7}} \overset{2}{\text{6}} \overset{3}{\text{2}} \overset{5}{\text{3}} \overset{5}{\text{5}}$  |

b) 5 6 5 3 5 3 2 5 i 3 5 6 |

a)  $\overset{2}{\text{1}} - - - \overset{3}{\text{3}} \overset{5}{\text{5}}$  |

b) 6 7 6 5 4 6 4 3 2 | 0 5 3 |

a)  $\overset{2}{\text{2}} \cdot \overset{3}{\text{3}} \overset{1}{\text{i}} \overset{2}{\text{i}} \overset{7}{\text{7}} \overset{6}{\text{6}} \cdot \overset{1}{\text{i}} \overset{3}{\text{3}} \overset{2}{\text{2}}$  |

b) 2 1 2 3 5 6 5 3 2 1 2 3 5 6 |

a)  $\overset{4}{\text{5}} \overset{4}{\text{4}} \overset{5}{\text{5}} \overset{3}{\text{3}} \cdot \overset{5}{\text{5}} \overset{6}{\text{6}} \overset{1}{\text{i}} \overset{5}{\text{5}} \overset{6}{\text{6}} \overset{3}{\text{3}} \overset{2}{\text{2}} \overset{5}{\text{5}} \overset{3}{\text{3}} \overset{2}{\text{2}} \overset{2}{\text{2}} \overset{3}{\text{3}}$  |

b) 4 6 4 3 2 3 5 6 4 5 3 2 1 | 0 3̇2 i i 3 5 7 6 |

<sup>74</sup> The musical notation of *Zhonghua Liuban* is from: Guqu Net, 'Zhonghua Liuban' (中花六板), *Guqu Net*, [n.d.] <[http://pu.guqu.net/dizi/20060828202900\\_507.html](http://pu.guqu.net/dizi/20060828202900_507.html)> [25 February 2022].

<sup>75</sup> The musical notation of *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* comes from: Wencheng Lü, 'Pinghu qiuyue (youming zui taiping)' [*Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake*, also Named as *Zui*

Example 2.2. Comparing the first section in *Huanle Ge* (a) and in *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* (b)<sup>76</sup>

The image displays five systems of musical notation comparing two pieces. Each system consists of two staves, (a) and (b). Staff (a) contains notes with various ornaments (accents, trills, etc.) and some notes are boxed in red. Staff (b) contains notes, some with ornaments, and some notes are also boxed in red. Red arrows point from the boxed notes in staff (a) to the corresponding boxed notes in staff (b), illustrating the comparison between the two pieces.

*Taiping*] (平湖秋月 (又名《醉太平》)), in *Lü Wencheng guangdong yinyue quji* [Lü Wensheng's Cantonese Music Collection] (吕文成广东音乐曲集), ed. by Guangdong Institute of Contemporary Literature and Art (Guangzhou: Guangzhou Publishing House, 2006), p. 6.

<sup>76</sup> The musical notation of *Huanle Ge* is from: Cnscore Net, 'Huanle Ge' (欢乐歌), *Cnscore Net*, [n.d.] <<https://m.cnscore.com/Score/Show/?FileName=208327>> [25 February 2022].

More added notes have been shown in other versions of *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake*. In his piano transcription, Chen completely transfers the original melody onto the piano, also adding two more passing notes compared with Lü's music notation (Ex. 2.3). Even in *gaohu* performance versions, through improvised arrangement, the feature of applying *jiahua* technique produces more tones than appear in the original melody. In Lü's own recording, the decorated passing notes become more variable in the performance (Ex. 2.4).<sup>77</sup> Another professional *gaohu* player, Yu Qiwei also illustrates a similar application of adding more passing notes but in different arrangements in his performance version of this piece (Ex. 25).<sup>78</sup> Besides this, the comparison between both the performance versions and Lü's musical notation reveals many differences in detail. Yu especially explains the concept of applying improvised technique in performance of traditional Chinese music: improvisation is very commonly used in traditional music performance, and the melodic expression, the musicality of the piece, the tempo changes, the use of *jiahua* techniques and gracenotes, etc., can vary from one performance to another, depending on the collaboration of different instruments, the actual venue and the diverse levels of audiences.<sup>79</sup> This interpretation also illustrates the reason why in Yu's and even Lü's own performances, while the framework of the overall musical structure remains the same, there are many differences with the original musical notation in the details.

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<sup>77</sup> The musical notation of Lü's performance version is transcribed by this research. The recording of Lü's performance can be found: Ng Rui Jun, *Autumn Moon Over a Calm Lake (Guangdong Gaohu) - Lü Wencheng*, online video recording, YouTube, 12 July 2020, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsAEZQRMop4>> [accessed 31 May 2023].

<sup>78</sup> Yu Qiwei is a celebrated *gaohu* player, working as a professor at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts. This music is his performance version notated in 1986. See: Qiwei Yu, *Zhongguo Guangdong yinyue · gaohu mingqu huicui (xiuding ban)* [Chinese Cantonese Music · A Collection of Famous *Gaohu* Compositions (Revised Edition)] (中国广东音乐 · 高胡名曲荟萃(修订版)) (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 2002), pp. 60-64.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

Example 2.3. Comparing Section A of Lü Wencheng's *gaohu* version (transcribed into staff notation) and Chen Peixun's piano transcription with two more passing notes added

The image displays a musical score for a piece in E-flat major (three flats). It is divided into four systems, each containing a *gaohu* staff and a piano transcription staff. The piano transcription is written in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs).

- System 1:** The *gaohu* staff begins with a melody marked *mf*. The piano transcription features a *mp* accompaniment with the instruction *dolce e spr.*
- System 2:** A red box highlights a specific melodic phrase in the *gaohu* staff. The piano transcription includes a *mp* accompaniment.
- System 3:** This system shows a more complex piano accompaniment with dense textures in both hands.
- System 4:** The *gaohu* staff has a *f* dynamic. The piano transcription includes a *f* dynamic with a *rall.* (ritardando) marking, and a *mf* dynamic. A red box highlights a melodic phrase in the *gaohu* staff.

Example 2.4. Comparing the first section in Lü's music sheet (a) and the notation informed by his performing version (b)

a) 3 3 5 3̇2̇ | i 3̇6i 2̇ 3̇5̇ 7 6i 5 |

b) 3 3 5 3̇2̇ | i 6i 2̇ 3̇5̇ 7 6i 5 |

a) 0 3̇2̇ i 3̇6i 2̇ 3̇ 7 6i | 5 65 3532 5i35 6 |

b) 0 5̇3̇2̇ i 6i 2̇ 3̇5̇ 7 6i | 5 6i 3523 5i35 6·7 |

a) 6 765 46 43 2 0 53 | 2123 56 53 2123 5 6 |

b) 6 765 56i53 2 2 53 | 2123 56i53 2123 5 6i65 |

a) 4 6 43 2356 45 32 1 | 0 3̇2̇ i i 3 57 6 |

b) 4· 643 2356 4·532 1 | 0 3̇2̇ i i 3 57 6·7 |



## The overall structure of the music (the original *gaohu* version and the piano transcription)

Another characteristic of ‘New Cantonese Music’ presented in *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* is its short and simple musical structure.<sup>80</sup> In the *gaohu* version, it only has four sections with a total of 21 bars. Chen’s arrangement closely follows the original version, while adding a brief introduction and extending the coda. The comparison of the structure in both versions is analysed below:

Table 2.1. The comparison of the structure in the versions of the *gaohu* and the piano transcription

The <i>gaohu</i> version	The piano transcription
	Introduction (bb. 1-2)
Section 1 (bb. 1-8)	Section A (bb. 2-9)
Section 2 (bb. 9-12)	Section B (bb. 10-13)
Section 3 (bb. 13-20)	Section C (bb. 14-22)
Coda (b. 21)	Coda (bb. 23-26)

The newly created introduction in the piano transcription is mainly composed of demisemiquaver arpeggios in the right-hand voice. The composer once explained his intention that this piano piece aims to convey the artistic expression of the title.<sup>81</sup> Thus, with the tempo of *lento* and gentle dynamics of *piano*, the soft and continuously moving demisemiquavers here depict the slowly flowing water, which corresponds to the calm lake in the title. Such successive arpeggios also pave the way for the development of this music, as they form the accompaniment throughout the whole piece (demisemiquavers and semiquavers in the introduction, section A

<sup>80</sup> Jingyi Chang, ‘Analysis on Chen Peixun’s five Piano Compositions in Cantonese Style’, p. 13.

<sup>81</sup> Peixun Chen, ‘A Brief Introduction to A Few Piano Pieces’, p. 16.



and coda, hemidemisemiquavers in section B). Another function of this accompaniment texture is to make the harmonic progressions less distinct.

When the music reaches the theme in section A, the melodic line is presented in the high register, imitating the sound of the *gaohu* whose range usually extends from A4-E7.<sup>82</sup> Also, the ornamental acciaccaturas (Ex. 2.6) applied in the piano transcription tend to achieve a similar sound effect to the portamento in *gaohu* playing. In Lü's *gaohu* music score, there are no performance notations or expression markings. On the other hand, in Yu's performance music sheet, he indicates detailed performance suggestions, including portamento markings. However, the acciaccaturas in the piano version are applied at different places compared with Yu's portamento notation (Ex. 2.7). Again, informed by Yu's explanation of improvised technique used in traditional *gaohu* playing, the specific notation in Yu's performance version is one improvised arrangement based on Lü's original music. In Chen's transcription, for creating a similar sound effect to the ornaments in *gaohu* playing, he indeed produces some creative arrangements on the piano which make this traditional piece fit into this Western instrument performance while borrowing the general portamento sound from the *gaohu*.

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<sup>82</sup> Yuezhe Zhao, and others, 'Gaohu de fayin qiangdu yanjiu' [Research on the Sound Intensity of *Gaohu*] (高胡的发音强度研究), *Science China Press*, 40.9 (2010), 1024-28 (p. 1024).

Example 2.6. The acciaccaturas at bars 2-5 in the piano version

The image displays a musical score for a piano piece, consisting of two systems of staves. The top system includes a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a piano part. The bottom system includes a grand staff and a piano part. The score is marked with *mp dolce espr.* and *mp*. Red boxes highlight specific notes in the upper staves, which are acciaccaturas. The piano part features complex rhythmic patterns with fingerings and accents.

Example 2.7. The portamento markings at bars 3-6 in Yu's *gaohu* performance version (notated in transformed stave)

The image shows a musical score for a performance version of a piece, consisting of two systems of staves. The top system is a single staff with a treble clef, marked with *mf*. The bottom system is a single staff with a bass clef, marked with *mp*. Red boxes highlight specific notes in both staves, which are portamento markings. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

To adapt this piece on the piano appropriately and make it more expressive, the melody starts to change its register frequently. In Section B, the melody in the high pitch moves to the low register in the left-hand voice, altering the musical colour from being bright to heavy. At the end of section B, the setting of dynamics gradually becomes more powerful from mezzo piano to forte.

Such dynamics are maintained to Section C when the melodic line is placed in two-hand voices, both in the bass and the high pitch. The music mood here develops

in a lively spirit. Continually, from bar 17 to 19, the melody communicates between two hands alternately (see Ex. 2.8). From bar 18, the progress of the music reaches its climax. In comparison with the *gaohu* version which is only written in mezzo piano at bar 18 to mezzo forte at bar 19, the piano transcription offers more detailed changes to promote the musical development and make the gradation of musical phrases more distinct: the dynamics sets in fortissimo at bar 18 with the expression marking as *marcato e espr.*, moving to forte at bar 19, then weakening the dynamics from mezzo forte to mezzo piano and slightly slowing down at 20 where in the expression marking is *dolce e espr.*; a transitory mezzo forte appears at the beginning of bar 21, but the music moves into a freer tempo (*a piacere* to *largamente*) gradually reducing the dynamics to pianissimo, to prepare for the final coda.

Example 2.8. The melodic line at bb. 14-22 in Section C in the piano version

14

15

16

Musical score for measures 16-17. The score is in a key with three flats and a 4/4 time signature. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1). The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving bass lines. A dynamic marking of *f* is present. A red horizontal line is drawn across the top of the right-hand staff.

17

Musical score for measures 17-18. The right hand continues the melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1). The left hand features a complex accompaniment with chords and moving bass lines, including a ten-finger chord (10) and a seven-finger chord (7). A dynamic marking of *f* is present. A red horizontal line is drawn across the top of the right-hand staff, and a red arrow points downwards from the right side of the score.

18

Musical score for measures 18-19. The right hand features a complex melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1). The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving bass lines. A dynamic marking of *ff* is present. A red horizontal line is drawn across the bottom of the left-hand staff, and a red arrow points downwards from the left side of the score. The text *ff marcato e espr.* is written below the left-hand staff.

19

Musical score for measures 19-20. The right hand features a complex melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1). The left hand provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving bass lines. A dynamic marking of *ff* is present. A red horizontal line is drawn across the bottom of the left-hand staff, and a red arrow points upwards from the bottom of the score. The text *ff* and *f* are written below the left-hand staff, and *m.s.* is written below the right-hand staff.

20

Musical score for measures 20-21. The score is in G major and 3/4 time. Measure 20 features a melodic line in the right hand with a red line underlining it, starting with a trill and followed by a sixteenth-note scale. The left hand has a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 21 continues the melodic line with a red line, featuring a 'poco rit.' marking and a 'dolce e espr.' marking. The dynamics range from mezzo-forte (mf) to mezzo-piano (mp) and piano (p). Fingerings and articulation marks are present throughout.

21

Musical score for measures 21-22. The score continues from measure 21. Measure 21 features a melodic line in the right hand with a red line underlining it, starting with a trill and followed by a sixteenth-note scale. The left hand has a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 22 continues the melodic line with a red line, featuring an 'a piacere' marking. The dynamics range from mezzo-forte (mf) to mezzo-piano (mp). Fingerings and articulation marks are present throughout.

22

Musical score for measures 22-23. The score continues from measure 22. Measure 22 features a melodic line in the right hand with a red line underlining it, starting with a trill and followed by a sixteenth-note scale. The left hand has a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes. Measure 23 continues the melodic line with a red line, featuring a 'largamente' marking. The dynamics range from pianissimo (pp) to mezzo-forte (mf). Fingerings and articulation marks are present throughout.

In the original *gaohu* version, the coda merely ends on a single note. In the piano transcription, Chen enlarges the scale of this, starting the coda with four trills still accompanied by demisemiquaver arpeggios. Then the dynamics change from mezzo piano to pianissimo and, on the final chord, to the softest expression of piano pianissimo. Thus, the coda echoes the tranquil introduction, and meanwhile ends

this piano piece with a more gradual close rather than a sudden completion as in the original gaohu version. Overall, except for the expanded introduction and coda, Chen's arrangements of following the overall musical structure, transferring the traditional *jiahua* technique and borrowing the general portamento sound from the *gaohu* music onto the piano, are the solid evidence to demonstrate that Chen intentionally remains faithful to the original piece while making it 'work' on the piano.

## Performance Analysis and Suggestions

### Approaches to performance of accompaniment

*Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* as a typical piece of programme music, with its texture of continuous arpeggios throughout the whole piece added to the original music to convey the picture of gentle water movements on the surface of a calm lake. To achieve an appropriate interpretation, performances by several pianists have been analysed to investigate the extent of their faithfulness to the score given by the composer, and to demonstrate how different approaches can impact musical expression. Meanwhile, the *gaohu* performance versions are involved in the analysis to establish a culturally informed approach in which traditional performance helps to shape the piano performance.

The Chinese pianist Bao Huiqiao was the first to perform this piece after it was arranged.<sup>83</sup> Her performance of the continuing demisemiquavers in the introduction is precisely constant in tempo and dynamics, which closely follows the simple notations from the composer: the general tempo begins *lento* and the dynamics merely is marked as *piano* at the beginning. This practical treatment continues to Section A.<sup>84</sup> From Section B, Bao's performance makes the hemidemisemiquavers

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<sup>83</sup> This information comes from the composer's notes. See: Peixun Chen, 'A Brief Introduction to A Few Piano Pieces', p. 16.

<sup>84</sup> Huiqiao Bao, 'Pinghui qiuyue' [*Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake*] (平湖秋月), *Bao Huiqiao gangqin zuqu huier shi ling* [Piano Suite by Bao Huiqiao: Gathering Odds and Ending from Flowers] (鲍蕙芬钢琴组曲《花儿拾零》) (China Record, CCD-1534, 2003) [on CD].

even more clear in the progress of musical development. The explicit running finger movement extends until the late part in Section C when the accompaniment voice returns back to the bass at bar 19.

A similar approach to performance is found in another pianist's recording. Yin Chengzong, who was the initiator in asking the composer to arrange this piece during the Cultural Revolution period, provides a stable movement in the accompanying voice in the introduction and Section A.<sup>85</sup> Starting from Section B, because the texture moves to the higher register in the right-hand voice, due to the dynamic contrast offered by the composer here—for example, the accompaniment is marked as pianissimo and the melody as mezzo piano—Yin closely follows the notation in his performance. With such a coordination of the dynamic arrangement, especially, the running texture in Yin's recording as a whole serves to emphasise the more essential melodic development.

However, Lang Lang plays this arpeggiated texture in a more ingenious and independent way.<sup>86</sup> The introduction is no longer evenly performed in tempo but Lang combines the demisemiquavers as three individual groups based on the open fifth double notes in the bass, which is consistent with the composer's indication (Ex. 2.9). When it enters into Section A, Lang uses lighter dynamics (even though the composer suggests piano in the accompaniment voice and mezzo piano is notated in the melody). From Section B, Lang still underlines the core status of the melody in the music while he delivers the texture in a faster tempo. The successive arpeggios are performed as long as unbroken phrases rather than numerous independent single notes. Compared with the other two pianists' performance, Lang's creative approach makes the sound effect of the special texture more indistinct, better reflecting the artistic expression of constantly rippling water.

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<sup>85</sup> Chengzong Yin, 'Pinghui qiuyue' [*Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake*] (平湖秋月), *Minren minqu (shidie zhuang)* [Celebrated Composers and Compositions (Ten CDs)] (名人名曲 (十碟装)) (Pacific Audio & Video Cooperation, 2000) [on CD].

<sup>86</sup> Lang Lang, *Wencheng: Autumn Moon on the Calm Lake*, online video recording, YouTube, 23 August 2018, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rv01hstNEpo>> [accessed 30 January 2022].

Example 2.9. The performance interpretation of Lang Lang's piano playing in the introduction



The *gaohu* composer Lü's performance recording is a *gaohu* solo accompanied by a traditional ensemble in a heterophonic arrangement.<sup>87</sup> However, in another traditional performance version by Yu Qiwei, who plays the *gaohu* solo in a homophonic arrangement accompanied by a traditional Chinese orchestra,<sup>88</sup> in Section A Yu's *gaohu* voice still takes the leading role by applying stronger dynamics than the orchestra. This dynamic arrangement is consistent with Lang's performance on the piano. Informed by these two rearranged performance versions by Yu Qiwei and Lang Lang, with both accompaniments added to the original monophonic melody, and also to reflect the piano composer's intention of using music to convey artistic expression (and he especially gives the expression marking of *dolce e espr* for the melody), the practical approach is suggested to make a clearer sound contrast in dynamics between the melody and the accompanying voices: to highlight the leading role of the melody which represents the bright moon and blur the arpeggiated texture of the accompaniment voice in a vague tone to depict the calm lake.

<sup>87</sup> Ng Rui Jun, *Autumn Moon Over a Calm Lake (Guangdong Gaohu) - Lü Wencheng*.

<sup>88</sup> Wai Yin Lee, *Pinghu qiuyue (Yu Qiwei laoshi gaohu duzou) [Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake (Gaohu Solo Performed by Yu Qiwei)]* (平湖秋月(余其偉老 高胡獨奏)), online audio recording, YouTube, 17 September 2013, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WxbYMxexCV8>> [accessed 9 March 2022].



## Tempo

The tempo markings provided by the composer do not present frequent changes: the general tempo is *lento* at the beginning; a *rallentando* appears at the last bar of Section A (b. 9), then back to the beginning tempo at the following bar; at the end of Section C (bb. 20-23), the tempo changes from *meno mosso* to a *piacere*, to *largamente*, then back to the original tempo at the coda. Bao Huiqiao's performance keeps the tempo in a generally steady situation along the musical development, and hardly a dramatic tempo change can be noticed. This is consistent with the composer's tempo markings in the music.

In Lang Lang's recording, again, he creates a freer practical approach. Lang starts the introduction and Section A in an obviously slower tempo, in a crotchet speed range of 15-25. Then a clear tempo change occurs from Section B, increasing to the speeds of 35-45. In the first part of Section C (bb. 14-17), Lang maintains the same tempo, preparing the later part. When the music comes to its climax in bar 18, Lang's arrangement slightly intensifies the tempo and reaches its peak of pacing with crotchet speeds of 50-55, then gradually calms down from the last two beats of bar 19. The coda, additionally, is played in a freer tempo rather than returning back to the original tempo suggested by the composer. The tempo arrangements in Lang Lang's performance almost follow the structure of the piano transcription. Therefore, except for the frequent change of musical pitch of the melody in different sections given by the composer to enrich the musical expression, his alterations of tempo settings are also helpful to make this piano piece more lively and distinguish its various sections to promote musical development.

Lü's own *gaohu* performance recording actually indicates a generally steady tempo in a crotchet speed range between 45-50. This tempo application follows his musical notation as no tempo changes are given. Even though Lü's performance places the music at a *largo* speed, compared with it, Chen's piano version slightly reduces the tempo (probably due to the original *gaohu* music being monophonic, whereas Chen's piano music involves complex texture in the accompaniment voice), while still producing a similar tempo effect of being slow and lyrical. Another common point is that neither version makes frequent and distinct tempo changes within the piece. Therefore, the piano performance suggestion is to follow the direction of

performing the piano transcription in a generally stable and consistent tempo of *lento*.

Before the entry of the coda at bar 22, the piano composer writes a lot of new materials in the transcription. In the *gao hu* music, the end of Section C connects with the ending bar directly without any special transition. However, in the piano transcription, the composer extends the rhythm of the melody first, then adds more texture to enrich the musical progression. Especially at bar 22, Chen Peixun gives a fermata on the first chord, then a short rest followed by a trill also marked with a fermata. Yin Chengzong's performances play this transitional bar at a relatively constant speed to link Section C and the coda. However, Bao Huiqiao's performance creatively extends the duration of the last note of Section C to delay the immediately following coda. In Lang Lang's recording, he especially extends the length of the trill. In another pianist's performance, Chen Jie provides an unexpectedly longer rest at first, and then a long trill immediately appears.<sup>89</sup> The unusual longer rest given by Chen provides a clear sense of the newly produced materials here created by the piano composer compared with the original *gao hu* version. Meanwhile, the long trill played by Lang and Chen becomes a bridge and makes the music more smoothly transfer to the coda as four more trills happen at the start of the coda.

In his performance markings, Chen Peixun allows for creative interpretation of the music at bar 21 (marked as a *piacere*) and prefers the *largamente* expression at bar 22, the end of Section C, then requests a return to the original tempo in the coda. To interpret this ending phrase of Section C more clearly with freer expression, the performance suggestion (Ex. 2.10) aims for a relatively exaggerated treatment of the music here, extending the free rendition in performance from bar 21 until the end of Section C. In other words, it is suggested to perform the short rest in a longer duration than the musical notation indicates and to give a clear sense of the fermata on the trill at bar 22—a similar approach to Chen Jie's and Lang Lang's

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<sup>89</sup> Jie Chen, *Pinghu qiu yue (Chen Jie yanzou)* [*Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake (Chen Jie's Performance)*] (平湖秋月(陈洁演奏)), online audio recording, HQGQ, 20 December 2013, <[https://www.hqgq.com/song/album\\_show/35](https://www.hqgq.com/song/album_show/35)> [accessed 30 January 2022].

performances. This also helps to delay the arrival of the coda at the end of this piece, giving more of a sense of finality.

Example 2.10. The suggested approach to piano performance at bb. 21-23

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano performance. The first system, measures 21-23, features a right hand with a melodic line marked *a piacere* and a red arrow above it, and a left hand with a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include *mf* and *mp*. The second system, measures 24-26, begins with a *pp* dynamic in the right hand, followed by *mf* and *mp*. A red arrow labeled *Tempo I* points to the start of measure 25. The right hand in measure 25 has a *rall.* marking and a *p* dynamic. The left hand continues with a rhythmic accompaniment. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and fingerings.

## Conclusion

In Chen's five piano transcriptions of Cantonese Music, *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* is the only one that completely transfers the original musical structure to the piano version: the other four piano pieces make some major revisions, such as expanding the musical forms or combining several traditional pieces into one piano piece. The reason for this special treatment of *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake* compared with the other four pieces may be linked to the different political environments in their history. The other four piano transcriptions were arranged in the 1950s when Mao announced his policy of 'let a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend'. The government's ideology which allowed diverse schools and styles of art and science to be discussed and developed determined the relatively freer social background at that time. Because of the authorities' attitude of greater tolerance in artistic creation, Chen's piano transcriptions arranged in the 1950s achieved more individual ideas. *Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake*, however, was arranged during the Cultural Revolution period, and Chen was asked to transcribe this particular piece by the musician Yin Chengzong who led the central composing group authorised by the government. Both aspects show the constraints behind his musical creation, which may explain why only this piano transcription completely follows the original piece.

Besides the overall structure, the piano transcription also preserves the style of Jiangnan Silk and Bamboo music in its use of *jiahua* technique (adding more passing notes as decoration in music). Meanwhile, from a simple *gaohu* piece to a mature piano transcription, Chen adds more materials to further develop his music. For example, the added introduction and the extended coda make this piano piece a more complete musical form. In places, Chen also provides a more elaborate treatment, such as changing the melody to different registers and applying more detailed dynamic changes. Another noteworthy element added in the piano transcription is the arpeggiated style of accompaniment voice running throughout the whole piece to help convey the image of a beautiful lake environment.

When this piano piece is transferred from the score to practical piano performances by different players, through analysing their various approaches, it is

noticed that creativity is also evident in these pianists' performances. Following the logic of musical analysis discussed above, the performance suggestions determined in this research do not merely depend on the performance approaches of different pianists. By absorbing the performance style of *gaohu* playing of this piece, this research firstly aims to maintain a similar approach in general tempo application that transfers an overall slow and steady performing style from Lü's original *gaohu* music to Chen Peixun's piano transcription. This way of performing the piano piece is appropriate because the transcription remains quite faithful to the original *gaohu* piece. On the other hand, while there is no record to indicate how the composer would expect performers to interpret his piano music, the fact that he has added more musical elements to make the monophonic traditional music effective as a piano piece with a polyphonic texture seems to justify a creative approach to piano performance to serve the purposes of better performing this traditional piece on the piano and expressing the generally calm mood in music that Chen's wanted to convey.

# Chapter Three: Piano Transcriptions by Wang Jianzhong

*Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* (《山丹丹开花红艳艳》)  
and *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* (《彩云追月》)

Wang Jianzhong (1933-2016) was the pianist and composer who produced the largest number of piano transcriptions during the Cultural Revolution. This chapter selects two pieces among Wang's compositions which are piano transcriptions based on different types of traditional Chinese music. *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*, originally a revolutionary song composed in 1971, was arranged by Wang as a piano version in 1973; instructed directly by the government, *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon*, a piece of traditional ensemble music composed in 1935, was arranged by Wang for the piano in 1975. The musical analysis follows a path from the exploration of both original versions of the music to a comparison of the original music with the piano transcriptions. From these two selected cases, the common feature will be revealed that, even if based on different types of original pieces, Wang's technique of arranging piano arrangements, to a large extent, preserves the overall structure of the original works, while in some details, Wang establishes his individual ideas distinct from the original versions. Thus, politically, the close ties with the ideological frame, as well as the relative faithfulness of the selected piano transcriptions in relation to the original traditional music, become the reasons why Wang's transcriptions are placed in this second chapter of case studies. On the basis that Wang's transcriptions are relatively faithful, the performance discussions in this chapter do not only examine recordings of piano performances from different pianists to explore various interpretations in their practical presentation, but also, unlike other chapters, include the earliest recordings of the original music to understand the authentic musical style that the two pieces of traditional music convey. Therefore, the final performance suggestions for the piano do not entirely follow performance approaches from the existing recordings of different pianists, but

aim to suggest methods of piano performance that reveal the performing style of the traditional music as informed by the oldest available recordings.

## Introduction of the Composer, Wang Jianzhong

Wang Jianzhong was raised in a non-musical family.<sup>1</sup> His father Wang Zhen was a celebrated chemist in China. Due to his interest in Western music during his childhood, Wang Jianzhong did not pursue the scientific pathway requested by his father but chose to learn the piano when he was ten. In 1950, Wang went to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, studying composition. Later on, he decided to transfer his major back to piano performance, but he never stopped learning compositional theory. In 1958, Wang graduated from the Shanghai Conservatory, moving to the Shenyang Conservatory of Music and teaching the piano there. Wang then returned to the Shanghai Conservatory, teaching piano and harmonic theory for several years.

In 1963, the government announced that ‘musical creations and performing arts must be revolutionary, national and popular’.<sup>2</sup> Impacted by this, the Western repertoires were restricted. Wang was assigned to the piano department for writing Chinese music to enrich the teaching materials. However, Wang had to stop his writing at the early stage of the Cultural Revolution. After the government adopted more tolerance for music in the 1970s, he restarted composing, arranging four

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<sup>1</sup> All information of Wang’s biography comes from an article written by his pupil, Qian Yiping for memorizing him after his death, and a self-statement in an interview documented in the appendix of a Master dissertation. See: Yiping Qian, ‘Zhongguo fengge gangqin chuanguo de Chenggong tansuo—Jinian Wang Jianzhong xiansheng’ [The Successful Exploration of Chinese Style in Piano Music—for Memorizing Wang Jianzhong] (中国风格钢琴创作的成功探索—纪念王建中先生), *Art of Music (Journal of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music)*, 2 (2016), 6-12 (pp. 7-8); Jie Song, ‘Wang Jianzhong gangqin zuopin yanjiu’ [Research on Wang Jianzhong’s Piano Music] (王建中钢琴作品研究) (unpublished Master dissertation, Northwest Normal University, 2003), pp. 46-69.

<sup>2</sup> Editorial Department, ‘Guyu yinyue geminghua, minzuhua, qunzhonghua wenti de taolun qingkuang’ [Discussion on Music Compositions being Revolutionary, National and Popular] (关于音乐革命化、民族化、群众化问题的讨论情况), *People’s Music*, 9 (1964), 43-48.

revolutionary songs into piano music in 1973, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* (《山丹丹开花红艳艳》), *Soldiers and Villagers in the Big Production Drive* (《军民大生产》), *Embroidering Banners with Golden Thread* (《绣金匾》) and *Song of Emancipation* (《翻身道情》). Those piano pieces came to the attention of Yin Chengzong who invited Wang to Beijing. From then, Wang worked in the composing group of the Central Philharmonic for five years. Approved by Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, his piano works such as *Three Variations on the Plum Blossoms* (《梅花三弄》) and *Hundreds of Birds Worshipping the Phoenix* (《百鸟朝凤》) were arranged from traditional music during this time.

In the 1980s, Wang went back to the Shanghai Conservatory for teaching, and became the associate dean from 1988-97. Meanwhile, he continued composing new Chinese piano pieces such as *Puzzle Tune* (《猜调》) in 1994 and a Chinese piano concerto in 2001, *Entering a New Era* (《走进新时代》). After dedicating his life to composing Chinese piano music, Wang died on 11 February 2016.

## **Background of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain***

*Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* is originally a revolutionary song composed in 1971 with typical musical characteristics of the northern Shaanxi area. During the Cultural Revolution, guided by the extremely restrictive policy (the leftward ideology) from the Chinese government, there were only eight Model Operas and eight revolutionary songs permitted and performed on China National Radio.<sup>3</sup> Promoted by staff of the radio station and receiving direct support from Premier Zhou Enlai, the Military Committee of the Broadcasting Bureau authorised a project to collect

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<sup>3</sup> This information comes from the article written by the leader of the recording group of China National Radio at that time. The article was first published on People's Daily on 5 August 2006, also available online at: Jingzhi Wang, 'Gaibain Shan Gan Ning bianqu wushou geming mingge jishi' [Documenting the Event of Arranging Five Revolutionary Folk Songs in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region] (改编《陕甘宁边区五首革命民歌》记事), *Sina*, 2006 <<http://news.sina.com.cn/o/2006-08-05/04119662501s.shtml>> [accessed 15 July 2021].



sources from the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region,<sup>4</sup> then compose revolutionary folk songs based on them. The project was intended to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the birth of the Chinese Communist Party (founded in 1921).<sup>5</sup>

On 22 May 1971, the leader of the recording group of China National Radio, Wang Jingzhi and the editor, Wang Jingtao came to Shaanxi Province, organising a group of ten people to collect and arrange revolutionary songs of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region. The members included the composers, Guan Heyan, Liu Feng, Liang Wenda; the lyricist, Xu Suo; the writer, Li Ruobin; the deputy director of the Shanxi Broadcasting Bureau, Bian Chunguang; the staff of the Literature and Art Department from the Shaanxi Radio Station, Feng Fukuan and the staff of Literature and Art Department from China National Radio.<sup>6</sup>

In Yan'an city, the composing group collected materials from traditional songs in the Border Region and wrote new lyrics for four revolutionary songs: *Our Leader, Mao Zedong* (《咱们的领袖毛泽东》); *Soldiers and Villagers in the Big Production Drive* (《军民大生产》); *Song of Emancipation* (《翻身道情》) and *Armed with Workers and Peasants* (《工农齐武装》).<sup>7</sup> Afterwards, the composer, Guan Heyan

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<sup>4</sup> The reason why the particular area of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region was chosen at that time is not mentioned in Wang's article. It can be considered that the region had become the central revolution base of the CCP since the Central Red Army arrived in Northern Shaanxi in 1935. During the Second Sino-Japanese War from 1937-45, the region became the command centre of the Central Committee of the CCP. Therefore, the region always occupied a significant position in the history of the CCP from 1935 to 49.

<sup>5</sup> Jingzhi Wang, 'Documenting the Event of Arranging Five Revolutionary Folk Songs in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region'; and Yanzhou Xia, 'Yongyuan de shandandan – gequ shandandan kaihua hongyanyan dansheng ji', [Forever Red Lilies – the Birth of the Song, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*] (永远的“山丹丹” — 歌曲《山丹丹开花红艳艳》诞生记), *Guangming Online*, 2019 <[https://news.gmw.cn/2019-10/14/content\\_33229380.htm](https://news.gmw.cn/2019-10/14/content_33229380.htm)> [accessed 15 July 2021].

<sup>6</sup> Le Zhao, 'Shandandan kaihua hongyanyan shi shanbei mingge ma?' [Is *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* a Folksong in the Area of Northern Shaanxi?] (《山丹丹开花红艳艳》是陕北民歌吗?), *CNR News*, 2015 <[http://www.cnr.cn/gbgx/gexuan/hgyj/20150416/t20150416\\_518334520.shtml](http://www.cnr.cn/gbgx/gexuan/hgyj/20150416/t20150416_518334520.shtml)> [accessed 15 July 2021].

<sup>7</sup> The information provided here and below comes from: Ibid.; Yanzhou Xia, 'Forever Red Lilies – the Birth of the Song, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*'.

suggested to add one more song that described the story when the Central Red Army reached northern Shaanxi. Another composer, Liu Feng, supported this idea, saying: 'it is not satisfactory only completing these four songs, because the most representative genre of folksongs in northern Shaanxi, *xiantianyou* (信天游) is not included'.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, based on the musical materials of several revolutionary and traditional songs, including *People in Northern Shaanxi Following Liu Zhidan* (《咱们陕北人跟的是刘志丹》), *When a Brother from the Red Army Comes Back* (《当红军的哥哥回来了》) and *A Girl Carrying Water* (《女孩担水》), *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* was arranged as the fifth revolutionary song.

The story of this song tells a history that goes back to 1934 to 35. In 1934, the Soviet government of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region was formally established in northern Shaanxi, with Xi Zhongxun as the chairman. Meanwhile, the Revolutionary Military Committee of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region was founded, Liu Zhidan becoming the chair of this committee. In November 1934, the Twenty-fifth Red Army implemented a strategic shift, leaving the Hubei, Henan and Anhui Revolutionary Bases to start the Long March. In September 1935, the army finally arrived in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region, to form a new Red Army in northern Shaanxi (The Twenty-fifth Regiment of the Red Army) with the local Twenty-sixth and the Twenty-seventh Red Army led by Xi Zhongxun and Liu Zhidan. This new regiment provided conditions for the Central Red Army to reach the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region and achieve the victory of the Long March. However, at the end of September, under the severe interference of the 'left' adventurism, the Border Region enforced the Eliminating Counter-Revolutionary policies. Xi Zhongxun and Liu Zhidan were convicted as 'enemies'. On 19 October 1935, the Central Red Army accomplished the mission of the Long March of 25000 Li, also reaching the Border Region. Mao Zedong noticed this situation and required to review the convicted revolutionists. Then, they were completely exonerated.

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<sup>8</sup> Liu's words are presented in Xia's article. See: Yanzhou Xia, 'Forever Red Lilies – the Birth of the Song, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*'.

*Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* recalls this history, expressing the central idea of praising Chairman Mao. The full lyrics are shown below:<sup>9</sup>

Mountain after mountain, river after river,  
Our central Red Army arrives in northern Shaanxi.  
Red flags fluttering, rifles pointing skyward,  
Our military troops are developing with power.

Thousands of families open their doors,  
To greet in our dear soldiers.  
Glutinous cakes are served on the table,  
And rice wine is also provided.  
Families sit around on the heated flour,  
And narrate heartfelt words.  
The dark clouds are blown away by the wind,  
And the weather is cleared up when Chairman Mao comes.  
Thunder and lightning for a thousand miles,  
Our revolutionary power is growing.

Wild lilies are blooming on the mountain with red brilliance.  
Chairman Mao leads us to fight for liberation.  
Chairman Mao leads us to fight for liberation.

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<sup>9</sup> The English version is originally translated by an English tutor at the Yan'an Vocational Technical Institute and revised by me. See: Tencent Video, *Yingwen ban de shanbei minge, shandandan huakai hongyanyan* [the English Version of a Folksong in Northern Shaanxi, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*] (英文版的陕北民歌《山丹丹花开红艳艳》), online video recording, Tencent Video, 4 January 2017, <<https://v.qq.com/x/page/d036253jwym.html>> [accessed 16 July 2021].

As a revolutionary song with a typical Shaanxi local style, the lyrics clearly demonstrate the features of *xintianyou*. Firstly, the lyrics of *xintianyou* are usually divided into two parts in one phrase with a balanced structure: the first part depicts natural scenery for laying a foundation for the second; the second part conveys emotions.<sup>10</sup> This is a commonly used approach of artistic expression in various forms of Chinese culture: the purpose of depicting natural scenery is to express inner emotion. Except for the middle section, the other lyrics in this folksong all reveal these characteristics: the beginning part describes the natural scenery in the plateau of northern Shaanxi Province; the following expresses the feeling of praise of the Red Army, the revolution and Chairman Mao. Especially, the phrase, ‘the dark clouds are blown away by the wind, and the weather is cleared up when Chairman Mao comes’, refers to Chairman Mao coming to the Border Region to rescue the local revolutionists. The content of it demonstrates the guiding ideology in art of the combination of Chinese revolutionary realism and romanticism proposed by Mao in 1958.

Another feature of *xintianyou* is to apply the rhetorical device of metaphor: to summarise the characteristics of natural things and human activities, then to abstractly extract the common points of these two.<sup>11</sup> The area of northern Shaanxi is a loess plateau with harsh environment; however, the red wild lilies growing there embellish this desert landscape (see Fig. 3.1). The title of this song is a metaphor: more clearly, the red lilies represent the Red Army; *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* suggests that when the Red Army arrives in northern Shaanxi, local people living in such a severe condition see hopeful things given by the troops.

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<sup>10</sup> See: Dajian Liu, ‘Liu *xintianyou* fengge goucheng de sanda yaosu’ [Discussion on Three Features of *Xintianyou*] (论“信天游”风格构成的三大要素), *Art Research*, 1 (2008), 42-44 (p. 42); Li Liu, ‘Qianxi shanbei minge *xintianyou* zhi yishu tezhen’ [Analysis on Artistic Features of *Xintianyou* in Northern Shaanxi] (浅析陕北民歌信天游之艺术特征), *Music Creation*, 12 (2014), 164-66 (p. 165).

<sup>11</sup> Li Liu, ‘Analysis on Artistic Features of *Xintianyou* in Northern Shaanxi’.

Figure 3.1. The red wild lilies on the loess plateau of northern Shaanxi<sup>12</sup>



After ten working days of completing these five songs, the leader of the composing group, Wang Jingzhi, took all of them and reported back to Beijing. On 25 December 1971, they were first played on the China National Radio, reaching audiences in the whole country. On 6 February 1972, People's Daily published these five works, together referred to as *Selected Revolutionary Folksongs of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region* (《陕甘宁边区革命民歌选》).<sup>13</sup> In 1973, the composer Wang Jianzhong followed the mainstream pathway of art creations and chose three of the five revolutionary folksongs, including *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*, *Soldiers and Villagers in the Big Production Drive* and *Song of Emancipation*, and added one more folksong of northern Shaanxi, *Embroidering Banners with Golden Thread*, arranging them all as piano transcriptions. They are known collectively as Four Compositions of Folksongs in Northern Shaanxi (陕北民歌四首). The collection clearly shows the local features of the Shaanxi music. This research concentrates on *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* to investigate in detail how the composer uses piano music to reveal this particular local style of music.

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<sup>12</sup> Haiqing Wang, 'Deng Gaobo shan shang shandan hua' [Climbing Gaobo Mountain, Admiring the Beauty of Red Lilies] (登高柏山 赏山丹花), *Zichang Communication*, 27 July 2015 <<http://www.sx0911.com/paper/html/2015-7-15/1847.html>> [accessed 16 July 2021].

<sup>13</sup> People's Daily, 'Shan Gan Ning bianqu geming mingge xuan' [Selected Revolutionary Folksongs of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region] (陕甘宁边区革命民歌选), *People's Daily*, 6 February 1972, 4th section.

## Musical Analysis of the Original Song

Having shown how *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* was created as a revolutionary song and arranged as a piano transcription in the 1970s, and revealed the distinctive characteristics of *xintianyou* lyrical style, in this section, the perspective moves to musical analysis to find evidence of the connection between the song *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* and the other three folksongs from northern Shaanxi which *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* are based on.

The original music of the revolutionary song, as mentioned above, adopts musical materials from other three different songs in *xintianyou* style from northern Shaanxi to create a new musical composition. Specifically, the thematic melody (Ex. 3.1) in the first section is related to a revolutionary song from Jinbian,<sup>14</sup> *People in Northern Shaanxi Following Liu Zhidan* (Ex. 3.2), and another revolutionary song named *When a Brother from the Red Army Comes Back* (Ex. 3.3).

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<sup>14</sup> A county in Yunlin City in the area of northern Shaanxi.

Example 3.1. The thematic melody (the first verse) in the first section of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*<sup>15</sup>

1=C

$\frac{2}{2}$   $\dot{2}$   $\dot{3}$   $\dot{2}$   $\underline{6}$   $\underline{6}$   $\underline{66}$  |  $\dot{2}$   $\dot{3}$   $\dot{2}$   $\dot{2}$  - |  $\frac{3}{2}$   $\dot{2}$  - - -  $\underline{6\dot{2}}$   $\underline{65}$  |  $\frac{2}{2}$  3  $\underline{2\dot{3}}$   $\underline{255}$  |

一 道 道 的 那 个 山 来 哟 一 道 道 水, 咱 们

$\underline{6}$   $\underline{6\dot{3}}$   $\underline{2\dot{1}}$   $\underline{7}$  |  $\underline{6}$   $\underline{4}$   $\underline{5}$   $\underline{6}$   $\underline{2}$  |  $\underline{5}$   $\underline{4}$   $\underline{3}$   $\underline{2}$   $\underline{6\dot{1}}$  | 2 - -  $\underline{55}$  |

中 央 (噢) 红 军 到 陕 北, 咱 们

$\underline{6}$   $\underline{6\dot{3}}$   $\underline{2\dot{1}}$   $\underline{7}$  |  $\underline{6}$   $\underline{4}$   $\underline{5}$   $\underline{6}$   $\underline{2}$  |  $\underline{5}$   $\underline{4}$   $\underline{3}$   $\underline{2}$   $\underline{6\dot{1}}$  | 2 - - - ||

中 央 (噢) 红 军 到 陕 北。

Example 3.2. The song, *People in Northern Shaanxi Following Liu Zhidan*<sup>16</sup>

100. 咱陕北人跟的是刘志丹

(信天游)

1=C  $\frac{2}{4}$  靖 边

$\underline{2}$   $\underline{3\dot{2}}$   $\underline{6\cdot 6}$   $\underline{66}$  |  $\underline{2}$   $\underline{3}$   $\underline{2}$   $\underline{2}$  |  $\underline{6\cdot 1}$   $\underline{65}$   $\underline{3}$   $\underline{2}$   $\underline{3}$  | 2  $\underline{255}$  |

1. 阳 湾 里 的 (那 个) 梨 桃 (吆) 河 畔 上 的 柳, 咱 们  
2. 羊 肚 子 的 (那 个) 手 巾 (吆) 三 道 道 蓝, 咱 们

$\underline{6}$   $\underline{6\dot{3}}$   $\underline{2\dot{1}}$  |  $\underline{6\dot{2}}$   $\underline{4}$   $\underline{5}$  |  $\underline{5}$   $\underline{4}$   $\underline{3}$   $\underline{2}$   $\underline{6\dot{1}}$  | 2 - ||

共 产 党 来 了 不 发 愁。  
陕 北 人 跟 的 是 刘 志 丹。

<sup>15</sup> The musical score of the song, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* comes from a journal article. See: Anonymous, 'Shandandan huakai hongyanyan' [*Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*] (山丹丹花开红艳艳), *The World of Music*, 10 (2019), 18-19. The first published version is available on People's Daily. See: People's Daily, 'Selected Revolutionary Folksongs of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region'.

<sup>16</sup> China Lyrics and Music Network, '100. zanmen shanbei ren gende shi Liu Zhidan' [100. *People in Northern Shaanxi Following Liu Zhidan*] (100. 咱们陕北人跟的是刘志丹), *China Lyrics and Music Network*, 2016 <[http://www.ktvc8.com/article/article\\_449240\\_1.html](http://www.ktvc8.com/article/article_449240_1.html)> [accessed 2 August 2021].

Example 3.3. The song, *When a Brother from the Red Army Comes Back*<sup>17</sup>

**当红军的哥哥回来了**

(信天游)

陕 北  
汉 族

1=C  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{1}{4}$

中速

$\underline{\dot{2} \underline{\dot{3}\dot{2}} \underline{\dot{6} \underline{\dot{6} \dot{6}}}}$	$\underline{\dot{2} \underline{\dot{3}\dot{2}}} \underline{\dot{2} \underline{\dot{5}}}$	$\underline{\underline{\dot{6} \underline{\dot{2}\dot{6}\dot{5}}} \underline{\underline{\dot{3} \underline{\dot{2} \dot{3}}}}}$	$\underline{\underline{\dot{2} \dot{0}}}$
1. 鸡娃子(那个) 叫来(哟)	狗娃子(那个)	咬,	
2. 羊肚子(那个) 手巾(哟)	三道道(的那)	蓝,	
3. 你当(你的那) 红军(哟)	我(呀)劳(的那)	动,	

$\underline{\underline{\dot{5} \underline{\dot{5} \underline{\dot{6} \underline{\dot{6}} \dot{5}}}}}$	$\underline{\underline{\dot{2}\dot{5}\dot{2}\dot{1}}} \underline{\underline{\dot{6}\dot{5}\dot{4}\dot{5}}}$	$\underline{\underline{\dot{1} \underline{\underline{\dot{7} \underline{\dot{6} \dot{5}}} \underline{\underline{\dot{4}\dot{3}\dot{2}\dot{5}}}}}}$	$\underline{\underline{\dot{5} \underline{\underline{\dot{2}} -}}}$
当红军的(那个) 哥哥(哟)	回(哟)	来	了。
当红军的(那个) 哥哥(哟)	跟 的是 刘志	丹。	
咱二人(的那个) 一心一意	闹 闹 闹	革	命。

It is clear to observe that the first four bars of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* become the shadow of the other two revolutionary songs, reproducing the melodic line in the music of the other two. Comparing *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* with *People in Northern Shaanxi Following Liu Zhidan*, only bar six is significantly changed (underlined in Ex. 3.2). On the other hand, the second half of the melody is totally different from the last four bars of *When a Brother from the Red Army Coming back* (underlined in Ex. 3.3). Meanwhile, the two revolutionary songs only sing the last four bars once. However, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* repeats these four bars at the end. Accompanied by the repetition of the lyrics, ‘our central Red Army arrives in northern Shaanxi’, the reappearance of the last four bars reinforces the main theme of this revolutionary song. Another distinctive element that *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* shows is a change of time signature (2/2, 3/2, 2/2) inside musical phrases, to present and continue a freer musical expression.

<sup>17</sup> The Collection of Music Sheets of Chinese Songs, ‘Dang hongjun de gege huilai le jianpu’ [Numbered Notation of *When a Brother from the Red Army Coming back*] (当红军的哥哥回来了简谱), *The Collection of Music Sheets of Chinese Songs*, 2017 <<http://www.gdhgh.com/gepu/88047.html>> [accessed 2 August 2021].



The middle section (theme b) in *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* (Ex. 3.4) is based on a traditional song of Northern Shaanxi, *A Girl Carrying Water* (Ex. 3.5).<sup>18</sup> Unlike the first section which quotes substantial musical materials from other revolutionary songs, the middle section in *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* merely borrows the framework of the melody of *A Girl Carrying Water*. The main notes in the melodic motion remain the same; however, the ornamental passing tones are different. The comparison below shows more creativity in this newly arranged revolutionary song.

Example 3.4. The melody of theme b in *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*

Example 3.5. The melody of *A Girl Carrying Water*

<sup>18</sup> Jianpuw, 'Nvhai danshui' [*A Girl Carrying Water*] (女孩担水), Jianpuw, [n.d.] <<http://www.jianpuw.com/htm/bn/327508.htm>> [accessed 2 August 2021].

# The First Version of the Piano Transcription

## The overall structure

In Chinese piano transcriptions, composers usually create new sections when instrumental compositions or traditional songs are arranged. In this way, a piano transcription, to a certain degree, becomes an independent composition. However, in the first version of this piano transcription of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* arranged in 1973, the composer Wang Jianzhong entirely maintains the same overall structure as the original song.<sup>19</sup> In 1978, Wang published a second version of this piano transcription.<sup>20</sup> The length was extended from 160 to 179 bars by adding one more variation in Section B. On the other hand, the first version was later included in the book, *30 Famous Chinese Piano Pieces* edited by Wei Tingge in 1996 and reprinted in 24 editions until 2017.<sup>21</sup> Even Wang himself once explained that the first version became popular earlier and was used more.<sup>22</sup> Thus, the following analysis in this research mainly focuses on the first version of this piano transcription. The structure of the original song and the first piano version is presented in Table 3.1.

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<sup>19</sup> The first version was arranged in 1973 and published in 1976. See: Jianzhong Wang, *Gangqin duzou qu shanbei mingge sishou* [Four Piano Solo Compositions of Folksongs in Northern Shaanxi] (钢琴独奏曲 陕北民歌四首) (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 1976), pp. 2-7.

<sup>20</sup> Jianzhong Wang, *Gangqin duzou qu shanbei mingge sishou* [Four Piano Solo Compositions of Folksongs in Northern Shaanxi] (钢琴独奏曲 陕北民歌四首) (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 1978), pp. 2-8

<sup>21</sup> Jianzhong Wang, 'Shandandan kaihua hongyanyan' [*Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*] (山丹丹开花红艳艳), in *30 Famous Chinese Piano Pieces*, ed. by Tingge Wei, 25th edn (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 2018), pp. 101-06.

<sup>22</sup> Jianzhong Wang, 'Houji' [Postscript] (后记), in *Selected Piano Compositions from Wang Jianzhong*, ed. by Daojin Tong and Qinyan Wang (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 2013), p. 186.

Table 3.1. The structure of the original song and the first piano version of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*

The revolutionary song	The piano transcription
Introduction (bb.1-7)	Introduction (bb. 1-4)
The first section: verse 1 (bb. 8-19) verse 2 (bb. 20-28)	Section A: theme a (bb. 5-15) variation a <sup>1</sup> (bb. 16-27)
Transition (bb. 29-40)	Transition (bb. 28-39)
The middle section: three verses (bb. 41-58)  transition phrase (bb. 57-64) the forth verse (bb. 65-89)	Section B: theme b (bb. 40-55) variation b <sup>1</sup> (bb. 56-80) variation b <sup>2</sup> (bb. 81-104) transition phrase (bb. 105-10) variation b <sup>3</sup> (bb. 111-36)
Repetition of the first section verse 1 (bb. 90-101) verse 2 (bb. 102-10)	Section A' variation a <sup>2</sup> (bb. 137-47) variation a <sup>3</sup> (bb. 148-56)
Coda (bb. 111-14)	Coda (bb. 157-60)

The music in the introduction of the piano transcription follows the melodic line of the introduction in the original music. Compared with the original song which is given the expression marking 'broad' (*kuanguang*, 宽广), Wang applies a similar effect by using free tempo from the traditional composing technique in Chinese music (notated as ㄅ and marked as *ad libitum*) to create a free and expressive

introduction in this piano piece.<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, numerous arpeggios are written by Wang to coherently link the melody and the accompaniment voice. This introduction paves the way for the entry of the theme in Section A.

When the theme comes in the original song, there are two verses of lyrics set to almost the same melody. In the piano transcription, to provide variety, the composer uses different textures: the theme is first presented as a monophonic line, whereas the following variation a<sup>1</sup> uses chords and octaves in the first phrase to thicken the texture. Additionally, the theme has three phrases, the third being a repetition of the second. In the revolutionary song, the first verse sings all three phrases, while the second verse omits the repeated phrase and instead repeats the whole second verse. In contrast, the piano transcription uses all three phrases in the variation as well, avoiding the repetition of the whole theme. In this way, the two parts in Section A maintain a more equal balance of musical structure in the piano version.

After Section A, the music immediately offers a completely different character. The transition in the song is marked by a faster tempo (*kuaiban*, 快板) and passionate mood (*relie de*, 热烈地). Similar to the piano transcription, it is given the tempo marking *allegro vivo* (although various editions of publications offer different markings: for example, the Chinese terms ‘快速’ (fast tempo) and ‘热烈地’ (passionately) are given in the 1976 and 1995 editions by the composer;<sup>24</sup> *allegro vivo* is marked in the 1996 edition revised by the composer and the editor;<sup>25</sup> *allegro*

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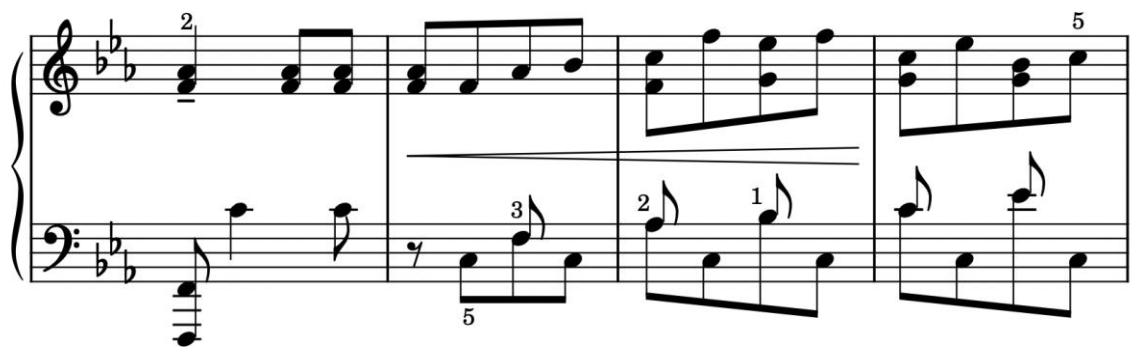
<sup>23</sup> The notation of ㄅ means free tempo which originally comes from the traditional notation of Chinese *qin* music. It is also normally used in traditional Chinese opera. See: Editorial Department of the Dictionary of Chinese Music, Research Institute of Music of the Chinese Academy of Arts, *Zhongguo yinyue cidian, zengding ban* [The Dictionary of Chinese Music, Revised Version] (中国音乐辞典, 增订版) (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 2016), p. 654.

<sup>24</sup> Jianzhong Wang, *Four Piano Solo Compositions of Folksongs in Northern Shaanxi*, p. 3. Jianzhong Wang, ‘Shandandan kaihua hongyanyan’ [Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain] (山丹丹开花红艳艳), in *The Collection of Wang Jianzhong’s Piano Compositions*, ed. by Weixiu Ye (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 1995), p. 33.

<sup>25</sup> Jianzhong Wang, ‘Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain’, in *30 Famous Chinese Piano Pieces*, p. 102.

vivace ( $\text{♩} = 76$ ) is presented in the 2015 edition revised by the composer;<sup>26</sup> these all suggest a similar meaning). In the transcription, the music in the transition is entirely consistent, applying continuous quavers (Ex. 3.6). To echo this typical rhythm, the accompaniment at the beginning of Section B uses the same type of rhythm (Ex. 3.7).

Example 3.6. Bars 32-35 in the transition of the piano transcription, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*



Example 3.7. The accompaniment voice at bars 40-47 in Section B



In the middle section of the song, the same melody appears four times with four different verses of lyrics. In the piano transcription, Section B (Ex. 3.8) becomes the most variable section in which the composer applies diverse composing techniques to adapt the vocal composition to the piano. Specifically, theme b (bb. 40-55) states the melody in the right-hand voice in a high pitch. Then, the music in variation b<sup>1</sup> (bb. 56-71) is directly transferred to the left-hand voice in a lower register. At the end of this variation (bb. 72-80), frequent changes of register occur when the last phrase of

<sup>26</sup> Jianzhong Wang, 'Shandandan kaihua hongyanyan' [*Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*] (山丹丹开花红艳艳), in *A Century of Piano Solo Works by Chinese Composers Volume IV (1966-1976)*, ed. by Mingqiang Li and Yunlin Yang (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House and Shanghai Literature & Art Audio-Visual Electronic Publishing House, 2015), p. 38.

the melody reappears. The second variation (bb. 81-104) is much more lively with a combination of the change of register between phrases and the composing technique of *jiahua* (adding more passing notes within the melody) for musical variation. The last variation (bb. 111-36) develops and arrives at the climax of the whole piece. In comparison with the previous parts, the dynamic is firstly marked as fortissimo to make a contrasting sound effect. Meanwhile, the composer uses tempo changes, marking the beginning as poco meno mosso, then marking accelerando and finally back to the original tempo at bar 118.

Example 3.8. The detailed analysis of Section B

40 (theme b)

47

53

(variation b<sup>1</sup>)

59

65

Musical score for measures 65-70. The piece is in B-flat major (two flats) and 3/4 time. The right hand features a series of chords and eighth-note patterns, while the left hand plays a bass line with some triplets. Measure numbers 2, 3, 4, and 3 are indicated above the right hand.

71

Musical score for measures 71-76. A red box highlights measures 71-75 in the right hand. Red arrows point from the box to the first and last notes of the highlighted section. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The left hand has a bass line with a triplet in measure 72. Measure numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 1 are indicated above the right hand.

77

(variation b<sup>2</sup>)

Musical score for measures 77-82. A red box highlights measures 77-80 in the right hand. Red arrows point from the box to the first and last notes of the highlighted section. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 3). The left hand has a bass line with a triplet in measure 80. Measure numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 2, and 3 are indicated above the right hand.

83

Musical score for measures 83-88. Red arrows point to specific notes in the right hand. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The left hand has a bass line with a triplet in measure 84. Measure numbers 1, 3, 1, 1, and 1 are indicated above the right hand.

89

Musical score for measures 89-94. A red arrow points to the first note of measure 89 in the right hand. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The left hand has a bass line with a triplet in measure 90. Measure numbers 2, 2, 1, 2, 3, 5, 3, 2, and 3 are indicated above the right hand. Dynamics *p* and *f* are marked.

95

Musical score for measures 95-100. Red arrows point to the first and last notes of the right hand. The right hand has a melodic line with slurs and fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). The left hand has a bass line with a triplet in measure 96. Measure numbers 1, 1, 1, 1, 1, and 1 are indicated above the right hand. Dynamics *f* and *v* are marked.

101

(transition phrase)

Musical score for measures 101-106. The score is in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a common time signature. It features a transition phrase with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Two red arrows point to specific notes: one in the right hand at measure 101 and another in the left hand at measure 104.

107

(variation b<sup>3</sup>)

Musical score for measures 107-112. The score is in a key with two flats and common time. It includes the instruction "Allargando" above the first measure and "poco meno mosso" above the last measure. The dynamic marking "ff" (fortissimo) is placed above the final measure. The music consists of chords and melodic fragments in both hands.

113

Musical score for measures 113-118. The score is in a key with two flats and common time. It features a complex texture with many chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The instruction "accel." (accelerando) is placed above the middle measure, and "tempo prima" (return to original tempo) is placed above the final measure.

119

Musical score for measures 119-124. The score is in a key with two flats and common time. It features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamic marking "mp" (mezzo-piano) is placed above the middle measure. The left hand includes fingerings 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

125

Musical score for measures 125-130. The score is in a key with two flats and common time. It features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamic marking "f" (forte) is placed above the middle measure, and "p" (piano) is placed above the final measure. The left hand includes fingerings 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

131

Musical score for measures 131-136. The score is in a key with two flats and common time. It features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The instruction "cresc." (crescendo) is placed above the first measure, and "rit." (ritardando) is placed above the final measure.



The last section is a repetition of Section A, but differs from it in that the texture in the right-hand voice consists of chords and octaves, while the left-hand voice has fast-moving semiquavers. At the same time, the dynamics are increased to fortissimo. Variation a<sup>2</sup>, thus, becomes a sublimation of the thematic melody. The following variation a<sup>3</sup> moves the melody line to the left hand with the much lighter dynamics as mezzo piano, preparing for the final tranquil coda. In the original song, the coda introduces new musical materials, placing the melody in a high pitch (Ex. 3.9). With the lyrics ‘Chairman Mao leads us to fight for liberation’, the end of this revolutionary song shows an emotional expression of heightened excitement.<sup>27</sup> Such an expressive phrase also exists in Wang’s first piano manuscript (Ex. 3.10).<sup>28</sup> The melodic line uses the music from the original song, presented in a thick texture of chords and octaves in the high register and marked as fortissimo. With continuous ascending arpeggios as foreshadowing, the concluding strong tones arrive. According to this evidence, the composer indeed considered including in his piano transcription all the content from the revolutionary song to convey the main idea of praising Chairman Mao. After this expressive phrase, unexpectedly, Wang created another phrase (Ex. 3.11) to end his piano version. The music was not shown in strong dynamics but weakened gradually, until approaching the last tone in piano pianissimo. However, this arrangement of the coda was never published. In all the published versions, the piano transcription sticks to the theme (Ex. 3.12), using the

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<sup>27</sup> CCTV Spring Festival Gala, ‘1990 nian yangshi chunjie lianhuan wanhui gequ shandandan huakai hongyanyan yuanzheng | CCTV chunwan’ [Spring Festival Evening Gala in 1990, the Performance of the Song, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*] (1990 年央视春节联欢晚会歌曲《山丹丹花开红艳艳》 远征 | CCTV 春晚), online video recording, YouTube, 10 January 2016, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIBJmzZUoKk>> [accessed 3 August 2021].

<sup>28</sup> After Wang died in 2016, his daughters donated all his manuscripts to the library of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. The examples of the manuscript used here are presented in a journal article written by an author who participated in collating and cataloguing manuscripts at that time. See: Ziang Zheng, ‘Cong kanben dao shougao – Wang Jianzhong gangqin zuopin shandandan kaihua hongyanyan yanjiu (xiapian)’ [From Publications to Manuscripts – the Analysis of Wang Jianzhong’s Piano Work, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*, Part II] (从刊本到手稿——王建中钢琴作品《山丹丹开花红艳艳》研究(下篇)), *Journal of Tianjin Conservatory of Music*, 2 (2002), 104-22 (pp. 117-18).

last phrase of the thematic melody as the coda. The mood becomes calmer as the final bars are performed in ritardando with the placid dynamics of piano pianissimo.

Example 3.9. The coda in the original song (bb. 111-14) (transcribed into staff notation)



毛 主 席 领 导 咱 打 江 山

The image shows a single staff of music in 4/4 time, transcribed from the original song. The melody consists of a series of eighth and quarter notes, ending with a half note. The lyrics '毛主席领导咱打江山' are written below the staff. A green box highlights the lyrics. A red arrow points from the first note of the staff to the first note of the piano manuscript in Example 3.10.

Example 3.10. The first phrase of the coda in the piano manuscript



The image shows two systems of piano manuscript. The top system shows the first phrase of the coda, with a green box highlighting the first few notes. The bottom system shows the continuation of the coda, with a green box highlighting the first few notes and a red box highlighting the final notes. A red arrow points from the first note of the staff in Example 3.9 to the first note of the piano manuscript in Example 3.10.

Example 3.11. The last phrase of the coda in the piano manuscript

This image shows a handwritten piano manuscript for the final phrase of a coda. It consists of four systems of staves. The first system shows a complex melodic line with many accidentals and fingerings (e.g., 3, 9, 10, 2, 8, 7, 9). The second system continues this line with more accidentals and fingerings (e.g., 2, 3, 12, 11, 21). The third system features a dynamic marking of *molto rit.* followed by *ppp*, and includes a circled word that appears to be "rit.". The fourth system shows a final chord with a dynamic marking of *ppp* and a circled number "51". There are also some handwritten notes like "5'15''", "4. b.", and "73" scattered throughout the manuscript.

Example 3.12. The coda in the published version (bb. 157-60)

This image shows the published version of the coda, spanning measures 157 to 160. It is written in a standard musical notation with a treble and bass clef. The melody in the treble clef is simple and consists of a few notes. The bass clef part has a few chords and notes. A dynamic marking of *ppp* is present in the bass clef part. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

## *Xintianyou* style from traditional music onto the piano

Besides the structure of the piano transcription being consistent with the original song, the music also maintains features of the local *xintianyou* style. One distinctive element of music in *xintianyou* style is the melodic motion by the interval of a fourth.<sup>29</sup> Arranged from three different songs with *xintianyou* style, the music of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* retains this fourth-interval structure. When the music of this song is completely arranged as a piano transcription, it clearly demonstrates this melodic characteristic in the theme in Section A (Ex. 3.13) and in the thematic melody of Section B (Ex. 3.14).

Example 3.13. Bars 5-15, the theme

<sup>29</sup> See: Li Liu, 'Analysis on Artistic Features of *Xintianyou* in Northern Shaanxi', p. 166; Dajian Liu, 'Discussion on Three Features of *Xintianyou*', p. 43.

Example 3.14. Bars 40-55 in Section B

Tunes in *xintianyou* style are mainly written in *zhi*, *shang* or *yu* modes.<sup>30</sup> The song *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* is in D *shang* mode (specifically, the thematic melody in the first section is arranged in D *shang qingyue* heptatonic mode; the theme in the second section is written in D *shang* hexatonic mode with *qingjue*), retaining the original mode of the three songs that *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* is based on. The piano transcription has changed the key from C *gong* system to E-flat *gong* system, but still maintains the music in F *shang* mode.

Surprisingly, an unusual note appears in the middle section. In the original song of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*, the first three verses (Ex. 3.15) and the last

<sup>30</sup> See: Li Liu, 'Analysis on Artistic Features of *Xintianyou* in Northern Shaanxi', p. 166; Dajian Liu, 'Discussion on Three Features of *Xintianyou*', p. 43.

verse (Ex. 3.16) in the second section all unexpectedly use C-sharp, which does not exist in C *gong* system. But the original source of the music, *A Girl Carrying Water* which the middle section of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* is based on, does not show this unusual feature (Ex. 3.17). One possibility for explaining this unusual accidental is related to the expressive technique and practice of *runqiang* (润腔) in traditional Chinese music composition and performance. Yu Huiyong first defined the characteristic vocal technique of ornamentation and embellishment used by performers during the singing process as *runqiang*.<sup>31</sup> The Chinese ethnomusicologist Dong Weisong explained the term *runqiang* in a more systematic way: it is a way for traditional Chinese artists to make all possible embellishments and decorations when they sing or play music with Chinese national style and characteristics, so that the musical pieces and performances become more perfect works of art with a deep sense of multi-textures, rich tone colours and unique styles.<sup>32</sup> The fundamental source of this expressive technique is based on the fact that the most prominent feature of the Chinese language is the variation of tones. Music sung in this language inherits this feature. A melody in traditional Chinese music adopts the pattern of tonal change in the Chinese language.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, in Dong's theory, one of the functions of *runqiang* is to reflect the style of local music.<sup>34</sup> *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* is written in *xintianyou* style, and the use of *runqiang* in singing is also an artistic means to demonstrate the regional musical style,<sup>35</sup> in other words, to distinguish the singing styles in other areas from the typical and local singing feature in northern Shaanxi Province. And in the process of singing *xintianyou* music, the

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<sup>31</sup> Huiyong Yu, 'Dui shengyue minzu hua qunzhong hua de yixie kanfa – cong Ma Guoguang tongshi de yanchang tanqi' [Some Thoughts on Vocal Music for being National and Popular – Discussions from the Singing of Comrade Ma Guoguang] (对声乐民族化群众化的一些看法——从马国光同志的演唱谈起), *Wenhui Daily*, 10 June 1963, 4th section.

<sup>32</sup> Weisong Dong, 'Lun ruiqiang' [Discussions on *Ruiqiang*] (论润腔), *Chinese Music*, 4 (2004), 62-74 (p. 62).

<sup>33</sup> Kejian Guo, "'Ruiqiang' shiyi' [Interpretations of *Ruiqiang*] ('润腔' 释义), *Musicology in China*, 2 (2021), 70-78 (p. 70).

<sup>34</sup> Weisong Dong, p. 64.

<sup>35</sup> Dajian Liu, 'Discussion on Three Features of *Xintianyou*', p. 44.

use of *runqiang* produces subtle changes in pitch.<sup>36</sup> Again, this is due to the rise and fall of the tones of the local dialect which affects the melodic changes.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, the absence of the normal note C here in *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* is an example of the microtonal change in pitch in the singing of the local musical style. Meanwhile, in music notation of the 12-tone equal temperament system, it is hard to write a tone slightly different from the note C, so the unusual note C-sharp is selected as one solution. In this case, the song of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* chooses the imprecise tone of C-sharp in C *gong* system, which adds more interest and enriches the musical expression. Even in the piano transcription (Ex. 3.18), the theme and all variations in Section B abandon the normal note of E-flat (the *gong* note in E-flat *gong* system), using the exceptional note of E natural in the same melodic position to correspond to the use of the exceptional note C-sharp rather than C (the *gong* note in C *gong* system) in the folksong.<sup>38</sup>

Example 3.15. Bars 40-43 in the song of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*

	:	2̇	6		2̇	6		2̇	#1̇	2̇	3̇		2̇	-	
	1. (男)	千	家	万	户	(齐)	哎	咳	哎	咳	哟,				
	2. (女)	热腾	腾儿的	油	糕	(齐)	哎	咳	哎	咳	哟,				
	3. (男)	围	定	亲	人	(齐)	哎	咳	哎	咳	哟,				

Example 3.16. Bars 64-67 in the song

	2̇	6	6		2̇	6		2̇	#1̇	2̇	3̇		2̇	-	
	满	天	的	乌	云	哎	咳	哎	咳	哟					

<sup>36</sup> Dajian Liu, 'Discussion on Three Features of *Xintianyou*', p. 44.

<sup>37</sup> Qiaoling Zhan, 'Minzu shengyue de *ruiqiang* mei' [The Charm of *Ruiqiang* in National Vocal Music] (民族声乐的润腔美), *Huangzhong (Journal of Wuhan Music Conservatory)*, 1 (2000), 76-82 (p. 77).

<sup>38</sup> Because the melody in the piano transcription is derived from an original song written in Chinese pentatonicism, E must be regarded as an accidental note in E-flat *gong* system, rather than the normal leading note in F minor from the perspective of Western theory.

Example 3.17. The comparison of the phrase in *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* and *A Girl Carrying Water*

(*Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*)    ||: 2̇ 6 | 2̇ 6 | 2̇.<sup>#</sup> 1̇ 2̇ 3̇ | 2̇ - |

(*A Girl Carrying Water*)    2̇. 3̇ 2̇ 1̇ | 3̇ 2̇ 1̇ | 2̇. 1̇ 2̇ 5̇ | <sup>♯</sup>2̇ - |

Example 3.18. Bars 40-43, 56-59, 81-84, 111-114 in Section B in the piano transcription of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*

The image displays four systems of piano transcription for the piece *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*. Each system consists of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The first system includes the instruction *sempre stacc.* and features a red box around a specific chord in the right hand. The second system includes *sempre stacc.* and *mf*, with a red box around a passage in the bass line. The third system includes a red box around a passage in the right hand. The fourth system includes *poco meno mosso* and *ff*, with a red box around a passage in the right hand. The red boxes highlight specific musical phrases or chords across these different systems.



## Harmony in pentatonicism

Another attempt to enrich the music in the piano transcription is applying polymodality. As analysed above, the melody is written in F *shang qingyue* heptatonic mode in E-flat *gong* system. However, at bars 10 and 14 in Section A (Ex. 3.19), D-flat rather than D appears in the cadence. Therefore, the melody in F *shang* mode is accompanied by the harmony in F *yu* mode (in A-flat *gong* system). It reflects the approach of harmony application in the Chinese pentatonicism termed as polymodality with the same tonic.<sup>39</sup> The same technique appears in Section B (Ex. 3.20). When the transition phrase comes from bar 105, it is an immediate repetition of the last phrase of variation b<sup>2</sup>. To make a clear musical contrast, the last phrase in variation b<sup>2</sup> still applies harmony in the original mode of F *shang*; however, the reappearing phrase directly changes the mode in the harmony to F *yu* mode as D-flat used in the accompaniment.

Example 3.19. Bars 10-11, 14-15 in Section A

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. Each system consists of a right-hand staff (treble clef) and a left-hand staff (bass clef). The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 2/4. The first system (bars 10-11) shows a melody in the right hand starting on a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, Bb4, and C5. The left hand provides accompaniment with chords and single notes. Fingering numbers 5, 1, 3, and 3 are indicated. The second system (bars 14-15) shows a similar melodic line in the right hand, but with a different harmonic accompaniment in the left hand, reflecting the change in mode from F *shang* to F *yu*. Fingering numbers 1, 3, 3, and 3 are indicated.

<sup>39</sup> See: Zuyin Fan, *Zhongguo wushengxing diaoshi hesheng de lilun yu fangfa* [Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism] (中国五声性调式和声的理论与方法) (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 2003), pp. 244-46.

Example 3.20. Bars 97-110 in Section B

The musical score for Example 3.20, Bars 97-110 in Section B, is presented in three systems. The first system begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system is marked **Allargando** and features more complex harmonic textures with some chromaticism in the bass line.

The repetition of the theme in Section A' is another place where polymodality is frequently used (Ex. 3.21). In the first four bars (bb. 137-40), A rather than A-flat is used in the harmony. It demonstrates that the music in F *shang* mode is accompanied by the harmony in F *zhi* mode (in B-flat *gong* system). This arrangement does not extend to the end, as not only A-flat but also D-flat appears at the end of the second phrase (bb. 141-43). It returns back to the technique used in Section A where the melody in F *shang* mode is accompanied by the harmony in F *yu* mode. The following phrase repeats this second phrase but changes the mode of harmony again. At bar 144, A-flat is changed to A, but this alteration is only maintained for one bar. The next bar returns to A-flat immediately, and D-flat follows. This repeated phrase presents an alternate use of polymodality.

Example 3.21. Bars 137-48 in Section A'

The musical score for Example 3.21, Bars 137-48 in Section A', is presented in five systems. The piece is in 2/2 time, key of B-flat major, and marked 'Largo'. The first system begins with a forte (*ff*) dynamic and features a large slur over the right hand. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The third system features a mezzo-forte (*m.f.*) dynamic and includes a trill (*tr*) in the right hand. The fourth system shows further melodic and harmonic progression. The fifth system concludes with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic and a trill (*tr*) in the right hand.

Moreover, the harmonic progression in the cadence is another evidence to illustrate the feature of pentatonicism. In the final coda (Ex. 3.22), the harmony applies the progression of root motion by seconds, approaching the cadence from

the VII major chord with an added sixth interval, then directly arriving at the tonic. This application shows the principle in the pentatonic harmony that chords on every degree are able to progress to the tonic directly.

Example 3.22. The cadence in the coda (bb. 159-60)

VII<sup>+6</sup> I<sup>5</sup>

## Performance Analysis and Suggestions

The analysis above provides details to demonstrate how the first version of this piano transcription is derived from and, to a large extent, follows the original song. At the same time, when a vocal song becomes an instrumental piece, the piano composer arranges his creative ideas to constitute new elements in this piano transcription which the original song lacks. Following the composer's approach, the following section places the perspective in piano performance. Through three different pianists' recordings of the first piano version, the analysis investigates various practical interpretations, comparing them with the recording of the original song to suggest piano performance approaches that can achieve a more authentic artistic style from the original music. The performance of the new materials added in the piano transcription has also been analysed, to suggest approaches that are informed by the original singing style and can better fit into piano performance.

### Tempo

The introduction of the piano transcription, marked in the Chinese notation as 'サ', is in free tempo. Besides this, the Chinese notation of '节奏自由' (free tempo) is

presented in the first published version and the 1995 edition given by the composer;<sup>40</sup> while *ad libitum* is provided in the 1996 edition revised by the editor and the composer.<sup>41</sup> Comparing the three recordings from the pianists, Yin Chengzong (recorded in 1974),<sup>42</sup> Li Yundi (recorded in 2011),<sup>43</sup> and Chen Jie (recorded in 2005),<sup>44</sup> they all start the introduction in an unrestricted tempo, reproducing the melodic opening from the traditional song. However, after the quick continuous arpeggios when the performance comes to the last three bars, as a bridge to connect the introduction and the thematic melody, the recordings show different approaches to performance. Yin slows down his tempo to a crotchet speed of 65-75 in the last phrase of the introduction but speeds up to 95-110 when Section A comes. Li, however, ends the introduction in a faster tempo (speed range of 100-115) and maintains it to the theme. Chen's performance presents a calmer and softer mood, gently playing the end of the introduction at a crotchet speed of 50-55. Then, the tempo of the theme in Chen's recording is slightly speeded up to 80-90. Compared with recordings from Yin and Li, Yin's interpretation provides a clear contrast to identify two different sections, whereas Li uses the bridge at the end of the introduction to link the coming theme more smoothly. The tempo setting in both of their performances shows an overall increase in speed. In contrast, Chen's slower

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<sup>40</sup> See: Jianzhong Wang, *Four Piano Solo Compositions of Folksongs in Northern Shaanxi*, p. 2; Jianzhong Wang, 'Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain', in *The Collection of Wang Jianzhong's Piano Compositions*, p. 31.

<sup>41</sup> Jianzhong Wang, 'Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain', in *30 Famous Chinese Piano Pieces*, p. 101.

<sup>42</sup> Chengzong Yin, *Chinese Music - Piano - Red Lilies Crimson and Bright 山丹丹开花红艳艳*, online video recording, YouTube, 24 February 2011, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTcN3WnK6nY&list=PLNjq3V-mrnOPfYrd4BhfV5ulVq7TWihCi&index=2>> [accessed 10 September 2021].

<sup>43</sup> Yundi – Zhuti (主题), *Glowing Red Morningstar Lilies*, online video recording, YouTube, 15 April 2015, <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPMqlCtr9MI&list=OLAK5uy\\_mCONgdm3w7sAXj8ADDCrvN7LesAClbsAo&index=6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPMqlCtr9MI&list=OLAK5uy_mCONgdm3w7sAXj8ADDCrvN7LesAClbsAo&index=6)> [accessed 10 September 2021].

<sup>44</sup> Jie Chen, *Shandandan kaihua hongyanyan (Chen Jie yanzou) [Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain (Chen Jie's Performance)] (山丹丹开花红艳艳》(陈洁演奏))* online audio recording, HQGQ, 20 December 2013, <[https://www.hqq.com/song/album\\_show/35](https://www.hqq.com/song/album_show/35)> [accessed 10 September 2021].

tempo at the last several bars of the introduction produces a feeling of the end of a section, then starting the new theme in a brand new tempo.

Even though the first published version and the 1995 edition both do not indicate any tempo marking for Section A, the expression term in Chinese, ‘热烈地’ (the same meaning as 1994’s edition marked as *appassionato*) is shown. The lack of specific tempo marking instructed by the composer indeed allows performers more freedom to express themselves. Moreover, based on the musical analysis above, Wang’s transcription completely follows the original song. Therefore, one reliable source to suggest the tempo setting in piano performance comes from the recording of the song itself, first made in 1971 (the same year as the revolutionary song was composed) with Yang Qiao as the lead singer from Shaanxi Provincial Opera and Dance Theatre,<sup>45</sup> to achieve a more authentic musical expression of local Shaanxi style. In the singing recording, the tempo of the accompanying music in the last part of the introduction is slower at a crotchet speed of 60-65.<sup>46</sup> When the theme comes, even though the tempo does not change, the time signature of 4/4 used at the end of the introduction in the song is transformed to 2/2 in the theme. The melody here is naturally tightened to form a contrast effect of a faster speed in the singing of the first section. Informed by this, the relatively slow tempo applied in Chen’s piano performance at the end of the introduction is more appropriate to represent the original song. In Section A, although different pianists use varied speeds, they all show a more lively tempo compared with the introduction. This is successful in invoking this passionate musical character indicated by the piano composer, and also achieving the tempo contrast evident in the singing recording.

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<sup>45</sup> Yanzhou Xia, ‘Forever Red Lilies – the Birth of the Song, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*’.

<sup>46</sup> Bilibili, [*Shanbei minzu tese nvgaoyin*] 1971 nain Yang Qiao lingchang <*shandandan kaihua hongyanyan*> luyin (*Shanxi gewu juyuan guanxian yuedui banzou hechangdui yanchang*) [The Characteristic Soprano from Northern Shaanxi, the Recording of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* with Yang Qiao as the Leading Singer (Accompanied by the Orchestra and Chorus of Shaanxi Provincial Opera and Dance Theatre)] ([*陕北特色民族女高音*] 1971 年杨巧领唱《山丹丹开花红艳艳》录音 (陕西舞剧院管弦乐队伴奏 合唱队演唱)), online video recording, Bilibili, 1 December 2022, <[https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV1wg411W7Ed/?spm\\_id\\_from=333.788.recommend\\_more\\_video.0](https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV1wg411W7Ed/?spm_id_from=333.788.recommend_more_video.0)> [accessed 15 May 2023].

When the transition arrives, a clearly different musical character appears compared with Section A, notated as *allegro vivo* (or the Chinese term, ‘热烈地’ and ‘快速’ with the same meaning). To create this explicit contrast, Yin’s recording provides an intensely quick tempo at a crotchet speed of 175-80, nearly approaching the tempo of *presto*. Li’s recording pursues the composer’s instruction and plays this lively section at a speed of 165-70, slightly slower than Yin’s performance. However, Chen’s performance creates a more coherent sound effect and the tempo is set at speeds of 140-50. In the original song, the expression and tempo markings are shown as impassioned (written in the Chinese term, ‘热烈地’) and fast tempo (快板), the same as the piano transcription. In the singing recording, a clear sense of a fast tempo is illustrated in the middle section. However, it does not reach an extreme but maintains a speed of 150. According to this, the most crucial expression in the music here is to form a contrast with the more lyrical music with a relatively slower tempo in the first section. And Chen’s arrangement in piano performance is closest to showing the tempo features of the original song.

## Approaches to Performance

To create an animated transition to Section B, particularly, all three pianists emphasise the first dotted quaver at the beginning of the transition at bars 28 and 30 (Ex. 3.23). The accent used in their performance directly follows the piano composer’s notation, also reproducing the expression in the revolutionary song, as the emphasis is presented in the original music as well (Ex. 3.24). In this way, all performances intentionally bring audiences’ attention to the fact that the vigorous music in transition enters immediately without any break. In addition, the first published version of the piano transcription does not show many detailed notations in Section B. Chen’s performance with panelling renders the melody as a connected line, tending to maintain the full duration of each note. On the other hand, the 1996 edition offers clear notations of *staccato* and *sempre staccato* in theme b and variation b<sup>1</sup>. In Yin’s performance, the separated *staccato* notes can be easily observed. Li’s performance even underlines the sound effect of *staccato* on the beginning crotchet chords in theme b (Ex. 3.25) and crotchets in variation b<sup>1</sup> (Ex. 3.26) where Li intensively shortens the notes durations. Similarly, in the original song recording, a distinctly separated sound effect is shown in each singing word in these

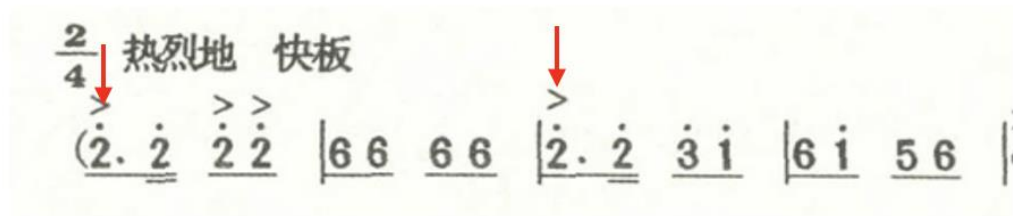
two bars without any connected singing, to express the decisive emotion in the lyrics. Based on this, the intensive use of staccato in Yin's and Li's performance indeed reveals the vigorous musical character that the composer and the original song aim to present.

Example 3.23. The beginning of the transition with accent in piano performance, bb.

28-30

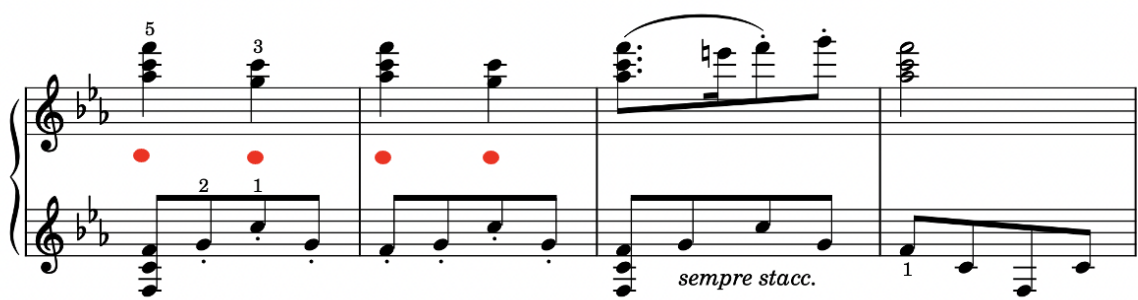


Example 3.24. Bars 29-32 in the original song



Example 3.25. The beginning of the theme b in Li Yundi's piano performance, bb.

36-43





Example 3.26. The start of variation b<sup>1</sup> in Li Yundi's performance, bb. 56-59

At the end of Section B, there are four groups of crotchet chords repeating the same melody to link the coming Section A'. The piano composer indicates the dynamic marking of crescendo and the tempo marking of ritardando at the last bar (the first published and the 1995 editions provide the Chinese notation as '渐慢' with the same meaning as ritardando). Even though there is no notation of staccato, Yin and Li literally separate the first two groups, applying staccato on the first four chords. But in the following two bars, a contrasting legato is used on the ending four chords (Ex. 3.27). Indeed, this individual change of performance approach creates a more variable musical development. Compared with them, Chen's performance still selects the approach of legato, even using pedals in each bar (Ex. 3.28). With the dynamics of crescendo, the performance fluently goes to the climax of Section A'. Although the notation of the original song does not show any tempo change at the end of the middle section, in the singing recording (Ex. 3.29) there is an evident ritardando applied from bar 85, earlier than in the piano version. Then a continuous long note is held for the last three bars which correspond to the four groups of crotchet chords in the piano transcription. This approach of singing performance makes a large extension of the sound at the end of this section. Even before the next section comes, a break appears to separate rather than connect the middle and last sections.

Example 3.27. The end of Section B in Yin Chengzong's and Li Yundi's recordings, bb. 133-36

Example 3.28. The end of Section B in Chen Jie's performance, bb. 133-36

Example 3.29. The informed notation of the singing recording at bb. 85-91

Ritardando

6 6 5 | 4 5 6 i̇ | 2̇ - | 2̇ - | 2̇ - |

晴呀 晴 了 天。

(a break)

$\frac{2}{2}$  2̇ | 3̇ 2̇ | 6. 6 | 6 6 | 2̇ 3̇ 2̇ 2̇ - |

千 里 的 那 个 雷 声 噢

Informed by the performance style in singing, it is intended to move the ritardando from bar 138 to 131 in the piano performance (Ex. 3.30), the same place of using ritardando in the singing recording but earlier than the piano composer's notation. Meanwhile, to create the effect of singing a long note for the last three bars of the middle section, it is suggested to use a similar approach to the piano performance by Chen who uses legato and pedalling to hold the chords together and not separate them. But to maintain this continuity, the recommended method of piano performance does not take a break after Section B and before Section A', but connects these two sections directly.

Example 3.30. The suggested approaches to piano performance at bb. 131-38

The image displays two musical staves. The upper staff is a piano transcription of a section, featuring a series of chords. A red arrow points from the right towards the left, indicating a ritardando (rit.) effect. The word 'cresc.' is written below the first few chords. The lower staff is a more detailed piano transcription, marked 'largo' and 'ff'. It includes complex fingerings (e.g., 5 2 1, 3 1 4 2, 1, 5) and a large slur over the final few measures, suggesting a long, sustained note or chord.

(no break)

At the end of this piano transcription, as the composer deliberately chooses a different ending from the original song, all excited and impassioned moods disappear but rather a placid melody is presented. Chen's and Li's recordings both maintain the last chords notated by a fermata given by the composer and even the silence after all sounds have vanished in a longer time. This performance represents the spiritual reception of sounds not received by human ears but experienced by the mind.

In sum, both the overall structure and the transferring of *xintianyou* style from northern Shaanxi (such as the use of fourth-interval structure and accidentals related to the technique of *runqiang*) from the revolutionary song onto the piano demonstrate

that the piano composer closely followed the conventional approach of largely retaining the original music in the piano transcription. Following Wang's faithful approach to transcription, the core purpose of the performance suggestions provided above also aims to reproduce the singing style from the oldest recording of the original song into piano playing. Bearing this analytical approach in mind, the following case of *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* will reveal similar points to illustrate the common features of Wang's arranging technique in piano transcriptions.

## Background of *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon*

Today, *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* is performed as a traditional ensemble piece, a piano solo and various versions of traditional songs. The original ensemble piece was composed by the Chinese musician, Ren Guang (1900-41). Ren was born and grew up in Sheng Xian, a city located in Zhejiang Province which is famous for its local opera.<sup>47</sup> During his middle-school time, educated in a school influenced by Western culture, Ren learnt different types of Western instruments, such as organ and trumpet. In 1919, the whole society in China was enveloped by the new-culture climate after the May Fourth Movement which encouraged young people to explore a new path for developing Chinese culture. Under this social environment, Ren decided to go to France, systematically learning the piano and Western music theory at the University of Lyon. In 1928, Ren came back to China, working at the Shanghai EMI Records Limited. Then, Ren made the acquaintance of Tian Han who had been active in the left-wing literature and art movement in Shanghai since 1924.<sup>48</sup> Through contact with Tian, Ren started to participate in numerous revolutionary events. He was active in writing revolutionary music, such as *The Nineteenth Route Army* (《十九路军》) and establishing revolutionary music organisations from 1932 to 33. In 1933, Ren joined the Chinese Communist Party, accepting proletarian revolution theory and ideas. In the next year, the EMI company wanted to organise its own traditional instruments orchestra. Ren grabbed this chance and established the EMI Traditional Orchestra which virtually became an experimental orchestra for revolutionary musicians under Ren's leadership, promoting national music and 'New Chinese Music'. In 1935, Ren composed *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* as a piece of traditional ensemble music, using Chinese traditional melody and Western compositional techniques. It

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<sup>47</sup> All the information of Ren Guang is collected from a book of his biography: Qiming Qin, *Yinyuejia Ren Guang* [The Musician, Ren Guang] (音乐家任光) (Hefei: Anhui Literature and Art Publishing House, 1988).

<sup>48</sup> Tian Han (1898-1968) was the pioneer of the left-wing literature and art movement. After joining the Chinese Communist Party in 1932, he participated in the Party's leadership of literature and art. In 1935, he became the scriptwriter of the movie, *Children of Trouble Time* (风云儿女), and lyricist of the theme song. See: Mengkeng Wu, 'Tian Han nianbiao' [Chronology of Tian Han] (田汉年表), *Journal of Guangxi University*, 4 (1984), 87-98.

later came to be widely performed in China. In 1960, based on the membership of the China National Broadcast Orchestra, the conductor, Peng Xiuwen expanded the scale of the original piece, providing a new orchestration. In 1975, Wang Jianzhong arranged Ren's version as a piano transcription. There have also been diverse of traditional songs based on this piece from the 1950s to the twenty-first century.

It is clear to observe that Ren had a strong political background. In 1933, he founded a musical association, the Institution of Chinese New Music, with Nie Er and other musicians.<sup>49</sup> The purpose of this association was to be familiar with the people's life and, based on that, to create new Chinese music compositions that met the people's needs.<sup>50</sup> Even in this early time in history, this aim completely corresponded to Mao's populism as proclaimed at the Yan'an forum in 1942. Furthermore, *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* is a typical musical example, using traditional Chinese pentatonic melody and Western composing techniques, which foreshadows Mao's policy of the 1960s, to make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China. In this way, not only was Wang's arrangement on the piano approved by the government who requested composers to arrange piano music from traditional works during the Cultural Revolution, but also, Wang's choice of Ren and his composition were politically correct, as the original ensemble piece presented the orthodox ideology.

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<sup>49</sup> Nie Er (1912-35), called as 'People's Musician', join the Communist Youth League of China in 1928. Since then, he had been active in the proletarian revolution. Introduced by Tian Han, Nie joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1933. At the same year, he built the Institution of Chinese New Music with Ren Guang and others. In 1935, he composed a theme song, *March of the Volunteers* (《义勇军进行曲》) for a movie, *Children of Trouble Time*, which later became the national anthem of PRC. See: Qiming Qin, *The Musician, Ren Guang*, p. 15; The State Council of the People's Republic of China, 'Nie Er', *The State Council of the People's Republic of China* <[http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2017-06/07/content\\_5200596.htm](http://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2017-06/07/content_5200596.htm)> [accessed 5 March 2021].

<sup>50</sup> Qiming Qin, *The Musician, Ren Guang*, p. 15.

# Analysing the Versions of the Ensemble and the Piano

## Western impact on the original ensemble version

The original instrumental ensemble version was composed in 1935 when the whole society in China had experienced a reformation influenced by Western culture since 1919. After the May Fourth Movement of 1919, Chinese intellectuals started to reconsider the value of their own traditional culture. This was regarded as a hindrance to social modernisation, whereas Western products such as science and culture were considered as the advanced mark of social progress. To a large extent, modernisation in China was equal to Westernisation. Numerous Western products were exported to China, including Western education and music. From then on, many Chinese musicians were educated in Western music and its theory. They started to appreciate and create 'New Chinese Music' from the perspective of Western conventions and values. Therefore, the texture of heterophony performed by Chinese traditional orchestras was inevitably required to be transformed and modernised on the Western ensemble pattern.

The first attempt at reformation came from a civil organisation, the Shanghai Datong Musicians Association established by Zheng Jinwen in 1919. They started to transform various kinds of traditional Chinese instruments and musical orthography, to explore new performing forms and to organise large-scale orchestras.<sup>51</sup> In 1935, the Central Broadcasting Station National Orchestra was established and funded by the government in Nanjing. It became 'the predecessor of the first modern Chinese orchestra' that reformed traditional instruments and built Chinese orchestras in the style of large-scale Western orchestras.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Shanghai Memory, '1919 nian 5 yue Datong yuehui yu Shanghai chuangjian' [Datong Musicians Association Founded in May 1919 in Shanghai] (1919 年 5 月大同乐会于上海创建), *Shanghai Memory*, [n.d.] <<http://memory.library.sh.cn/node/73203>> [accessed 16 February 2021].

<sup>52</sup> Kuohuang Han, and Judith Gray, 'The Modern Chinese Orchestra', *Asian Music*, 11.1 (1979), 1-17 (p. 14).

The goal of the EMI Traditional Orchestra founded by Ren Guang in 1934 was to promote 'New Chinese Music'. The ensemble piece *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* indeed has the shape of modernised Chinese music. Specifically, the orchestration of this piece illustrates that the EMI orchestra had some organisation principles in the Western style. Taking the string instruments as the centre, including plucked (*qinqin*,<sup>53</sup> *pipa*, *ruan*, *yangqin*) and bowed strings (*erhu*, *zhonghu*, *zhongge*, *dage*),<sup>54</sup> the orchestra also had other two groups: wind instruments (*di* as the flute, *xiao* as the clarinet) and percussion instruments (*muyu* as the wood block, *diaobo* as the cymbal).<sup>55</sup> Moreover, the most significant evidence to consider the EMI Orchestra as a modernised Chinese orchestra is the inner musical structure and organisation among those instrumental groups. The wind instruments and some of the strings usually perform the melody, with *qinqin* and *yangqin* as the harmonic accompaniment often using primary triads in D major, and percussion as the rhythmic accompaniment. According to this, the original version of *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* already has a multi-voiced polyphonic structure, with dynamic contrast among different groups.

Another aspect that illustrates the influence of Western culture and the modernisation of this piece is the usage of the tango rhythm in both the traditional ensemble version and the piano transcription.<sup>56</sup> Tango is a musical genre that emerged and 'developed from a fusion of art forms existing in the cultural melting

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<sup>53</sup> *Qinqin* is a kind of traditional Chinese instrument, with similar structure as *ruan*. It is usually used as accompaniment voice of rhythm and harmony.

<sup>54</sup> *Zhonghu*, *zhongge*, *dage* are all bowed string instruments, made and based on *erhu*. This instruments group of bowed strings is analogous to the violin family in the Western orchestra.

<sup>55</sup> Han's article does not mention the EMI Orchestra as a modern Chinese orchestra, but a Chinese source does. See Qing Yang, and Meng Cai, 'Wo guo minzu chuanguo chuchuang shiqi de tansuo guiji (shang)' [The Exploration of Chinese National Musical Instrument Creation in its Initial Stage (Volume one)] (我国民族乐器创作初创时期的探索轨迹(上)), *Music Research*, 6 (2008), 24-33 (p. 28).

<sup>56</sup> As stated in the last paragraph that the original piece is performed by the modernised Chinese orchestra, the expression of 'traditional ensemble version' means the original piece is played by traditional Chinese instruments, not traditional Chinese orchestra.



pot of Argentina' since the middle of the nineteenth century.<sup>57</sup> By the early twentieth century, it was widely spread and finally became one kind of music in the popular culture of Buenos Aires. During the 1910s, it sailed far away across the Atlantic Ocean, arriving in France. Within the short period of the year 1913, Tango Argentino (renamed by the French upper class) travelled through the whole of Europe and North America. Meanwhile, the composer of the original ensemble music, Ren Guang was professionally educated at the University of Lyon from 1919 to 1923, living in France until 1927. Ren's musical and social life must have been impacted by tango as one of the most popular forms of music since the 1910s. He composed this ensemble piece using the typical tango rhythm and traditional Chinese pentatonic scale.<sup>58</sup> The piano transcription arranged by Wang reserves this feature, largely utilising tango rhythm in both the melody and the accompaniment.

## The overall structure in the music of the ensemble and the piano versions

The ensemble version includes three independent sections with distinct musical materials, whereas the piano transcription has been rearranged in a simple ternary form with a repetition of Section A. The structure of both pieces is compared and demonstrated in Table 3.2:

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<sup>57</sup> The quotation and all background information of tango stated below are from the chapter. See Kacey Link, and Kristin Wendland, 'Introduction. Argentine Tango: A Multidimensional Art Form', in *Tracing Tangueros: Argentine Tango Instrumental Music*, ed. by Kacey Link, and Kristin Wendland (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 1-19 (p. 6).

<sup>58</sup> Qiming Qin, *The Musician, Ren Guang*, p. 27.

Table 3.2. The structure of the versions of the traditional ensemble and the piano transcription

The ensemble version	The piano version
Introduction (bb. 1-4 )	Introduction (bb. 1-9)
Section A (bb. 5-14)	Section A (bb. 10-19)
Transition (bb. 15-16)	Transition (bb. 20-21)
Section B (bb. 17-24)	Section B (bb. 22-37)
Transition (bb. 25-26)	Transition (bb. 38-47)
Section C (bb. 27-43)	
	Section A' (bb. 48-57)
Coda (bb. 44-45)	Coda (bb. 58-71)

As this comparison shows, Wang's arrangement is extended from the original ensemble version. The introduction in the original piece is written on a small scale with four bars which only contain the accompaniment in a typical tango rhythm but with no melody present. In the piano introduction, however, Wang composes new musical materials, starting the melody in the tango rhythm as well. This is followed by an arpeggiated chord on the tonic, and a typical piano texture of pentatonic scales appears in the lower voice. The third phrase (bb. 5-7) in the piano transcription is derived from Section B of the ensemble music (bb. 31-33) where the melody is written in quavers. Compared with that, Wang tightens the rhythm, breaking quaver notes into semiquavers, and the music is divided between the two hands alternately (the detailed explanation is presented in Ex. 3.31). This alteration on the piano, firstly, can enrich the layers of the piano sound, as this phrase in the ensemble version is performed by seven instruments from groups of wind instruments (*di, xiao*), plucked (*pipa, ruan*) and bowed strings (*erhu, zhonghu, zhongge*). Moreover, the music arranged in two hands alternately can be explained to respond to the title that depicts the clouds chasing the moon. It creates a joyful

mood, making the musical character more lively. The last two bars in the piano's introduction return to the tango rhythm, in correspondence with the beginning and paving the way for the entry of the main theme in Section A.

Example 3.31. Bars 31-33 in the original music (transcribed into staff notation) from the ensemble version (a is performed by *di*, *xiao*, *pipa*, *erhu* and *zhonghu*; b is performed by *ruan* and *zhongge*),<sup>59</sup> and bb. 5-7 in the transcribed music on the piano

The image shows a musical score for Example 3.31. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system has two staves labeled 'a)' and 'b)', representing the ensemble version. The second system has two staves labeled 'Piano', representing the piano transcription. The piano part features arpeggios in the right hand and a melody in the left hand. A dashed line with the number '8' indicates an octave shift in the piano part.

Section A and the first transition in the piano directly follow the original ensemble music, presenting the same melody and inner music structure. When Section B comes, the traditional version sets the melody in the alto range, with a musical period consisting of two phrases (phrases a + b). Different from this, the piano transcription puts the melody in the treble. In addition, it expands one period into two (phrases a + b, a + b), containing more variations of musical range: from bar 30, the piano music repeats the first phrase in Section B in the left hand (with arpeggios in the right hand as the accompaniment), then the melody of the last phrase (bb. 34-37) goes back to the right-hand voice in the high pitch.

<sup>59</sup> The original musical notation of the ensemble version of *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* comes from: Qiming Qin, *The Musician, Ren Guang*, pp. 143-51. Bars 31-33 are on p. 149.

In the second transition, the ensemble music only includes the accompaniment in tango rhythm; after that, the final Section C comes directly, with two musical periods (bb. 27-34, bb. 35-43). Wang's transcription combines these two sections from the traditional version, arranging the transition part and the first period of Section C in the ensemble piece as the second transition section in the piano version. After this long transition, Section A appears again in the piano music, with a thicker texture of numerous chords, octaves and arpeggios. In the coda, the original version uses the tango rhythm as usual. On the other hand, the piano transcription repeats the music from the introduction which forms an effect of echoing.

Wang's piano transcription basically follows the order of each section in the musical structure of the traditional ensemble version but with his own creations in many details. Specifically, the repetition of Section A at the end, instead of using new musical materials, is able to emphasise the theme and make the music more expressive in a thickened texture. This kind of structure, to some extent, can be explained as possibly related to the demand by the government that music creations need to be revolutionary, national and popular. The modernised composing way of repeating the main theme at the end makes it easier for general audiences to remember, deepen their impression and arouse their response. Furthermore, the introduction, transitions and coda in the original music are uniformly written in tango rhythm without melodic movement, while Wang's new arrangement of these sections in the piano transcription involves more abundant musical contents than the traditional version. One possible reason to understand Wang's arrangement is the polyphonic performance capacity of the piano, which often demands additions to simpler traditional versions of the music to make it fit the piano better. Although this is the only one of the selected case study transcriptions based on an original piece that is not monophonic, being written for multiple instruments, the piece does not use complex textures, so that transcribing it for piano is still largely a matter of adding more musical materials rather than leaving things out.

## Revision of ornaments on the piano

Like the new musical materials created for the piano, the use of ornaments such as trills and arpeggios and arpeggiated chords in different places compared with the original music becomes another evidence that Wang's arrangement suits the piano. In bars 18 and 19, there are trills applied in the voices of *di*, *xiao* (wind instruments) and *erhu*, *zhonghu* (bowed string instruments). At the last bar in the first phrase, the melody ends in a long sustained note performed by five different instruments: *di*, *xiao*, *pipa*, *erhu*, *zhonghu*. However, completely different arrangements are made on the piano. At bar 23, the trill does not appear on the first long dotted note in the melody but a mordent is placed on the first note of the added music. Again, at bar 24, the trill vanishes in the piano version, but a long trill replaces the long single note of the ensemble version (the detailed interpretation is presented in Ex. 3.32). One possible reason might be that trills are easy to perform on the traditional wind and string instruments, and are commonly applied on long notes, whereas this is less usual on the piano. Meanwhile, the dotted crotchet is marked as forte in the ensemble music, and using a trill on this note gives it emphasis. The corresponding bar in the piano piece presents the contrasting dynamics of piano. To maintain the soft feeling of music and not underline any notes, Wang abandons the trill in the melody but a short one appears in the ornamented music part. Also, Wang delays the appearance of the trill, not writing it at bar 24 but at the last bar of this phrase, which uses the trill to maintain the melody on the piano and build an ending effect for the phrase.

Example 3.32. Bars 17-20 in the ensemble music (a is performed by *di*, *xiao*, *erhu* and *zhonghu*; b is performed by *pipa*) and bb. 22-25 in the transcribed piano version

The image shows a musical score with three systems. The first system (a) is for ensemble instruments (di, xiao, erhu, zhonghu) and the second system (b) is for pipa. The third system is for piano. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The piano part starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The ensemble parts have a forte (*f*) dynamic. Red boxes highlight trills in the ensemble parts and a trill with double notes in the piano transcription. Red arrows point from the ensemble trills to the piano trill. A red bracket on the right side of the piano part indicates a section of the transcription.

The second phrase becomes gradually more intense than the first. Wang again delays the ornament, not placing it in the middle of the melodic development. The trill is located on the last beat of bar 23 in the ensemble piece; but in the corresponding phrase in the transcription, Wang applies double notes and chords to enrich the texture at bar 28. Then, when the ensemble piece uses a long note in the melody performed by *di*, *xiao*, *pipa*, *erhu* and *zhonghu* to end the second phrase, the piano version transforms it as an arpeggiated chord and the descending arpeggios form the ending (see Ex. 3.33). The same situation happens at the end of the second transition part in the piano transcription, where Wang uses the combination of an arpeggiated chord and a long trill to replace the long note in the orchestra (Ex. 3.34). This arrangement covers the shortage that a single note (especially in a high pitch) performed on the piano is strikingly thin and cannot sustain for long. The usage of trills, arpeggios and arpeggiated chords thickens the texture of the piano, making the music more variable. More importantly, this revision can achieve a similar sound effect to the voices from the orchestra.

Example 3.33. Bars 21-24 in the ensemble music (a is performed by *di*, *xiao*, *erhu* and *zhonghu*; b is performed by *pipa*) and bb. 26-29 in the transcribed piano version

Example 3.34. Bars 31-34 in the ensemble music (a is performed by *di*, *xiao*, *pipa*, *erhu* and *zhonghu*; b is performed by *ruan* and *zhongge*) and bb. 44-47 in the transcribed piano version

## Performance Analysis and Suggestions

When Wang delivers the musical elements features of the original ensemble version on the piano, his transcription reveals the overall structure of the original music, but with some innovative revisions. Consistent with this, the following discussion moves to performance analysis, comparing the first version of the

ensemble performance recording made in 1935 when this traditional piece was composed and the recordings from four pianists, to suggest how piano performance can best reveal the musical style of the original music. Meanwhile, following the piano composer's example, the recommended approach to performance aims to apply different methods to make the music more appropriately fit into the frame of this piano piece.

## Tempo

The overall tempo marking given by the composer for the whole piece in the piano transcription is written as *moderato*, with the expression marking of *chiaramente*. Similarly the ensemble version specifies a medium speed (presented as a Chinese term of '中速' in the music notation) with lyrical expression ('抒情'). Yin Chengzong's recording uses a more lively tempo in a crotchet speed range of 130-140, reaching *allegro* rather than *moderato*.<sup>60</sup> In another two pianists' recordings from Chen Jie and Li Yundi, they both decelerate the speed to the range of 115-125.<sup>61</sup> Xu Lujia applies the relatively slowest speed range of 110-120 among the discussed pianists.<sup>62</sup> In the recording of the ensemble version performed by EMI Traditional Orchestra, the tempo is even slower compared with all the recordings of

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<sup>60</sup> Wenzheng Zhou, *Caiyun zhuiyue (Guangdong yinyue/ Wang Jianzhong & Yin Chengzong, bianqu)* [*Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon (Cantonese Music/ Wang Jianzhong & Yin Chengzong for the Arrangement)*] (彩雲追月 (廣東音樂 / 王建中 & 殷承宗, 編曲)), online video recording, YouTube, 23 February 2021, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBCMjx0qcEw>> [accessed 19 May 2023].

<sup>61</sup> Jie Chen, *Caiyun zhuiyue (Chen Jie yanzou)* [*Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon (Chen Jie's Performance)*] (彩云追月 (陈洁演奏)), online audio recording, HQGQ, 20 December 2013, <[https://www.hqgq.com/song/album\\_show/35](https://www.hqgq.com/song/album_show/35)> [accessed 2021]; Yundi – Zhuti (主题), *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon*, online video recording, YouTube, 15 April 2015, <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p6HKu1BVVk&list=OLAK5uy\\_mCONgdm3w7sAXj8ADDcVn7LesAClbsAo&index=11](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p6HKu1BVVk&list=OLAK5uy_mCONgdm3w7sAXj8ADDcVn7LesAClbsAo&index=11)> [accessed 5 March 2021].

<sup>62</sup> Professor Xu Lujia, *Caiyun zhuiyue, zhu dajia haomeng* [*Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon, and Wish Everyone a Good Night*] (《彩云追月》, 祝大家好梦), online audio recording, Xiaohongshu, 18 July 2020, <<https://www.xiaohongshu.com/discovery/item/5f129eb700000000010012cb?xhsshare=CopyLink&appuid=5ac5f31ae8ac2b1b0b116679&apptime=1613558808>> [accessed 18 February 2021].



piano performance, in a speed range of 95-105.<sup>63</sup> Except Xu's piano playing, all versions of other performances do not demonstrate a precise moderato speed. Informed by the ensemble performance and the expression marking indicated by the composer of the original music, it is advised to perform at a generally slower speed, close to the traditional performance and better to establish the lyric emotion in music.

## Approaches to performance of tango rhythm in transition

The typical tango rhythm applied in this traditional ensemble piece and its piano transcription does influence approaches to performance by the different pianists. For example, at the end of the introduction, the last two bars (bb. 8-9) in tango rhythm form a connecting link between the preceding and the following section. In Yin's recording, he especially performs the stronger dynamics to underline the first chord on the downbeat at bar 8, even though the whole introduction is marked piano by the composer. Then, a contrast in dynamics is used in the following bar. The same approach is used again at the first transition in the piano transcription. The dynamic instruction given by the composer is mezzo forte with crescendo at bar 20 and diminuendo at bar 21. Yin does not strictly follow the composer's marking, but performs the section of transition in strong dynamics without changing, then repeats the transition part in contrasting dynamics as piano (the piano composer does not indicate repetition here). In this way, his creative approach of playing the tango rhythm without melody in this transition part two times with different dynamics provides an obvious sense of this particular tango rhythm, expanding the sound effect of this rhythmic feature in the piano transcription.

There is another approach used by Xu to highlight the tango rhythm in the piano performance. Xu first complies with the tempo of moderato in the introduction. At the last two bars, however, he deliberately slows the tempo of the tango rhythm down, then returns to the original tempo in the following Section A.

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<sup>63</sup> H M Chan, *Caiyun zhuiyue – baidai guoyuedui hezou (1935)* [*Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon – Performed by EMI Traditional Orchestra (1935)*] (彩云追月 – 百代国乐队合奏 (1935)), online video recording, YouTube, 7 August 2020, <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2YGXMF48\\_w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2YGXMF48_w)> [accessed 19 May 2023].

The same situation happens again at the first transition section. Xu applies *ritardando* to the tango rhythm in the transition, then returns to the original tempo in Section B. Xu's own comments on his recording mention that the piano composer Wang invited him to perform this piano piece when Wang was arranging it, and some changes were made together by them. It can be considered that Xu's performance approach is one reliable source to reveal the piano composer's ideas. Besides, his usage of the change of tempo builds a contrast between tango rhythm and other musical materials. However, Chen Jie and Li Yundi choose a more continuous approach. At bars 8-9 and 20-21, they both perform the music more smoothly, with no dramatic dynamic contrast or tempo changing. This approach to performance does not emphasise the distinctive tango rhythm, but highlights the structural function of these two pairs of bars as a linking point, concatenating the preceding and the following parts.

The recording of the ensemble version performed by EMI Traditional Orchestra actually chooses a steady approach to present the music without tempo and dynamic change. Unexpectedly, in the notation the *diaobo* (cymbal) never appears in the introduction (Ex. 3.35), but it is heard in the recording (Ex. 3.36). More specifically, the *diaobo* is performed from bar 2 to 4 on each downbeat, which indeed increases the dynamic sound effect. The same situation applies in the transition bars of 15-16: the *diaobo* is played on the downbeat of each bar but not presented in the score. Informed by this, Yin's piano performance emphasises the first chord at bar 8 to make a similar sound effect as in the ensemble recording. To combine this with the approach from Xu, the transition bars are suggested to make an accent on the first chords of bars 8, 20 and 21, and intentionally introduce a *ritardando*. In this way, the slowing down tempo gives some space to breathe in the transition music between different two sections, and also the stressed first chords of each bar give a clearer feeling of tango rhythm (Ex. 3.37).

Example 3.35. The introduction of bb. 1-4 in music notation of the traditional ensemble version

1 = D  $\frac{4}{4}$

中途的拍谱

笛	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	5̣·6̣1̣2̣3̣5̣
箫	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	5̣·6̣1̣2̣3̣5̣
笙	3 3 3	3 3 3 3	4 4 4	3 3 3	3 3 3
梆子	1·5̣ 5̣ 5̣	5̣ 5̣ 5̣ 5̣ 5̣	4·6̣ 6̣ 6̣	1·5̣ 5̣ 5̣	1·5̣ 5̣ 5̣
鼓	1 2 1	1 1 1 1	1 1 1	1 1 1	1 1 1
二胡	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	5̣·6̣1̣2̣3̣5̣
琵琶	1·1 1 1	5̣ 1 1 1 1	6̣·4 4 4	1·1 1 1	5̣ 0 0 0
大鼓	1·3 3 3	5̣ 3 3 3 3	6̣·4 4 4	1·5̣ 5̣ 5̣	1·3 3 3
吊钹	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0
板鼓	1·3 3 3	5̣ 3 3 3 3	4·6̣ 6̣ 6̣	1·5̣ 5̣ 5̣	1·3 3 3
二胡	1 1 1	5̣ 1 1 1	4·4 4 4	1·3 3 3	1 1 1
二胡	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	5̣·6̣1̣2̣3̣5̣
中胡	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	5̣·6̣1̣2̣3̣5̣
中笙	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0	5̣ - - -
大鼓	1 0 0 0	5̣ 0 0 0	4 0 0 0	1 0 0 0	5̣ - - -

Example 3.36. The revised notation of cymbal playing at bb. 1-4, informed by the ensemble recording

吊钹	0 0 0 0	X 0 0 0	X 0 0 0	X 0 0 0
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Example 3.37. The suggested approaches in the transition bars of 8-9 and 20-21 in piano performance

Musical score for piano performance, bars 8-9. The score is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). A red accent mark (>) is placed above the first note of the treble staff in bar 8. A fermata is placed over the treble staff in bar 9. The bass staff has a "rit." marking below it. The music consists of chords in the treble and a melodic line in the bass.

Musical score for piano performance, bars 20-21. The score is in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). Red accent marks (>) are placed above the first notes of the treble staff in both bars 20 and 21. A "rit." marking is placed below the treble staff in bar 20. The music features chords in the treble and a melodic line in the bass.

## Conclusion

From a piece of Chinese traditional ensemble music and a vocal song to two piano transcriptions, the first common point is that each version of the music demonstrate a direct and strong link with Chinese politics: *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* is originally a revolutionary song; *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* was composed by Ren Guang who was a political musician; the emergence of two piano transcriptions was directly consistent with the orthodox and mainstream path of arranging Chinese piano transcriptions based on traditional music in the 1970s.

Particularly, *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* arose from the direct political intervention by which the Chinese government wished to conduct a project of arranging Chinese piano transcriptions. Meanwhile, Wang's two piano transcriptions, to a large extent, not only maintain the overall structure of music from the original versions, but also show the distinctive features of the original music: the local musical style of *xiantianyou* originating from northern Shaanxi, and the distinctive tango rhythm impacted by Western music, have both been transferred onto the piano. In both pieces, Wang's common composing technique is to change the musical register to give more variety when the original versions repeat the same melody. In a manner of speaking, Wang's style of arranging piano transcriptions steps on a regular path in the conventional way.

Meanwhile, as a pianist, he also considers whether his transcriptions from other types of music fit the piano. This led to changes in some places: for example, he created a new coda in his piano version of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*, to replace the more revolutionary melody in the original song; he delayed the use of ornaments in his piano version compared with the ensemble music of *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon*. Wang's creative process produced added materials in the piano music which the original version of the music lacks. For example, when the song *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* with merely a single melodic line became a piano piece of piano music with multi-voiced textures, Wang applied the harmony of polymodality in pentatonicism in the accompaniment. This is one conspicuous element showing the Chinese cultural identity in this piano transcription.

Finally, in the perspective of performance investigation, while many different pianists have made recordings of these two piano transcriptions, the analysis in this research recommends an approach to piano performance that is more informed by the performing style of the original music, reflecting Wang's efforts to retain aspects of the traditional music on the piano,. Ultimately, the suggested performance methods intend to bring a more authentic artistic style from Chinese traditional music into piano performance.

## Chapter Four: *Music at Sunset*

### ( 《夕阳箫鼓》 )

Li Yinghai (1927-2007), a contemporary Chinese composer and theorist, devoted himself to the creation of Chinese-style music and the development of traditional Chinese music theory. This chapter concentrates on the second version of his piano transcription, *Music at Sunset* (firstly arranged in 1975 based on different versions of a *pipa* solo, later revised as a second piano version in 1981 and published in 1982), to investigate the approaches of how a piano transcription becomes a Chinese piece, in the aspects of imitating sound effects and performing techniques from traditional instruments on the piano, as well as applying composing techniques from traditional Chinese music. All of these reveal more creativity in the piano transcription departing from the original *pipa* music, which allocates this transcription to the third case study chapter according to the logic of increasing freedom of adaptation. Besides, the main focus of the analysis in this chapter, compared with other selected case studies in this research, is to apply Li's theory of pentatonic harmony to this selected piano piece. First published in the 1950s, Li started to systematically explain traditional Chinese modes and scales in a pentatonic framework in his book. Based on this, Li's arrangement of accompaniment voices in the piano music no longer depends on the Western harmony theory but establishes a way of constructing chords in a pentatonic way. Later on, Li's student, Fan Zuyin, a Chinese composer and musicologist, improved Li's theory, extending the aspect of interpreting harmonic progressions in pentatonicism. *Music at Sunset* completely presents all of these concepts. Therefore, the explorations in this chapter comprehensively analyse this piano transcription through Li's theory that achieves a unique way of demonstrating Chinese musical style in terms of pentatonicism.

In the last section of this chapter, the performance suggestions follow Li's idea of showing traditional Chinese style in piano music. Li's aim of showing more traditional sound effects from various Chinese instruments on the piano impacts the analysis of practical approaches in performance. Also, informed by traditional

Chinese philosophy and aesthetics, the performance suggestions provided by this research lead to a performance in some ways different and revised from the notation given by the composer. All dimensions of this piano transcription ultimately realise the goal of making this piano music Chinese.

## Introduction of the Composer—Li Yinghai

Li Yinghai was born in Sichuan Province in 1926. Influenced by his family who especially favoured local operas and traditional songs, Li aspired to pursue a musical career in the future. From 1943 to 48, Li was systematically educated in the piano and Western composing techniques at the Chongqing National Academy of Music, where he embarked on the road of professional music learning.<sup>1</sup> Because of the victory of the Second Sino-Japanese War, the Academy was moved to Nanjing, and Li was taught composition by Wolfgang Fraenkel there. During the years from 1952 to 1963, Li had been working at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and successively held the posts of associate professor, director of the Ethnomusicology Research Office and deputy director of the Composition Department.

Under the leadership of He Luting who was the dean of the Shanghai Conservatory, ethnomusicology research was given more attention, and Li had the chance to study traditional music intensively.<sup>2</sup> He believed that mechanically

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<sup>1</sup> Li's biographical information comes from an article, 'Li Yinghai's Lifetime' written by his pupil, Fan Zuyin (a professor working at the China Conservatory of Music). After Li's death, entrusted by the China Conservatory of Music and Li's wife, Gu Danru, Fan wrote this article to commemorate Li's contributions in the whole life for Chinese music development, and to help audiences better understand Li. 'Li Yinghai's Lifetime' is published as the appendix in Fan's article, 'Li Yinghai, My Forever Respected Teacher': Zuyin Fan, 'Li Yinghai xinsheng, wo yongyuan de enshi' [Li Yinghai, My Forever Respected Mentor] (黎英海先生, 我永远的恩师), *Chinese Music*, 2(2007), 1-3, 21 (p. 3).

<sup>2</sup> He Luting (1903-1999) was a well-known Chinese composer and music educator. His piano piece, *Buffalo Boy's Flute* (牧童短笛) won the first prize of a piano composition competition sponsored by Alexander Tcherepnin (a Russian musician who worked in China between 1934-37) in 1934 in Shanghai, and was regarded as the first mature Chinese piano composition. More information is in Introduction chapter.

copying and transferring the Western major and minor system resulted in harmony that was incompatible with pentatonic music and national style.<sup>3</sup> Afterwards, Li published the book, *Chinese Modes and Harmony* in 1959, addressing the question of how to build on the theory of Western harmony to construct a harmony system in pentatonicism.<sup>4</sup> Other articles and books based on this topic were also published later.<sup>5</sup> Li, therefore, has been recognised as a significant theorist in Chinese musical history who nationalised Western harmony and affected the later generations.<sup>6</sup> For developing Chinese national music, in 1964, the State Council decided to establish the China Conservatory of Music. As the leading researcher in national music theory, Li was dispatched to the conservatory for teaching, working there until he retired.<sup>7</sup> (From 1973, Li worked at the School of Music, Central May 7th University and the Central Conservatory of Music. In 1980, Li went back to the China Conservatory of Music.) Li dedicated his whole life to analysing national musical theory and also writing Chinese music. The creation of piano music is the main field of Li's instrumental music composition that responds to his theoretical research. He also believed the piano, though a Western instrument, had the ability to express the style and features of Chinese music. His representative Chinese

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<sup>3</sup> Yinghai Li, *Hanzu diaoshi jiqi hesheng* [Chinese Modes and Harmony] (汉族调式及其和声) (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 1959), pp. 3-4.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Li's all books are collected in: Yinghai Li, *Li Yinghai yinyue lilun xuanji* [An Anthology of Li Yinghai's Musical theories] (黎英海音乐理论选集) (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> There was an academic conference held at the China Conservatory of Music in 2006, discussing and summarising Li's contributions (such as researching nationalising Western harmony, composing national music and musical education) to Chinese academia and influence on the latter generations of Chinese musicians. The collated document of the conference can be found in: Xiaomian Sun, and Jiajia Gao, 'Yinghui wanqian pu yuehai— "qingzhu Li Yinghai xiansheng 80 huadan ji xueshu yantao hui" zongshu' [Overview of Celebrating the 80th Birthday of Li Yinghai and the Academic Conference] (英绘万千谱乐海— "庆祝黎英海先生 80 华诞暨学术研讨会" 综述), *Chinese Music*, 2 (2007), 17-21.

<sup>7</sup> From 1973, Li worked at the School of Music, Central May 7th University and the Central Conservatory of Music. In 1980, Li went back to the China Conservatory of Music.



piano compositions include *Music at Sunset* (《夕阳箫鼓》) and *Under the Silvery Moon Light* (《在银色的月光下》). Li's life came to an end on 15 January 2007.

## Background of *Music at Sunset*

Nowadays, *Music at Sunset* is performed as a *pipa* solo, a traditional instrumental ensemble piece and a piano solo. The authorship of *Music at Sunset* cannot be identified.<sup>8</sup> The earliest record of the title *Music at Sunset* appeared in *Musical Textual Research* (The earliest extant repertoires of Chinese operas and music, 《今乐考证》) by Yao Xie (1805-64), yet no score was documented.<sup>9</sup> The earliest *pipa* score, with six sections, can be traced in *Pipa Scores of Ju Shilin* (《鞠士林琵琶谱》), written in around 1860 by the *pipa* master, Ju Shilin (1793-1874).<sup>10</sup> In around 1875, the Chinese musician, Wu Wanqing (1847-1926) expanded Ju's version, adding a coda to make seven sections.<sup>11</sup> In 1898, the pupil's pupil of Ju Shilin, Chen Zijing (1837-91), included *Music at Sunset* in his *Chen Zijing's Pipa Scores* (《陈子敬琵琶谱》), meanwhile giving subtitles to each of Wu's seven

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<sup>8</sup> As mentioned by a Chinese ethnomusicologist, Yang Yinliu: 'the general *pipa* scores, before the version (around 1895) collected by Li Fangyuan, both published versions and manuscripts did not indicate composers'. See: Yinliu Yang, 'Cong chunjianghuayueye de biaoti tanqi' [Discussion on the Title of *A Moonlit Spring Night on the River*] (从《春江花月夜》的标题谈起), *People's Music*, 2 (1954), 26-28 (p. 27).

<sup>9</sup> The written time of *Musical Textual Research* cannot be traced. All presently available versions claim that it was written during the Qing dynasty (1636-1912). One published version (by the National Academy of Chinese Opera in 1959) can be viewed online: Documentation, 'Jinyue kaozheng' [Musical Textual Research] (《今乐考证》), *Original Documentation*, 2016 <<https://max.book118.com/html/2016/0119/33594217.shtm>> [accessed 10 August 2020].

<sup>10</sup> Jianzhong Qiao, 'Lun Lin Shicheng yi bian Ju Shilin pipa pu yu yangzhengxuan pipa pu' [Discussion on *Pipa Scores of Ju Shilin* and *Yangzhengxuan Pipa Scores* Edited by Lin Shicheng] (论林石城译、编《鞠士林琵琶谱》与《养正轩琵琶谱》), *Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music*, 1 (2013), 10-16, 43 (p. 10).

<sup>11</sup> Guqu Net, 'Xiyang xiaogu' [Music at Sunset] (《夕阳箫鼓》), *Guqu Net* [Ancient Music Website], 2008 <[http://info.guqu.net/pipamingqu/20080617175430\\_23249.html](http://info.guqu.net/pipamingqu/20080617175430_23249.html)> [accessed 10 August 2020].

sections ('The Whirlwind'; 'Half Moon'; 'By the Water'; 'Ascending the Mountain'; 'Bursting Songs'; 'Evening View'; 'Returning Sail').<sup>12</sup> Another rearranged version was composed by a *pipa* player, Li Fangyuan (1850-1901). In Li's *Thirty New Pipa Scores from The North and South School* (《南北派十三套大曲琵琶新谱》) written in 1895, the name of the piece was changed to *Xunyang Pipa* (《浔阳琵琶》), and the structure was expanded from seven to ten sections with various subtitles ('*Pipa* and Drum at Dusk'; 'Pistils Spreading in the wind'; 'Half Moon Over Guan Mountain'; 'Falling Sun by the Water'; 'Rustling Sound of Maple Leaves in Autumn'; 'Thousand-Foot Wu Gorge'; '*Pipa* Sound from the Red Woods'; 'Evening View on the River'; 'Evening Song of the Fisherman'; 'Shadow of Dusk-Returning Sail').<sup>13</sup> The name and artistic expression of this music refers to a poem, *Song of a Pipa Player* (《琵琶行》) written by Bai Juyi (772-846), a poet of the Tang Dynasty; in keeping with the poem, the general mood of this piece expresses sorrowful and plaintive emotions.<sup>14</sup> Later, Li Fangyuan's pupil, Wang Yuting (1872-1951) altered some complicated techniques from Li's version and recreated this music as *Xunyang Moon Night* (《浔阳月夜》).<sup>15</sup> In 1925, based on Wang's version, Liu Yaozhang (1905-96, who studied the *pipa* with Wang Yuting) and Zheng Jinwen

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<sup>12</sup> English translation of subtitles is from: Kuohuang Han, 'The Chinese Concept of Program Music', *Asian Music*, 10.1 (1978), 17-38 (p. 24). This background information is found in: Yuemin Fang, 'Xiyang xiaogu cong pipa qu dao gangqin qu de wenhua yanbian' [The Cultural Change of *Music at Sunset* from the *Pipa* to Piano Piece] (《夕阳箫鼓》从琵琶曲到钢琴曲的文化演变), *Explorations in Music*, 2 (2006), 20-22 (p. 21).

<sup>13</sup> Translated subtitles are from: Kuohuang Han, 'The Chinese Concept of Program Music', p. 24.

<sup>14</sup> The background information is collected from: Yuemin Fang, 'The Cultural Change of *Music at Sunset* from the *Pipa* to Piano Piece', p. 21; Yinliu Yang, 'Discussion on the Title of *A Moonlit Spring Night on the River*', p. 27. The Story of *Song of a Pipa Player* tells: that one night when Bai bids all his friends farewell by the riverside, he hears a piece of *pipa* music by a highly-skilled performer who uses music to recount her bleak life experience. Bai empathises with this emotion because he is degraded by the corruption of officialdom. This poem expresses Bai's grieved feelings. The full content of this poem is presented in the Appendix 2 Section 2.1.1-2.

<sup>15</sup> The date of this version is not recorded in the existing resources. But almost Wang's *pipa* music is collected by the Traditional Instruments Department at the Central Conservatory of Music which was published in *Wang Yuting's Pipa Scores* in 1980.

(1872-1935) from Shanghai Datong Musicians' Association adapted the piece for a traditional instrumental ensemble. Again, the name was altered by Zheng Jinwen to *A Moonlit Spring Night on the River* (*Spring, River, Flower, Moon, Night*, 《春江花月夜》). To more appropriately express these five artistic scenes, Zheng renamed the ten subtitles as: 'Bells and Drums from the River Pavilion'; 'Rising Moon over the Eastern Mountain'; 'Whirlwind and Curling Water'; 'Flower Shadow Shading the Pavilion'; 'Deep Water and Distant Clouds'; 'Evening Song of the Fishermen'; 'Swirling Water Rushing on the Shore'; 'Sound of Oars in the Distant Water'; 'Splashing Sound of the Returning Sail'; Coda.<sup>16</sup> Some resources consider this piece of music to refer to a poem with the same name by Zhang Ruoxu (670-730), a poet of the Tang Dynasty.<sup>17</sup>

The mostly widely performed *pipa* version today is the one arranged by Shen Haochu (1889-1953) in 1926, documented in his *Yangzhengxuan Pipa Scores* (《养正轩琵琶谱》).<sup>18</sup> The name has been returned to its origin as *Music at Sunset*, and the structure reverted back to seven sections with subtitles as in Chen Zijing's version. Throughout its history, there have been numerous *pipa* versions. The current Chinese academia even considers that the original piece no longer exists, rather being renewed in various versions with different styles and techniques. In 1975, based on many different *pipa* versions, Li Yinghai arranged it as a piano transcription, named as *Music at Sunset*;<sup>19</sup> also in 1981, he rearranged it in a

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<sup>16</sup> Translated subtitles are from: Kuohuang Han, 'The Chinese Concept of Program Music', p. 24. All Background information is collected from: Guangyi Xu, 'Tantan youxiu de gudian yuequ chunjianghuayueye' [Discussion on the Great Classic Music, *A Moonlit Spring Night on the River*] (谈谈优秀的古典乐曲《春江花月夜》), *People's Music*, 2 (1983), 28, 34-36 (p. 34).

<sup>17</sup> See: Zhengsheng Chen, 'Chunjianghuayueye de qianshi jinsheng' [The Throughout History of *A Moonlit Spring Night on the River*] (《春江花月夜》的“前世”“今生”), *Journal of Nanjing Art Institute (Music & Performance)*, 4(2018), 30-34 (p. 33). *A Moonlit Spring Night on the River* depicts the beautiful scenes on the river under the moonlight; at the same time, it shows the melancholy expression or nostalgia of wanderers. The full contents are presented in the Appendix 2 Section 2.2.1-2.

<sup>18</sup> Yinliu Yang, 'Discussion on the Title of *A Moonlit Spring Night on the River*', p. 26.

<sup>19</sup> Li himself said: '[This piano transcription] was based on many different *pipa*'s versions during composing'. See Li's interview from a journal article: Jin Yang, 'Shitan gangqin gaibianqu xiyang xiaogu de yanzou' [Discussing Performance of the Piano Transcription,

second piano version.<sup>20</sup> Li explained: ‘the first version has been greatly impacted by *pipa* versions. I wanted to better exert the piano’s features...So the second version becomes an independent piano composition’.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, this new version evokes other traditional instruments such as Chinese bamboo flute (*xiao*) and Chinese zither (*zheng*), rather than only *pipa*,<sup>22</sup> which makes this piece more expressive and Chinese-sounding.

This piano music was not just spontaneously composed by Li, but reveals the political influence coming from the Chinese government. Li recalled his memories of circumstances during the Cultural Revolution, saying:

[at the early stage of the Cultural Revolution], because of *The Yellow River Piano Concerto* and *The Piano Accompaniment to The Red Lantern* arranged by Yin Chengzong [which were authorised by the Chinese government] and able to be performed on the stage, under this condition, piano transcriptions could be made in the later time during the revolution period. In addition, adaptations were the only type that Chinese composers could create in this time.<sup>23</sup> Many composers started to write piano transcriptions. Also, we were requested [by the authorities] to arrange some pieces based on ancient music.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, *Music at Sunset* is an artistic product guided by the Chinese government, which demonstrates the 1960s-70s’ orthodox preferences and ideologies. The

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*Music at Sunset*] (试谈钢琴改编曲《夕阳箫鼓》的演奏), *The New Voice of Yue-Fu (The Academic Periodical of the Shenyang Conservatory of Music)*, 2 (2007), 164-67 (p. 164).

<sup>20</sup> Because the instrumental ensemble version uses the name, *A Moonlit Spring Night on the River*, some resources mention *Music at Sunset* and *A Moonlit Spring Night on the River* as the same one piano composition. Also, there is another completely different piano transcription, *A Moonlit Spring Night on the River* arranged by a Hong Kong composer, Lin Yuepei in 1971.

<sup>21</sup> This quotation comes from Li’s interview, recoded in: Jin Yang, ‘Discussing Performance of the Piano Transcription, *Music at Sunset*’, p. 165.

<sup>22</sup> Lanshen Su, ‘Tan zhonghua zhi yue, qiu minzu zhi feng—Li Yinghai xiansheng fangtan lu’ [To Explore Chinese Music, to Seek National Style—an Interview with Li Yinghai] (探中华之乐, 求民族之风—黎英海先生访谈录), *Piano Artistry*, 1 (1999), 4-9 (p.8).

<sup>23</sup> Actually, new compositions were still possible during the revolution. More detailed discussions are presented in Chapter 1, p. 104.

<sup>24</sup> Li’s interview is from: Jin Yang, p. 164.

types of musical creation were severely restricted, and the content was controlled by the government. This piano transcription reveals the situation that whether musical pieces could be composed or performed on the stage during the Cultural Revolution mainly depended on their political value to serve the class of proletariat, not composers' individual expression or artistic merit. From a national standpoint, music needed to be socialist to present the spirit of the Chinese government.

Furthermore, *Music at Sunset* reflected the policies of earlier historical times. When the piano entered and developed at the early stage in China in the early twentieth century, China was in a severe situation: although the feudalist Qing government had been overthrown, facing the powerful industrialised capitalist Western countries, China's governments (including the Nanjing Provisional Government and National Government) seemed vulnerable, and the level of the national economy was low. Therefore, only a small group of Chinese people who were called urban middle class and elites by Kraus could approach, learn and appreciate this Western instrument and art.<sup>25</sup> In 1942, Mao published his *Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art* that requested artists to approach grassroots people, experiencing and learning from them, because this social base contained the richest and broadest sources for creation.<sup>26</sup> In this way, composing piano music based on traditional sources became evidence that composers were following the government's populism. Li Yinghai confirmed his creative motivation which was directed by the policy. He said: 'Mao's *Yanan's Talk* gave a fundamental impact on our musical compositions...[Chinese composers] must concentrate on national forms that people are delighted to hear and see'.<sup>27</sup> Li became a devoted follower of orthodox ideologies, and to him, piano music, was no longer an exotic art. Instead, writing piano transcriptions based on traditional Chinese music made the piano more national. *Music at Sunset* adapts China's social and cultural

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<sup>25</sup> Richard Curt Kraus, *Pianos and Politics in China, Middle-Class Ambitions and the Struggle over Western Music* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>26</sup> The Maoist Documentation Project, 'Talks at the Yanan Forum on the Literature and Art', *Marxists*, 2004 < [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3\\_08.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_08.htm) > [accessed 24 July 2020].

<sup>27</sup> Yinghai Li, *Chinese Modes and Harmony*, pp. 3-4.

background and environment, which popularises the development of the piano in China. In turn, the people could have the ability to appreciate and understand this kind of art, enriching their own spiritual and cultural needs.

Even though Li revised his piano version in the post-revolutionary time in 1981, comparing these two piano versions (see Table 4.2 below) reveals that the second version did not add more newly created sections. Specifically, Variations II and VI in the first version were omitted in the second. Variation V in the first version was shortened in the second version as Var. IV. In Variations I (Var. I in the first version), II (Var. III in the first version) and III (Var. IV in the first version) in the second version, the revision was made in the texture of accompaniment voices and decorations in the music while Li maintained the same melody in both versions (more details are analysed in the following section).

Thus, this ancient melody coming from a long history was preserved and presented in the revised version so that Chinese audiences would still find it familiar and have the ability to appreciate this piano music. The essence of this second piano version, therefore, is still under the ideology of populism, not divorced from the political framework of artistic creations in the Cultural Revolution. Based on this, as well as Li's musical intentions in the arrangement, the following analysis mainly concentrates on the second version of the piano transcription rather than the first.

## Comparing the Versions of the *Pipa* (1926 version) and the Piano (second version)

The overall structure

The 1926 *pipa* version contains seven sections with various subtitles;<sup>28</sup> Li's transcription has expanded the scale to ten sections which include one introduction, a theme, seven variations and a coda. A clear comparison of structure can be seen from the table below:

Table 4.1. Comparing the structure in the 1926 *pipa* version and the second piano transcription

The 1926 <i>pipa</i> version	The piano transcription
[1] <i>The Whirlwind</i>	The introduction and the theme <sup>29</sup>
[2] <i>Half Moon</i>	Variation I
[3] <i>By the Water</i>	
[4] <i>Ascending the Mountain</i>	
[5] <i>Bursting Songs</i>	Variation II
[6] <i>Evening View</i>	
	Variation III-VI
[7] <i>Returning Sail</i>	Variation VII
The coda	
	The coda

<sup>28</sup> English translation is from: Kuohuang Han, 'The Chinese Concept of Program Music', p. 24.

<sup>29</sup> Li transferred the whole introduction of *pipa* piece, and also created new musical materials and expanded this section in his piano version.

It is clear to see that Li does not arrange his piano transcription closely following the *pipa* version: some sections from the piano piece correspond to the *pipa* version, but sections three, four and six from the *pipa* version disappear while new variations are added. This arrangement, to some extent, is not a piano transcription in the strict sense according to Western conventions. The Chinese term for 'transcription' is *gaibian zuopin* (改编作品). *Gai* refers to alteration or transformation, while *bian* corresponds to composing, and *zuopin* means works. As illustrated in Wei Tingge's research, the situation of adapting traditional music on the piano is that: composers creatively arrange original melodies and compose new polyphonic texture on the piano; meanwhile, musical forms have distinct differences compared with the original pieces. '*Gaibian*', therefore, is a word with broader meanings.<sup>30</sup> In Chinese thinking, 'transcription' is a way of not only rearranging the original music from one instrument to another, but also of composing new music in the new version. As Li himself explained, this transcription has become an independent piano composition.<sup>31</sup>

The tempo structure is another element impacted by Chinese traditional music. The detailed arrangements of the original *pipa* piece and both piano versions are presented below:

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<sup>30</sup> Tingge Wei, 'Lun Wang Jianzhong de gangqin gangbian qu' [Discussion on Piano Transcriptions arranged by Wang Jianzhong] (论王建中的钢琴改编曲), *Musicology in China*, 2 (1999), 64-73 (p. 66).

<sup>31</sup> Jin Yang, 'Discussing Performance of Piano Transcription', p. 165.



Table 4.2. The detailed tempo settings in the *pipa*, the first and second piano versions

Section	The <i>pipa</i> version	Section	The first piano version	Section	The second piano version
[1]	‘サ’ (Free tempo)	The introduction	Tempo a piacere	The introduction	Tempo a piacere
	♩ = 66	The theme	Andante moderato	The theme	Andante moderato
[2]	♩ = 66	Variation I	Moderato	Variation I	Moderato
[3]	♩ = 66	Variation II	Animando		
[4]	♩ = 66				
[5]	‘サ’ (Free tempo) ♩ = 144	Variation III	Ad lib. Dolce – piu mosso	Variation II	Ad lib. Dolce – piu mosso
		Variation IV	Lento – moderato	Variation III	Lento – Andante
		Variation V	Allegretto	Variation IV	Allegretto
[6]	♩ = 84	Variation VI	Sostenuto – moderato		
		Variation VII Piu mosso - moderato		Variation V	Meno mosso
		Variation VIII	Sostenuto – moderato – presto – largamente	Variation VI	Moderato
[7]	♩ = 60 – accelerando – ♩ = ♪			Variation VII	Meno mosso – presto – largamente
The coda	Free tempo				
		The coda	Lento ad lib.	The coda	Lento ad lib.

This piano transcription applies the structure of a traditional rhythmic form, using the free—slow—intermediate—fast—free tempo commonly used in traditional Chinese music<sup>32</sup> (including traditional instrumental music<sup>33</sup> and Chinese operas),<sup>34</sup> whereas this traditional pattern is not illustrated in the *pipa* music. According to the table above, in the introduction, Li directly invokes and translates the free tempo from the *pipa* version (free tempo is indicated in the *pipa* notation by ‘サ’ and ‘节奏自由’, and in the piano music by preserving the traditional notation of ‘サ’ and providing the tempo marking, tempo a piacere). From the introduction to variation III, the first version goes through the whole pattern of free—slow—intermediate—fast—free. However, from variation IV to VIII, the tempo arrangements become freer, not strictly following the pattern of slow—intermediate—fast tempo. In the second version, from the introduction to variation II, the tempo changes are free—slow—intermediate—free, without the fast section. Then from variation II to the end, the tempo structure completes the full pattern. The tempo structure in Li’s piano transcriptions generally follows the traditional sequence of free—slow—intermediate—fast—free tempo, but some adjustments are made, as indeed they are in many traditional operas.

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<sup>32</sup> See: Yongyi Yu, ‘Xi Li Yinghai gangqin qu xiyang xiaogu de yinyue chuangzuo’ [Analysis on Musical Composition of *Music at Sunset* by Li Yinghai] (析黎英海钢琴曲《夕阳箫鼓》的音乐创作), *Chinese Music*, 1 (2013), 157-61, 77 (p. 158). Xing Chen, ‘Gangqin shang de minyue jifa – tan Li Yinghai dui gangqin minzu yindiao fengge de chuli shoufa’ [Composing Techniques of Traditional Instruments on the Piano – Discussion on Traditional Style on the Piano Applied by Li Yinghai] (钢琴上的民乐技法—谈黎英海对钢琴民族音调风格的处理手法), *Chinese Music*, 2 (2014), 193-96, 200 (p. 195).

<sup>33</sup> Rong Qian, ‘Shilun zhongguo yinyue zhong san jiepai de wenhua neihan’ [Discussion on Cultural Meanings of Free Tempo Used in Chinese Music] (试论中国音乐中散节拍的文化内涵), *Music Research*, 4 (1996), 97-100 (p. 97).

<sup>34</sup> Except this, the various types of operas still contain divers tempo structures, such as slow—fast—free tempo applied in the Peking opera, free—fast—intermediate tempo applied in the Huangmei opera and slow—free—slow tempo applied in the Liyuan opera. See: Fuyao Zha, ‘Lun xiqu changqiang banshi lianjie de duoyangxing’ [Discussing the Variety of Tempo in Traditional Operas] (论戏曲唱腔板式连接的多样性), *Journal of Xinghai Conservatory of Music*, 4 (2000), 37-40.

## The sound effects of traditional Chinese instruments arranged on the piano

As explained by Li himself, the second piano version is not merely informed by *pipa* music, but also connects with other traditional instruments. The next stage of analysis focuses on how Li uses piano music in his second version to create similar sound effects to those produced by traditional Chinese instruments.

The introduction begins by repeating the same note, which responds to the title of this piece. Interpreted word by word, *xiyang* means sunset; *xiao* refers to a Chinese traditional instrument, a vertical bamboo flute; and *gu* represents the Chinese drum. *Xiyang xiaogu* refers the sounds of flute and drum at sunset, or more generally, music at sunset. The first phrase in the music of both the *pipa* (see Ex. 4.1) and the piano (see Ex. 4.2) applies repeated notes to imitate drum strokes. The newly created second phrase in the piano thickens the texture, repeating the same chords rather than single notes to capture the effect of drum beating (see Ex. 4.3). Also, on the *pipa* score, there is a clear indication of a change from slow to fast tempo (‘慢起渐快, 由慢渐快’), the same as the piano version which shows *poco meno mosso* and then *accel poco a poco*. However, compared with the *pipa* version where only a decrescendo is used at the end of the first phrase, the piano transcription demonstrates a more explicit and sensitive dynamic changes. The music at the beginning on the piano score is written in *mezzo piano*, followed by the even lighter double notes in the bass. Then, the long sequence of repeating notes alternately performed by the two hands increases from *pianissimo* to a louder sound, finally retuning to be quiet. Many secondary sources interpret these more careful dynamic alterations as depicting the sound of drum coming from far to near, then receding back into the distance.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> See Xiaolei Lei, ‘Tan gangqin qu xiyang xiaogu de yanzou chuli’ [Discussion on Performance of *Music at Sunset*] (谈钢琴曲《夕阳箫鼓》的演奏处理), *The New Voice of Yue-Fu (The Academic Periodical of the Shenyang Conservatory of Music)*, 12 (1984), 45-46 (p. 45); Meng Bian, ‘Tan zhongguo gangqin yinyue yu gangqin minqu xiyang xiaogu’ [Discussion on Chinese Piano Music and the Piano Piece, *Music at Sunset*] (谈中国钢琴音乐与钢琴名曲《夕阳箫鼓》), *Instrument*, 1 (2000), 60-61 (p. 60); Xing Chen, ‘Composing

Example 4.1. The beginning phrase in the *pipa* music<sup>36</sup>

1=G (定弦 2̣ 5̣ 6̣ 2̣)  $\frac{2}{4}$

【一】回 风

慢起渐快      由慢渐快

Example 4.2. The first phrase in the piano transcription<sup>37</sup>

Tempo a piacere

Example 4.3. The second phrase in the piano transcription

Techniques of Traditional Instruments on the Piano – Discussion on Traditional Style on the Piano Applied by Li Yinghai, p. 195.

<sup>36</sup> Qupu Website, 'Xiyang xiaogu' [Music at Sunset] (《夕阳箫鼓》), *Qupu Website*, 2012 <<http://www.qupu123.com/qiyue/pipa/xiyangxiaogu.html>> [accessed 10 September 2020].

<sup>37</sup> Yinghai Li, 'Xiyang xiaogu' [Music at Sunset] (《夕阳箫鼓》), in *30 Famous Chinese Piano Pieces*, ed. by Tingge Wei (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 1996), pp. 129-137 (p. 129).

After the drum beats finish, several arpeggiated chords with arrows pointing down in the right hand (see Ex. 4.4) appear for the first time in this piano transcription (also presented at the end of the theme, variation II and the final end), with the purpose of imitating the same technique prevalently performed on the *pipa*. This is named in Chinese notation as *lin* (临): the player uses the thumb to pluck from the first string to the fourth in sequence. On the other hand, Li also revised this traditional technique for better musical development on the piano. In section seven of the *pipa* version, arpeggiated chords are extensively employed, but in the corresponding section, Variation VII in the piano transcription, these are transformed to unarpeggiated octaves and chords. One possible reason why Li uses different performing techniques here on the piano is the fast tempo. Li indicates the tempo from (moderato) poco string to even presto at the end. Using arpeggiated chords, the same as on the *pipa*, would result in the piano performance failing to achieve the presto tempo later. Li's arrangement is written on the basis of keeping the original music and melody from the *pipa* version while accommodating the potential performance capacity of the piano.

Example 4.4. The arpeggiated chords with arrows pointing down in the piano transcription



Immediately following the arpeggiated chords in the introduction, the music evokes the sound of the *xiao* with a series of acciaccaturas in the right hand (Ex. 4.5). Specifically, this represents the sound effect of portamento in *xiao* playing. The piano transcription also imitates the *xiao* in the innovative Variations III and V. In Variation III, Li deliberately revised the ornamental notes from the first piano version (in Var. IV, Ex. 4.6) to trills in the melody in the second version (Ex. 4.7). Meanwhile, numerous trills appear again at the beginning of Variation V in

response to the arpeggios in the bass (Ex. 4.8). Compared with the piano, when the player blows a long note on the *xiao*, it produces trills in two ways: one is called the fingered trill, where the player uses the fingers to cover and uncover the sound holes quickly and consecutively; another is named the air trill, where the performer produces a shake in the airflow by movements of the diaphragm and abdominal muscles. On the piano, using the movement of two fingers to perform trills resembles the technique of the fingered trill on the *xiao*.

Example 4.5. Phrases 5 and 6 in the introduction



Example 4.6. Bars 72-80 in Var. IV in the first piano version<sup>38</sup>

The musical score for Example 4.6 consists of two systems of piano notation. The first system, marked *p*, shows a right-hand part with a series of sixteenth-note chords and a left-hand part with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system, marked *accel. non tro ppo*, continues the right-hand part with more complex rhythmic patterns and trills, while the left hand remains accompanimental. A large red arrow on the left side of the page points from the first system down to the second system.

Example 4.7. Bars 48-56 in Var. III in the second piano version

The musical score for Example 4.7 consists of two systems of piano notation. The first system, marked *mp*, features a right-hand part with trills and a left-hand part with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system, marked *poco rit.*, continues the right-hand part with trills and a left-hand part with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. A large red arrow on the left side of the page points from the first system down to the second system.

<sup>38</sup> Yinghai Li, 'Xiyang xiaogu' [Music at Sunset] (《夕阳箫鼓》), in *Gangqin qu wushou (genju zhongguo guqu ji chuantong yuequ gaibian)* [Five Piano Pieces (Arranged based on Chinese Ancient and Traditional Music)] (《钢琴曲五首 (根据中国古曲及传统乐曲改编)》), ed. by Yinghai Li (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 1981), pp. 25-34 (p. 28).

Example 4.8. Trills in Var. V, bb. 87-91



The change of key from the G *gong* system applied in the *pipa* version to G-flat *gong* system in the transcription makes it easier for the piano to imitate a technique from another traditional instrument, the Chinese zither *zheng*. The application of E-flat *yu* mode in the introduction forms a pentatonic scale on the piano's black keys (Ex. 4.9). Before the introduction arrives at its final destination, Li creates a small climax of continuous arpeggios. The music here aims to achieve the sound effect of the free glissando on the Chinese *zheng*, where the performer uses the thumb and forefinger to successively play glissandos in both directions. Two other passages that imitate the sound effect of the *zheng* are in Variations I and III. In the first piano version, Li applied broken chords in the accompaniment voice. However, in his revised second version, he changed the texture to more conjunct and connected notes running in the lower register to accompany the melody in the right-hand voice (Ex. 4.10-11). This type of accompaniment is borrowed from a type of texture voice commonly performed on the *zheng*.

Example 4.9. A long pentatonic scale in the introduction





Example 4.10. Bars 15-18 in Var. I in the first piano version and bb. 15-18 in Var. I in the second piano version

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano, labeled 'Moderato'. The top system, representing the first piano version, shows bars 15-18 with a treble clef and a key signature of three flats. It features a complex melodic line in the right hand with various ornaments and a steady accompaniment in the left hand. A red arrow points from this system down to the second system. The second system, representing the second piano version, shows the same bars (bb. 15-18) with a similar key signature and tempo. The right hand part is simplified, featuring a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure and a series of eighth notes in the following measures. The left hand part is also simplified, with a few notes in the first measure and a single note in the second measure. The dynamic marking 'mf' is present in the first measure of the right hand, and 'm.d.' is present in the second measure of the right hand and the first measure of the left hand.

Example 4.11. Bars 52-55 in Var. III in the first piano version and bb. 28-31 in Var. II in the second piano version

The image displays two piano scores for Example 4.11, arranged vertically. A large, curved red arrow on the left side points from the top score down to the bottom score, indicating a comparison or transformation between the two versions.

**Top Score (First Piano Version):**  
- Title: *Più mosso*  
- Dynamics: *mp* (mezzo-piano)  
- Time Signature: 2/4  
- Key Signature: B-flat major (two flats)  
- The score consists of two staves (treble and bass clef). The right hand features a melodic line with eighth-note patterns and a final flourish marked with an 8va (octave) and a first ending bracket. The left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes.

**Bottom Score (Second Piano Version):**  
- Title: *Più mosso*  
- Dynamics: *mp* (mezzo-piano)  
- Time Signature: 2/4  
- Key Signature: B-flat major (two flats)  
- The score consists of two staves. The right hand has a more sparse melodic line compared to the first version, with a final flourish marked with an 8va and a first ending bracket. The left hand features a more active accompaniment with sixteenth-note patterns.

## Pentatonicism in Chinese Culture

### Harmony of pentatonicism in the piano transcription (second version)

Since the 1920s, the first generation of Chinese composers had absorbed Western musical theory, moving from the linear style of Chinese traditional music towards multi-voice textures. The first attempts at transforming Chinese traditional music on the piano were based on quoting traditional melodies or ancient rhythms and other Chinese musical elements within the frameworks of Western harmony and other composing techniques. Such a syncretic method dominated the direction of composing Chinese piano works for a long time. In the development of compositional practice, Li always believed that musical creations should be anchored in Chinese tradition, then assimilate the nourishment of Western experience while making it more national.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, the technical question of how to nationalise harmony on the basis of Chinese pentatonic scales was raised. In the 1950s, he systematised the theory of Chinese national modes (pentatonic modes) and started to research his own system of harmony in pentatonicism. Having explained the basic theory of Chinese modes and scales in pentatonicism in the Introduction chapter, the following analysis illustrates how Li applies his theoretical research to compositional practice, in other words, how pentatonic harmony based on Chinese scales and modes, as it appears in the second version of the piano transcription, originated from Western theory but demonstrates unique features in national style.

In Western harmony, triads and seventh chords are constructed on major or minor scales. Applying the same principle, Example 4.12 constructs chords on C *gong* mode in the three types of heptatonic scales in pentatonicism:<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Li's words are written in the preface in his pupil's book. See: Zuyin Fan, *Zhongguo wushengxing diaoshi hesheng de lilun yu fangfa* [Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism] (中国五声性调式和声的理论与方法) (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 2003), p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> See Yinghai Li, *Hanzu diaoshi jiqi hesheng, xiudingban* [Chinese Modes and Harmony, Revised Version] (汉族调式及其和声, 修订版) (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House,

Example 4.12. Triads and seventh chords on C *gong* mode

G   S   J   Z   Y

(G-gong, S-shang, J-jue, Z-zhi, Y-yu)

It is clear to observe that the triads based on *gong* and *yu* (including the seventh chord on *yu*) are formed of principal notes, while the others all contain added notes. As pentatonicism emphasises principal notes and considers added notes as ornamental, some chords built on or including added notes are incongruous with pentatonic melody.<sup>41</sup> To solve this problem, two technical approaches are applied to construct two types of chords which are (1) an open fifth chord and (2) a chord with an alternative note.

An open fifth chord (marked as <sup>5</sup>) means the third note above the root in a triad or a seventh chord has been removed. The first reason for constructing chords in this way is that the third note is not one of the principal notes but an added note in a pentatonic scale, as happens with the chords on *shang* and *zhi*.<sup>42</sup> In addition, under some circumstances, open fifth chords are also built on other pitches as a typical

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2001), p. 154; Zuyin Fan, *Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism*, p. 75.

<sup>41</sup> Yinghai Li, *Chinese Modes and Harmony, Revised Version*, pp. 113-114; Zuyin Fan, pp. 75-76.

<sup>42</sup> Yinghai Li, p. 115; Zuyin Fan, pp. 76-78.

type of chords in pentatonicism to distinguish them from the Western triads and seventh chords. Specific examples using open fifth chords are found in *Music at Sunset* in the bass of Variation III (Ex. 4.13) and Variation V (Ex. 4.14). The complete analysis is presented below:

Example 4.13. Bars 37-43 in Var. III (written in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)

Chord analysis for Example 4.13: | 5 | VII<sup>5</sup> | | 5 | VII<sup>5</sup> | | 5 | VII<sup>5</sup> V<sup>5</sup> | | 5

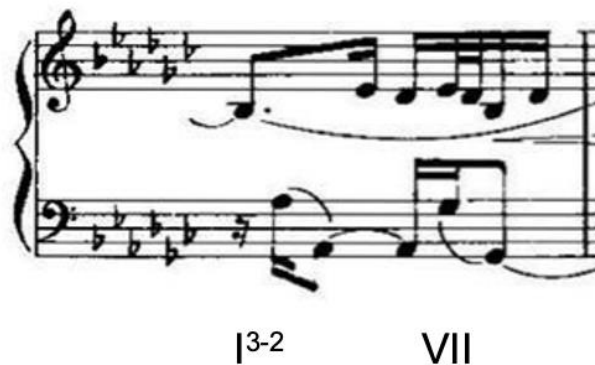
Example 4.14. Bars 97-104 in Var. V (in E<sup>b</sup> *yu* mode)

Chord analysis for Example 4.14: V<sup>5</sup> IV<sup>5</sup> III<sup>5</sup> III<sup>5</sup> III<sup>5</sup> V<sup>5</sup> IV<sup>5</sup> IV<sup>5</sup> IV<sup>5</sup> III<sup>5</sup> | 5 | 5 | 5 III<sup>5</sup> | 5 | 5

Removing the added notes from chords indeed allows the harmony to remain pentatonic, though open fifth chords omitting one tone from triads or seventh chords may sound relatively thin, with certain limitations in

performance.<sup>43</sup> Thus, there is another type of chord created in pentatonicism to maintain a full sound effect of harmony. A chord with an alternative note means that if the third note in this chord is not a principal but an added note in a pentatonic scale, this added note is replaced by a principal note.<sup>44</sup> For example, at bar 6, the chord is structured as A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> (Ex. 4.15). In other words, C<sup>b</sup> in the A-flat minor triad has been replaced by B<sup>b</sup>, as C-flat is an added note (*qingjue*) in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode. Another similar example is presented at bar 10 (Ex. 4.16). The chord here is structured as D<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup>, and F (*biangong*) is changed to E<sup>b</sup> (*yu*). A transformed seventh chord with a replaced note is also used in Variation II at bar 28 (Ex. 4.17). The chord is structured as A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> G<sup>b</sup>, which means C-flat (*qingjue*) is changed to B<sup>b</sup> (*jue*).

Example 4.15. Bar 6 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)



<sup>43</sup> Yinghai Li, *Chinese Modes and Harmony, Revised Version*, p. 115.

<sup>44</sup> Zuyin Fan, *Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism*, p. 78.

Example 4.16. Bar 10 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)



Example 4.17. Bar 28 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)



To maintain the full sound effect of a chord, and at the same time to possess the different sound colours of Western chords, a third category of chord is to add an additional principal note on the basis of a triad or a seventh chord.<sup>45</sup> For instance, at the beginning of two bars in the first variation (Ex. 4.18), the first chord is built as D<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> D<sup>b</sup>. This particular chord can be analysed using two principles: the third note above the root has been removed, as F is as added note (*biangong*) in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode; and the addition of B-flat creates a sixth interval between it and the root, D-flat. This chord is marked as IV<sup>-3+6</sup>. The following bar uses an original triad with an added fourth interval (E<sup>b</sup> G<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup>). Furthermore, the beginning of the second period in Variation VII (Ex. 4.19) is an

<sup>45</sup> Yinghai Li, *Chinese Modes and Harmony, Revised Version*, p. 115; Zuyin Fan, *Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism*, pp. 81-82.

example of alternately using chords with replaced notes and a chord with an additional note. Particularly, the first chord at bar 173 is constructed as E<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> D<sup>b</sup>. G-flat as a principal note in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode, but it is substituted by A-flat in order to differ from the E-flat minor seventh chord. Explicit analysis is illustrated below.

Example 4.18. Bars 15-16 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)

IV-3+6                      V+4

Example 4.19. Bars 173-74 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)

Vm7, 3-4                      VII+6                      Im7, 3-4

The three categories of chords analysed above are considered as the technical approach to transforming Western chords in order to make harmony fit with a pentatonic melody. Another method on the basis of the pentatonic scale has also been established. By organising various numbers of notes from a scale, there are three categories of chords: (1) three-tone chord, (2) four-tone chord and (3) five-tone chord. Similar to the Western harmony theory, these three types of chords have their root and changed positions. In Western theory, inversions have a specific meaning that the third, the fifth or the seventh of a



chord is in the bass. To distinguish from this, when other notes rather than the root act as the bass one of a chord, it is defined as a changed position in Chinese music theory. Thus, inversions and changed positions present a similar form but with different concepts.<sup>46</sup>

One type of a three-tone chord is only constructed on *gong* with major second intervals, in other words, a three-tone cluster chord constituted by the three successive tones, *gong*, *shang* and *jue*.<sup>47</sup> Clear examples can be found at different places in this piece. For example, at the end of the introduction, the harmony is formed of the notes G<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup>. Due to B<sup>b</sup> being in the bass, the chord here is recognised as III<sup>3/2</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> changed position (Ex. 4.20). The same chord in its root position is used in the first variation (Ex. 4.21).

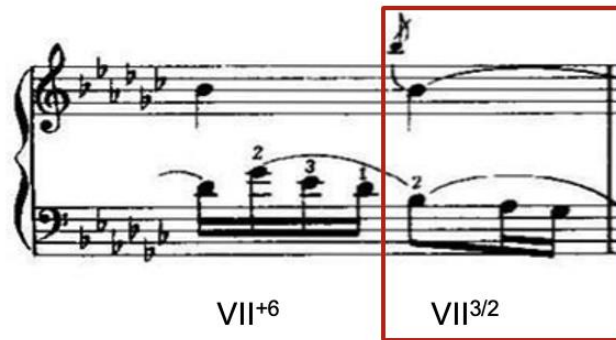
Example 4.20. A three-tone chord in the introduction (in E<sup>b</sup> *yu* mode)

The image shows a musical score for a piano introduction. The score is written in E-flat major (three flats) and consists of two staves. The upper staff contains a complex texture of many notes, with some notes numbered 1 through 5. The lower staff contains a similar texture. A red box highlights a specific chord structure in the bass, which is labeled as III<sup>3/2</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Below the score, the text "√5 notes" is written, and below the red box, the text "III<sup>3/2</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>" is written.

<sup>46</sup> Zuyin Fan, *Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism*, p. 104.

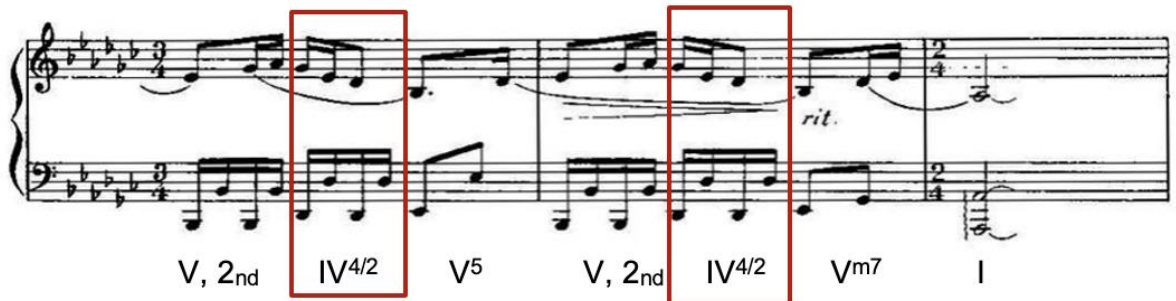
<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

Example 4.21. Bar 24 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)



Compared with the first type analysed above, the second type of three-tone cluster chord separately uses *shang*, *jue*, *zhi* and *yu* as the root, forming four different chords. The feature in this chord is that a perfect fourth interval is involved (marked as <sup>4/2</sup>).<sup>48</sup> For instance, at the end of Variation VII, a three-tone chord containing D<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> G<sup>b</sup> is used (Ex. 4.22). The demonstration is shown below:

Example 4.22. Bars 182-85 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)



The constitutional principle of a four-tone chord is using four successive notes from a pentatonic scale. In this way, the first two types of four-tone cluster chords based on *gong* (e.g. C D E G) and *yu* (e.g. A C D E),<sup>49</sup> can also be viewed as chords with additional notes. There is another type of four-tone cluster chord

<sup>48</sup> Zuyin Fan, *Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism*, pp. 104-05.

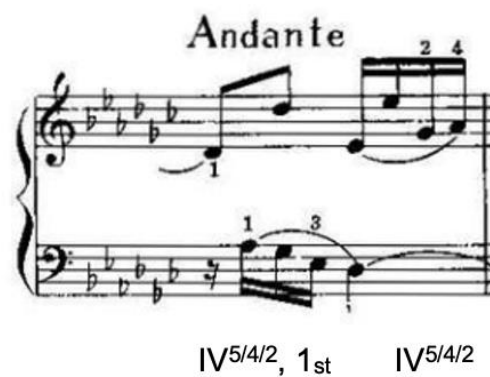
<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

written on *shang* and *zhi*. A particular interval as a feature presented in this type of chord is that the root and the top note form a perfect fifth.<sup>50</sup> A specific example can be traced in Variation I. The harmony is written as a broken chord of D<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> G<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup> which is a four-tone cluster chord based on *zhi* (Ex. 4.23). The same chord is applied in the third variation, presented in its first changed position (Ex. 4.24).

Example 4.23. A four-tone cluster chord at bar 18 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)



Example 4.24. A four-tone cluster chord at bar 57 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)



A five-tone chord, as its name implies, vertically structures all principal tones from a pentatonic scale. From bars 175-178, the harmony continuously uses five-tone chords based on *zhi* (D<sup>b</sup>) which include all primary tones in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode as D<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> G<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> (Ex. 4.25). Meanwhile, to some extent, the distinction between scale and arpeggio is not always clear in pentatonic music. The harmony here is only considered as a five-tone broken chord or arpeggio, not a pentatonic scale.

<sup>50</sup> Zuyin Fan, *Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism*, p. 106.

Restricted by the particular A-flat *shang* mode, this whole section is written based on the scale A<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> D<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> G<sup>b</sup>. If considering this harmony as a scale, the whole section is modulated to D-flat *zhi* mode.

Example 4.25. A five-tone chord at bars 175-78 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)

Besides building chords by transforming the triads or seventh chords of Western music, or combining notes based on a pentatonic scale, the structure of Chinese traditional instruments is another element impacting on constructing chords different from those of Western theory. Specifically, the four strings of the traditional plucked instrument *pipa* are tuned to the perfect fourth, major second and perfect fourth intervals. According to this, a chord consisting of the same intervals is named a *pipa* chord (marked as <sup>p</sup>). A typical example is demonstrated in variation five (Ex. 4.26). The whole section only use two kinds of chords: *pipa* chords are mainly applied at first with open fifth chords interspersed in the middle; then, open fifth chords take the leading role. Similarly, *pipa* chords are used as the main harmony to open the second variation (Ex. 4.27).

Example 4.26. Bars 87-96 in Var. V (in E<sup>b</sup> *yu* mode)

The first system of music (bars 87-96) is marked *meno mosso* and *mp*. It features a melodic line with trills and a piano accompaniment. The chord labels below are: V<sup>p</sup>, I<sup>p</sup>, VII<sup>p</sup>, VII<sup>5</sup>, VII<sup>p</sup>, I<sup>p</sup>, V<sup>p</sup>, V<sup>5</sup>, V<sup>p</sup>, V<sup>p</sup>. The second system (bars 97-106) is marked *poco string* and *stretto*. It continues the melodic and accompaniment patterns. The chord labels below are: VII<sup>p</sup>, VII<sup>5</sup>, VII<sup>p</sup>, V<sup>p</sup>, IV<sup>p</sup>, IV<sup>5</sup>, IV<sup>5</sup>, VII<sup>5</sup>, V<sup>5</sup>, V<sup>5</sup>.

Example 4.27. The first opening bar of Var. II (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)

The score for Example 4.27 is marked *Ad lib. dolce*. It features a melodic line with trills and ornaments, and a piano accompaniment. The chord labels below are: II<sup>p</sup> and IV<sup>p</sup> in the first system, and V<sup>p</sup> in the second system. The number 131 is written at the end of the first system.

The last category of chord, similar to the theory in Western music, is a polychord that consists of more than one chord sounding simultaneously within the limits of the same tonality. These different chords are usually placed in different registers, rarely intersecting. The sound effect is thicker and more

divided than a single chord. There are two types of polychords in pentatonicism: (1) a polychord consisting of various structures, and (2) a polychord based on different scale degrees.<sup>51</sup> Examples can be found in *Music at Sunset* in the first variation (Ex. 4.28). At bar 19, a polychord is written on A-flat: a *pipa* chord (A<sup>b</sup> D<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup>) is written on the top and an A-flat minor seventh chord without the third note (A<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> G<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup>) is placed below. The following bar uses the other type of polychord, based on different scale degrees: the higher pitch uses a chord with an additional tone constitutive of G<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> D<sup>b</sup> E<sup>b</sup> based on *gong*, while the bottom chord is based on E-flat (*yu*). At bar 21, the harmony still applies a polychord locating a chord based on the fifth degree on the top and a seventh-degree chord below. The clear explanation is presented as follows:

Example 4.28. Bars. 19-21 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)

$\frac{I^p}{|m7-3}$        $VII+6$        $\frac{VII+6}{V-3}$        $V-3+6$        $\frac{Vm7}{VII^2, 2^{nd}}$        $I-3$

## Harmonic progression and composing techniques

Having covered how chords are formed based on Chinese scales, the next step is to present how harmonic progressions are generated under the framework of the pentatonic theory. Composing techniques are also analysed to show how they reflect Chinese music tradition.

The principal scale degrees in a pentatonic system are all important and independent, and each of them is able to be the tonic. So a scale degree does

<sup>51</sup> Zuyin Fan, *Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism*, p. 219.

not have an intrinsic tendency effect. In this way, compared with Western harmony, chord functions in pentatonicism (except the tonic which has only the function of stability) are weaker. In a harmonic progression, each chord is able to connect with any other. Thus, harmonic progressions are freer than in Western common practice, without equivalent harmonic functions.<sup>52</sup> This characteristic is demonstrated clearly in a cadence. For instance, the cadence in the theme of *Music at Sunset* (Ex. 4.29) shows the major triad based on *gong* (i.e. chord VII in *shang* mode) moving directly to the tonic *pipa* chord. Then an immediate supplementary cadence follows with the II open fifth chord progressing to the stable tonic. This harmonic cadence does not demonstrate any functional resolution but applies the method of root movement in three-tone groups from a pentatonic scale. In Li's research, a three-tone group means a group consisting of a tonic and the next two notes of the pentatonic scale either above or below the tonic (Ex. 4.30).<sup>53</sup> Meanwhile, in pentatonic melody, proceeding by the interval of a minor third is considered as conjunct motion.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, a three-tone group with root movement by conjunct motion always has the sound effect of motivation. A cadence based on a three-tone group motivates chords on adjacent scale degrees to the final tonic. Specifically, the cadence in the theme of this piece applies the ascending three-tone group as the bass notes of the chords to establish the harmonic progression. The supplementary cadence is constructed based on two notes of the three-tone group, eventually moving back to the tonic (Ex. 4.31).

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<sup>52</sup> Zuyin Fan, *Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism*, pp. 71, 111.

<sup>53</sup> Yinghai Li, *Chinese Modes and Harmony, Revised Version*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

Example 4.29. Bars 12-14, the cadence in the theme ( $A^b$  *shang* mode)

Example 4.30. The three-tone groups based on C *gong*

Example 4.31. Bars 12-14, the progression of the bass notes of the chords in the cadence

This particular type of cadence with the same melodic materials happens repeatedly in some variations, as this transcription preserves the Chinese traditional composing technique applied in the original *pipa* version, known as changing heads but combining ends (*huantou hewei*, 换头合尾). The meaning of this technique is as the name implies: new musical materials are added in the



first part of a section, based on the thematic melody but introducing some variation to increase the interest and development of music, then the (thematic) melody is repeated at the end to bring a common conclusion phrase.<sup>55</sup> In this piano transcription, the ending phrases in Variations I to III and the coda all use the same materials as the theme, with similar harmonic progressions in their cadences. Variations I (Ex. 4.32) and III (Ex. 4.33) apply the three-tone group (E<sup>b</sup>-G<sup>b</sup>-A<sup>b</sup>) as the progression of the bass to establish cadences. The cadence in the second variation (Ex. 4.34) uses the same three-tone group but with the second chord inverted. The coda (Ex. 4.35) utilises two notes of the three-tone group as the bass (G<sup>b</sup>-A<sup>b</sup>) to construct the supplementary cadence.

Example 4.32. Bars 24-26 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)

VII<sup>+6</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> VII<sup>3/2</sup> V<sup>5</sup> VII |m7, 3-4 |5 notes

Example 4.33. Bars 59-61 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)

V<sup>5</sup> VII |<sup>5</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Editorial Department of the Dictionary of Chinese Music, Research Institute of Music of the Chinese Academy of Arts, *Zhongguo yinyue cidian, zengding ban* [The Dictionary of Chinese Music, Revised Version] (中国音乐辞典, 增订版) (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 2016), p. 298.

Example 4.34. Bars 34-36 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)

V VII<sup>+</sup>6, I<sup>st</sup> I<sup>P</sup> II<sup>5</sup> I<sup>5</sup>

Example 4.35. Bars 195-99 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)

VII<sup>+</sup>6 I VII<sup>5</sup> I<sup>5</sup>

In dealing with the relationship among different voices, horizontal voice-leading may shape the harmonic progression, since structures and succession of chords are relatively unrestricted by conventions. Such harmonic progressions, in Chinese music theory, are named as the harmonic approach of linear structure,<sup>56</sup> similar to contrapuntal motion in Western music theory. One of the types of linear structure that is typically and commonly used in pentatonic harmony, forbidden in Western common practice, is parallel motion, especially the progressions of consecutive fifths. An explicit example is presented in

<sup>56</sup> All theories of linear structure explained here and below come from: Zuyin Fan, *Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism*, pp. 258-76.

Variation VI where the whole harmonic progression consists only of parallel fifths (Ex. 4.36).

Example 4.36. VAR. VI (bb. 105-24)

Moderato *meno mosso* *poco string.*

(tonicization to D-flat *gong* mode)

I<sup>5</sup> III<sup>5</sup> II<sup>5</sup> II<sup>5</sup> III<sup>5</sup> I<sup>5</sup>

*cresc. poco a poco*

(back to the original G-flat *gong* system, E-flat *yu* mode)

VII<sup>5</sup> I<sup>5</sup> V<sup>5</sup> V<sup>5</sup> I<sup>5</sup> VII<sup>5</sup>

VII<sup>5</sup> V<sup>5</sup> IV<sup>5</sup> IV<sup>5</sup> VII<sup>5</sup> V<sup>5</sup>

V<sup>5</sup> IV<sup>5</sup> III<sup>5</sup> III<sup>5</sup> V<sup>5</sup> IV<sup>5</sup> IV<sup>5</sup>

IV<sup>5</sup> III<sup>5</sup> I<sup>5</sup> I<sup>5</sup> III<sup>5</sup> I<sup>5</sup>

Besides consecutive fifths, parallel movement by other intervals is also applied, such as consecutive fourths used in Variation IV (Ex. 4.37). However, strict parallel movement by the same intervals may sometimes bring in added notes (Ex. 4.38). Thus, in pentatonicism, there is some flexibility in parallelism to avoid added notes. For example, in Variation VII, the first phrase (Ex. 4.39) mostly uses parallel fourths but with occasional thirds as G-flat (*gong*) substitutes F (*qingjue*).

Example 4.37. Bars 70-71 (in D<sup>b</sup> *gong* mode)



Example 4.38. Bars 186-89 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)



Example 4.39. Bars 124-38 in VAR. VII (in E<sup>b</sup> *yu* mode)

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system is marked 'meno mosso' and 'poco string.' and features a melody in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand. Red boxes highlight specific intervals in both hands. The second system continues the piece with similar notation and highlighting.

Contrary motion is another type of linear structure used in this piece. In the second phrase of the theme, the melodic line generally presents an upward trend, while the accompaniment in the bass moves down the pentatonic scale of A-flat *shang* mode. The distance between two voices is gradually extended and finally ends on an octave (Ex. 4.40).

Example 4.40. Bars 6-9 (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)

The image shows a single system of musical notation for piano. The melody in the right hand moves upward, while the accompaniment in the left hand moves downward. A red box highlights the interval between the two voices, which widens over the course of the phrase.

A typical composing technique invoked from traditional Chinese music in the thematic melody is named 'fish biting tails' (*yu jiao wei*, 鱼咬尾). The meaning of

this term is that the preceding phrase ends with the same note as the beginning of the following phrase, as if the next fish bits the tail of the former.<sup>57</sup> Both the *pipa* and the piano versions of *Music at Sunset* reveal this technique. On the other hand, the *pipa* version (Ex. 4.41) places the melody into two voices with more passing tones and intricate rhythms. Compared with that, the piano transcription (Ex. 4.42) revises the structure, combining the two lines into one voice that only keeps the main notes, as well as simplifying the rhythms. In this way, it is more straightforward to observe that the melodic line of the piano piece obeys the rule of ‘fish biting tails’ strictly among all phrases, and the melody is able to link as an unbroken line. For example, at bar 9 in the *pipa* music, the former phrase ends on D in the high voice. The D that starts bar 10, however, appears in the low voice. The piano version changes the distribution, consecutively using D-flat as the end of the previous phrase and the start of bar 10.

Example 4.41. The theme of the *pipa* piece transcribed into staff notation

<sup>57</sup> See Editorial Department of the Dictionary of Chinese Music, Research Institute of Music of the Chinese Academy of Arts, *The Dictionary of Chinese Music, Revised Version*, p. 938.

Example 4.42. The theme in the piano music

'Fish biting tails' is not only applied in the theme, but is also commonly used throughout this piano transcription. Variations I, II, IV, V to VII are all structured with this technique. Particularly, comparing the first bar of Section Five in the *pipa* music and of Variation II in the piano transcription, the piano composer adds a note at the end of each preceding phrase that is the same as the start of the following phrase (see Ex. 4.43), while the *pipa* version does not show this feature (see Ex. 4.44). Li's arrangement is by no means making the music lose its variability. Nevertheless, the closely connected musical phrases maintain a logical process inherited from traditional Chinese music, which enhances the coherent and fluent effect of the melody.

Example 4.43. The first bar in Variation II of the piano transcription

Example 4.44. The first bar in Section five of the *pipa* version

【五】嘯 曠

tr 节奏自由

( \* ----- /icc

\*  $\frac{2}{2}$  ( ) - 9522 332 7 6 - 6756 7567

(X) -

I

\*  $\frac{2}{2}$  ( ) - 5767 5765 3 - 3523 5235 2 - 2352 3235

I

\*  $\frac{2}{2}$  ( ) - 1212 3235 2 - 2352 3235 1 - 1231 2123



At the end of the coda, the last phrase finally recalls the thematic melody which is stated in counterpoint: the right-hand voice performs the melody in arpeggiated octaves first; then, the left-hand voice imitates the melody but one bar later (Ex. 4.45).

Example 4.45. Bars 192-97 in the Coda of the piano transcription (in A<sup>b</sup> *shang* mode)



All sections of this piano transcription are mainly written in G-flat *gong* system; at the same time, the inner structure also shows some changes of key and mode. In traditional Chinese music theory, changes of key and mode are termed *yigong fandiao* (移宫泛调) and are divided into three categories: (1) *yigong*, change of key; (2) *fandiao*, change of mode; (3) *yigong* and *fandiao*, changing both key and mode.<sup>58</sup> Specifically, the details of keys and modes from each section of this piano version are presented in Table 4.3.

<sup>58</sup> Yinghai Li, *Chinese Modes and Harmony, Revised Version*, pp. 46-48; Zuying Fan, *Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism*, p. 183.

Table 4.3. The details of keys and modes in the piano version

Section	Mode
The introduction	E-flat <i>yu</i> mode
The theme	A-flat <i>shang</i> mode
Variation I	A-flat <i>shang</i> mode
Variation II	A-flat <i>shang</i> mode
Variation III	A-flat <i>shang</i> mode
Variation IV	D-flat <i>gong</i> mode (in D-flat <i>gong</i> system) — A-flat <i>shang</i> mode
Variation V	E-flat <i>yu</i> mode
Variation VI	E-flat <i>yu</i> mode
Variation VII	E-flat <i>yu</i> mode — A-flat <i>shang</i> mode
The coda	A-flat <i>shang</i> mode

Even though E-flat *yu* mode and A-flat *shang* mode are alternately applied in this piece, they both belong to G-flat *gong* system; in other words, all notes from the scale are the same although the tonic may change. In this way, *fandiao* applied in this piece does not create a clear contrast in the music but rather a unified sound effect. However, the direct modulation to D-flat *gong* mode (*yigong* and *fandiao*) at the beginning of variation IV does produce a dramatic musical change. In the pentatonic theory, the *gong* note always has the function of defining a key. Without it, a key is not stable or clear.<sup>59</sup> Meanwhile, the only major third interval in a pentatonic scale is that between *gong* and *jue*. Therefore, this interval or the relationship

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<sup>59</sup> Zuying Fan, *Theories and Approaches of Modes and Harmony in Chinese Pentatonicism*, p. 66.

between *gong* and *jue* also confirms a key.<sup>60</sup> The first half section in variation IV does not contain G-flat but rather D-flat and F appear numerous times. According to this, this half section has modulated to the closely related system of D-flat *gong* mode. From bar 75, G-flat starts to be emphasised in order to return to the original system (the full explanation is presented below in Ex. 4.46). This modulation indeed promotes the melodic development and adds more interest and variety to the music.

Example 4.46. Bars 62-86, Var. IV

(Modulation to D-flat *gong* mode)

*Allegretto*

(back to G-flat *gong* system)

*rit.* *Andante*

(confirming back to A-flat *shang* mode because of the ending tonic)

<sup>60</sup> Yinghai Li, *Chinese Modes and Harmony, Revised Version*, pp. 11-12.

The other two places of *yigong* and *fandiao* happen in the introduction and in Variation VI. In the introduction, grace notes comprising all the pitches in D-flat *gong* system indicate tonicization (Ex. 4.47). At the beginning of Variation VI, not all the tones of a pentatonic scale but only three of them appear, which results in uncertainty of key. However, due to D-flat and F showing the important major third interval, the tonicization to D-flat *gong* mode is confirmed (Ex. 4.48).

Example 4.47. The second phrase in the introduction

(indication of tonicization)



Example 4.48. Bars 105-08 in Var. VI



## Performance Suggestions – Approaches to Performance

Analysing the piano transcription from the theoretical perspective promotes understanding traditional elements that are extracted from traditional Chinese arts and theories and then transferred into this piano music. In applying them, the composer has created a 'national' type of piano transcription. Their inclusion in this piece certifies that this is a typical Chinese music composition, different from Western piano music. The following practical analysis, including the comparison of

recordings from different pianists, is informed by the theoretical analysis discussed above. It aims to demonstrate an effective approach to performance and the reception of Chinese cultural resources.

The analysis of the introduction as imitating the portamento sound of a traditional instrument, *xiao*, is the first instance that suggests a change in performance on the piano compared with the original notations by the composer. On the *xiao*, blowing portamento is a typical technique that smoothly slides from one note to another, with the intervening notes not separate or rapid but coherent and gentle. However, acciaccaturas on the piano are only grace notes, expected to be extremely short and not occupying distinct time values in order to serve the essential notes in the melody. Therefore, the portamento technique from the traditional Chinese instrument directly translated onto the piano inspires a change of ornamentation to a category between acciaccatura and appoggiatura (see Ex. 4.49). Based on this, a culturally informed approach to performance makes the ornamentation more important and integral to the melody, while still emphasising the principal notes themselves. This type of practical alteration, then, is an exploration and illustration derived from traditional music to achieve a Chinese style in piano music.

Example 4.49. The original notation of phrases 5 and 6 in the introduction and the revised approach to piano performance

The image displays two staves of musical notation for a piano piece, illustrating a performance alteration. The top staff shows the original notation, and the bottom staff shows the revised approach. A large red arrow on the left points from the original notation down to the revised notation. Both staves are in a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a common time signature. The music is written for piano, with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano). The original notation (top staff) features a melodic line in the right hand with a grace note (acciaccatura) before the main note, and a bass line in the left hand. The revised notation (bottom staff) replaces the grace note with a more integrated ornamentation, possibly a portamento-like effect, and includes a trill in the right hand. A dashed vertical line separates the two phrases, and a trill is indicated in the right hand of both phrases.

In the arpeggios (or pentatonic scales) of the next phrase, the notations of both the first (see Ex. 4.50) and the second (see Ex. 4.51) versions published by Li divide them between the two hands. A later edited version even indicates the fingering in each hand added by the editor (see Ex. 4.52). In all these versions, the arpeggios on a pentatonic scale are intended to achieve the same sound effect as the *zheng*'s glissando technique. However, another practical interpretation is shown in a professional recording from a Chinese pianist, Xu Lujia.<sup>61</sup> Timed at 0'58" to 1'02", Xu applies an actual glissando on the black keys of the piano. His glissando performance also required him to revise the music given by the composer. The music on the piano score starts from  $\flat B5$ . It moves higher, then descends a long way and finally returns to the high pitch. The first ascending part only containing five notes causes difficulty in applying glissando technique on the piano. In order to resolve this issue, Xu begins the performance from  $\flat B3$ , expanding the ascending range by two more octaves. His practical alteration makes the technique adapt to the piano appropriately, using this Western instrument to create more authenticity in emulating the sound of a traditional instrument.

Example 4.50. The arpeggios in the first piano version<sup>62</sup>



<sup>61</sup> The piano version Xu performed is the second. The recording can be found on: 90-Year-Old Pianist, Xu Lujia, *Chunjianghuayueye – gangqin yanzou Xu Lujia* [A Moonlit Spring Night on the River – Piano Performance by Xu Lujia] (春江花月夜 - 钢琴演奏 许路加), online video recording, YouTube, 28 April 2020, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDnqrWNfeTY&feature=youtu.be>> [accessed 26 July 2020].

<sup>62</sup> Yinghai Li, 'Music at Sunset', in *Five Piano Pieces (Arranged based on Chinese Ancient and Traditional Music)*, p. 25.

Example 4.51. The arpeggios in the second piano version<sup>63</sup>



Example 4.52. The arpeggios in the edited score based on Li's second version<sup>64</sup>



At the end of the introduction, Li merely marks *ritardando*, indicating that the music gradually slows down to the end, then the theme immediately begins without a rest (see Ex. 4.53). However, several performers add a silence here for a longer time than would be expected from the notation.<sup>65</sup> This interpretation has a basis in Chinese traditional philosophy. Chinese ancient philosophy lays emphasis on the combination of *shi* (reality) and *xu* (illusion) which are derived from Confucianism and Taoism. Reality refers to the actual sound made in the music, and illusion deals with the 'empty touch' on an instrument, which represents 'silence'.<sup>66</sup> Thus, in Chinese tradition silence is regarded as the most natural sound, breaking away

<sup>63</sup> Yinghai Li, 'Xiyang xiaogu' [Music at Sunset] (《夕阳箫鼓》), *Chinese Music*, 1 (1982), 65-73 (p. 65).

<sup>64</sup> Yinghai Li, 'Music at Sunset', in *30 Famous Chinese Piano Pieces*, p. 129.

<sup>65</sup> The recordings from the performers, Chen Jie and Li Yun (the composer, Li Yinghai's daughter) are available from: Jie Chen, 'Xiyang xiaogu' [Music at Sunset] (夕阳箫鼓), *Zhongguo gangqin mingqu* [Chinese Piano Favourites] (中国钢琴名曲) (NAXOS, 2013) [on CD]; Yun Li, 'Xiyang xiaogu' [Music at Sunset] (夕阳箫鼓), *Li Yinghai gangqin zuopin xuanji* [Li Yinghai Piano Works] (黎英海钢琴作品选集) (the Central Conservatory of Music and Beijing Global Audio & Video Company, 2002) [on CD].

<sup>66</sup> Except the empty touch, *xu* also refers to imagination or artistic expression conveyed by the music.

from the constraints of audible sound to achieve the supreme level of musical quality. A line from the poem *Song of a Pipa Player*, referenced in the 1895 *pipa* version, depicts the same implication: ‘then music expressed far less than silence revealed’.<sup>67</sup> Thus it can be seen that silence in Chinese tradition proves to be the transcendental sound beyond the actual audible music.

Frank Kouwenhoven made a similar point about the aesthetics of traditional *qin* music:

Very interesting is the extraordinary importance attached to ‘silence’ in *qin* music—that is, to the imaginary continuation of sounds beyond what the normal human ear can detect: silence—not only pauses and interruptions but also the dying away of audible sounds, supported by hand and finger movements that may continue for a while after any audible pitch has disappeared—another way to suggest ‘deep, spiritual listening’.<sup>68</sup>

Francisco Feliciano argued more generally that ‘sound and silence are equal, thus to make the void of silence live is to make the infinity of sounds’.<sup>69</sup>

Kouwenhoven’s interpretation of ‘the dying away of audible sounds’ suggests a connection between the plucked strings of the *qin* (and also the *pipa*) and the struck strings of the piano. After the performance of the last note, in all cases, the sounds of the *qin*, *pipa* or piano die away without players’ control. However, pianists still have different ways of performing this dying-away sound. In Chen Jie’s recording, she holds the keys and pedal, then waits for the sound to become inaudible; Li Yun, however, holds the keys and pedal first and waits for the sound to become very faint though still audible, then lifts both the keys and the pedal to produce a clear break before the theme.

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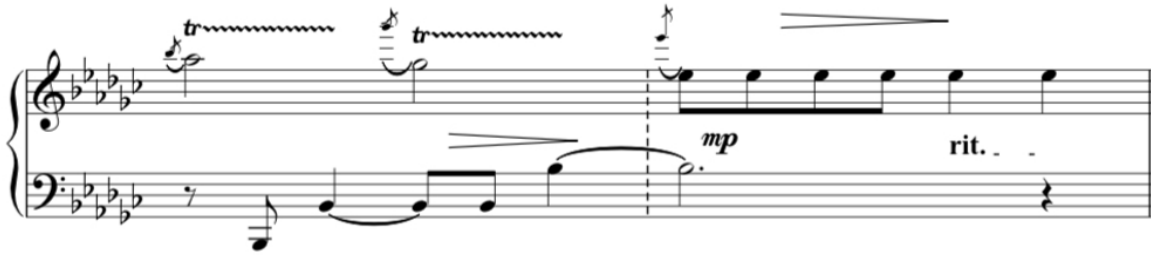
<sup>67</sup> See the Appendix, Section 2.1.1.

<sup>68</sup> Frank Kouwenhoven, ‘Meaning and Structure: The Case of Chinese *qin* (zither) Music’, *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 10.1 (2001), 39-62 (p. 42).

<sup>69</sup> Francisco F. Feliciano, *Four Asian Contemporary Composers: the Influence of Tradition in Their Works* (Quezon City: New day Publisher, 1983), p. 71.



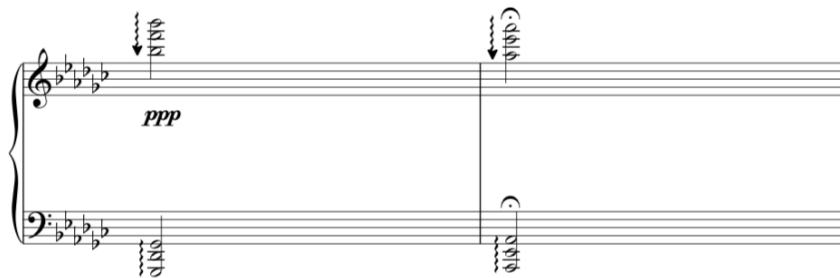
Example 4.53. The end of the introduction



The performance at the end of this piece is also informed by the same aesthetic considerations. A fermata is marked on the final tonic at bar 199 (Ex. 4.54). In Xu Lujia's recording, he finishes this ending shortly. Chen Jie and Li Yun sustain the last arpeggiated chords, waiting for a gradual rather than a sudden disappearance of the sound. Then the ensuing silence after their actual performance represents spiritual sounds that cannot be perceived by the human ear but only absorbed by the mind.

Chinese musical aesthetics recognise the important use and superior quality of silence, and these philosophical interpretations may support an approach to piano performance. To a certain degree, performance informed by tradition and culture becomes another expression of a unique Chinese style.

Example 4.54. Bars 198-99



## Conclusion

The immediate impetus for Li's piano transcription of *Music at Sunset* reflected the changing political demands of the Chinese government on musical composition during the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s. But the political requirement was never the full value of Li's piano work. He actively searched for ways in which the music of this Western instrument could be delivered in a Chinese style. In addition to the most straightforward method of transferring the melodies from the traditional *pipa* piece onto the piano, Li also innovates in the second piano version by imitating and embodying the sounds of traditional instruments such as the drum, *xiao* and *zheng*. In addition, the structural arrangement of this piano work is based on but enlarged from the original *pipa* music.

As the most representative outcome of Li's research, the melodic development in this piano work is entirely within the framework of the pentatonic theory. At the same time, the harmony that accompanies the melody in this piano music is also completely established within this system. The use of pentatonic harmony is based on chords built on pentatonic scales, including open fifth chords, three-tone, four-tone and five-tone chords, as well as polychords. The traditional tuning of the *pipa* (constituted by perfect fourth, major second and perfect fourth intervals) is also one of the ways in which the pentatonic chords are constructed. These chords are fully demonstrated in this Chinese piano work. Furthermore, as there is currently no unified academic standard for analysing pentatonic chords, this research establishes its own method for indicating these chords in musical analysis. Not only the formation of chords, but also the harmonic progressions are dependent on the basis of pentatonic scales. For example, in a cadence, there is little sense of functional resolution, but rather an unconstrained movement back to the tonic, resulting from the independence of each primary note and the absence of minor seconds (with their strong tendency towards the tonic) in the scale. As we have seen, Li also embodies the traditional composing techniques of 'changing heads but combining ends' and 'fish biting tails' in this piano transcription.

After the theoretical analysis, the performance methods proposed in this research achieve two main purposes: 1) to reflect in the piano music what the composer wanted to accomplish: the use of the piano to achieve similar sound

effects to traditional instruments, including drums, *xiao*, *zheng* and *pipa*; 2) to reflect in the piano music the aesthetic value of silence which is emphasised in traditional Chinese philosophy. Having completed all these levels of analysis, this piano work should not be classified as a piece of Western music simply because it is played on a Western instrument. Each aspect of the analysis has exemplified the way this piece embodies a Chinese cultural identity.

## Chapter Five: *The Story of a Cowherd*

### ( 《放牛娃儿的故事》 )

Dan Zhaoyi (1940-) is best known as a Chinese piano educator whose students, such as Li Yundi (the first prize winner of the 14th International Chopin Piano Competition in 2000) and Zhang Haochen (the first prize winner of the Thirteenth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition in 2009), have been recognised and active on international piano performance stages in recent years. However, Dan is less well known as a piano composer.

This chapter firstly reviews Dan's musical career, concentrating on his activities in composition. Because the development of music in China follows a parallel path with politics, the analysis of Dan's background information confirms a substantial influence from the broader social and political context in his musical creations. To balance this extrinsic impact, and to establish and present his own musical sensibility, the next part of the chapter focuses on Dan's musical works and particularly on a selected case, *The Story of a Cowherd*, originally a revolutionary song arranged in the 1930s and then rearranged as a piano transcription by Dan in 1973. The analysis examines how Dan preserves, and more distinctively, largely and creatively departs from the original song. Dan's relative freedom and large extent of creativity in arranging the piano transcription makes him as the last selected composer in this final chapter of musical case studies. Furthermore, based on Dan's own interpretations gained from an interview conducted by this research, this chapter reveals all the narrative content that Dan intended in each section of this piano transcription. Supported by musical analysis, this demonstrates that this piano transcription, in aesthetic concept, becomes 'a descriptive type of programme piece' which depicts a complete story behind the music. Therefore, the expression in this piano version is not purely musical but also sustains a story throughout the whole piece without any interruptions. Such a comprehensive programme style differs from any other cases in this research. In this way, following the composer's creative purpose, the final section on performance suggestions applies this distinctive programme style in piano playing. A recording of a piano performance by Gu

Jingdan, the composer's piano pupil, will be discussed, not with the intention of using Gu's recording as a model to follow in all respects, but rather to support the performance approaches suggested in this research through selected passages in which Gu used a similar approach.

## Background Information on the Composer, Dan Zhaoyi

Dan Zhaoyi started his professional pathway in piano performance in 1955 when he went to the attached middle school of the Southwest College of Music (renamed as the Sichuan Conservatory of Music in 1959).<sup>1</sup> Dan himself explained that he never had high hopes of becoming a (professional) composer, but he indeed enjoyed composing.<sup>2</sup> In 1956, Dan wrote a melody that started in a major key but ended on the minor. Later, he arranged it with an accompanying texture to form his first piano piece, named *Country Road* (《乡间的小路》). At this time, not merely being a piano performer, Dan embarked on a new way of composing piano music.<sup>3</sup> After Dan graduated from school in 1959, he went to the Sichuan Conservatory of Music to study piano performance. In 1961, he was assigned to Beijing for further training in piano performance, also studying the timpani at the Central Philharmonic. Dan remembered the details of this assignment:

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<sup>1</sup> This information comes from the composer, Dan Zhaoyi, interviewed by the author for this research.

<sup>2</sup> Zhaoyi Dan, 'Qianyan – re'ai yu biance de jiejing' [Preface – The Fruit of Love and Spurring] (前言 – 热爱与鞭策的结晶), in *Dan Zhaoyi gangqin zuopin xuanji* [Dan Zhaoyi's Selected Piano Works] (但昭义钢琴作品选集), ed. by the editorial board of the series of Dan Zhaoyi (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House & Shanghai Literature & Art Audio-Visual Electronic Publishing House, 2011), pp. 7-11 (p. 9).

<sup>3</sup> From the interview.

I went to the Central Philharmonic in 1961 during the most difficult period of the natural disasters,<sup>4</sup> mainly thanks to the Dean of the Sichuan Conservatory of Music, Chang Sumin, and the Director of the Central Philharmonic, Li Ling, who were colleagues during the Yan'an Period [1935-48] and had a very good friendship. The conservatory had a student orchestra of its own at the time but did not have a percussionist. The orchestra needed a timpanist. Around 1960, when the Central Philharmonic toured to Chengdu [where the conservatory is located], Chang discussed with Li the opportunity that I would be sent to the Central Philharmonic in Beijing, to study percussion and meanwhile, to further my study of piano performance. Actually, Dean Chang's deeper consideration was for me to take this opportunity to focus on my piano studies.<sup>5</sup>

In 1962, impacted by the social craze launched by Mao's policy of demanding intellectuals to go to the countryside, Dan invited his classmate, Chen Decheng to compose a piano concerto with a single movement, *Dedicating our Youth to the New Socialist Countryside* (《把青春献给社会主义新农村》). According to Dan's memories, he and Chen finished the first version of this concerto for two pianos. Because of Dean Chang's enthusiastic encouragement and support for this piece, the conservatory assigned Xiong Jihua (a professor of Conducting at the Department of Composition) to orchestrate the concerto. Then, it was auditioned by the Central Philharmonic, conducted by the principal conductor at that time, Li Delun with the soloist Prof Zhou Guangren. Unfortunately, the notation and recordings were both lost in the Cultural Revolution.<sup>6</sup> During the time from 1961 to 1964 when Dan intensively studied at the Central Philharmonic, he recalled:

I was taught by Liu Jingru, the principal percussionist of the Central Philharmonic, and Zhang Kongfan, a young conductor at the orchestra for piano performance. As some of my piano playing technique problems were not solved, I started to seek my own piano tutor. Eventually, I was fortunate enough to become a student of the famous piano performer and educator, Prof Zhou Guangren.

During my studies at the orchestra, I often listened to the rehearsals. At that time, the orchestra had a weekly 'concert of the week', performing classical symphonies by famous composers. Meanwhile, numerous Soviet conductors were constantly invited to the orchestra. I had many opportunities of listening to

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<sup>4</sup> China experienced the Great Chinese Famine during the years from 1959 to 61 because of the policies of the Great Leap Forward (1958 to 1962) and the People's Communes (starting from 1958 and ending in 1983), proposed by Chairman Mao.

<sup>5</sup> From the interview.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

their performances, which became an invaluable experience for me. I was able to hear how conductors of all schools approach music and learn how to improve the quality of performances. During these three years from 1961 to 64, I established a close relationship with the Philharmonic and the artists from the orchestra. [The time] until my [piano] students, Chen Sa and Li Yundi performed with the Philharmonic at the final round of competitions, witnessed an unbreakable bond between me and the orchestra.<sup>7</sup>

After graduation from Beijing in 1964, Dan went back to the Sichuan Conservatory of Music and performed in the conservatory's orchestra. During the time of the Cultural Revolution, Dan performed as the timpanist in numerous performances of the Model Operas, such as the ballets, *The White-Haired Girl* (《白毛女》) and *The Red Detachment of Women* (《红色娘子军》), the *Shajiabang Symphony* (交响乐《沙家浜》) and *The Yellow River Piano Concerto*. He also played as the piano soloist in the piano quintet, *On the Docks* (《海港》) and the Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* (钢琴伴唱《红灯记》).<sup>8</sup> According to all his previous performing experience, Dan got more familiar with traditional Chinese music from all these operas. So in 1973 from February to August, Dan arranged 15 piano etudes based on the music from the Model Operas.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1980s, Dan did not cease composing. He arranged a piano transcription, *Yearning* (《思恋》), based on a traditional Chinese song, *That is Me* (《那就是我》),<sup>10</sup> and another transcription in the 1990s, *A Banquet at Shu Place*, (《蜀宫夜宴》) based on a traditional ensemble piece of the same name.<sup>11</sup> Dan explained that as a composer, he was unfortunately not good at writing melodies. That's why most of his compositions were transcriptions.<sup>12</sup> In 2011, all Dan's piano compositions were

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<sup>7</sup> From the interview.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Zhaoyi Dan, 'Preface – The Fruit of Love and Spurring', p. 10.

<sup>10</sup> From the interview.

<sup>11</sup> Zhaoyi Dan, 'Wo gangqin shengya zhong de zhongguo qingjie – xiao bang yinyue de zhongguo hun ji qita' [The Chinese Sprite in my Piano Career – The Chinese Interpretations in Chopin's Music & Others] (我钢琴生涯中的中国情结—肖邦音乐的中国魂及其他), *Chinese Music*, 2 (2019), 5-15 & 80 (p. 6).

<sup>12</sup> Zhaoyi Dan, 'Preface – The Fruit of Love and Spurring', p. 10.

collected and published in the book, *Dan Zhaoyi's Selected Piano Works* (《但昭义钢琴作品选集》).<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, on the one hand, Dan's composing experience from the 1950s to the 70s shows the direct results of political impact: the 1960s piano concerto is written under the background of Mao's policy that requested intellectuals to go and help on the rural land; the piano etudes composed during the revolution period were based on the Model Operas which were the officially permitted programmes at the time. The deeper consideration here is to evaluate how much influence from the politics Dan received. It can be confirmed, at least, that politics provided the social context for Dan to write his music. On the other hand, according to Dan's explanations, his music also shows the expression of his personal consciousness and his individual passion for composition. Specifically, about the piano concerto, he said:

I am not a professional composer. The composing activities [from the conservatory] that firstly began in 1959 were due to the government's advocacy of the 'nationalism' of music. As the situation demanded, all teachers and students started to write their own teaching materials.<sup>14</sup> This is how I developed my interest in composition, which then grew into a personal hobby and passion. This single-movement concerto is an expression of my own youthful vigour and enthusiasm, as well as my passionate sincerity.<sup>15</sup>

Meanwhile, for his piano etudes, Dan also explained,

[I was] deeply impressed by the music in the programmes [the Model Operas]... These etudes were not dedicated to political demand... My compositional intention was to take musical materials with national styles [from the operas] and arrange them as piano etudes with musical implications. They provide students with musically suggestive and expressive content in their technical training and allow them to avoid purely technical pursuits. As I am not a professional composer, the compositions I arranged are essentially the combined results of using the inner sense of hearing formed by the perceptual knowledge of playing piano works, and the technical training

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<sup>13</sup> Zhaoyi Dan, *Dan Zhaoyi's Selected Piano Works*.

<sup>14</sup> According to Dan's words, in 1959, all Western music was criticised by the government and considered as the products of the bourgeoisie. Thus, it was the time relying on teachers and students to write their own teaching materials.

<sup>15</sup> From the interview.



intentions of the piano etudes. In this way, my etudes are more expressive in their music and beneficial to the training of piano playing as well.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, under the political and social environment, Dan began as a professional piano performer and then used composition to develop piano education in China. Most importantly, as a composer, even during the time of the Cultural Revolution, he found his way by balancing political influence and his individual will, as the motivation for arranging his transcriptions in the revolutionary time was not purely political, but also driven by his desire to develop his abilities in composition and to express his personal creativity in music.

## **Background Information on the Piano Transcription, *The Story of a Cowherd***

The piano transcription of *The Story of a Cowherd* was arranged by Dan Zhaoyi during the Cultural Revolution period in 1973. The original source was the revolutionary song, *A Cowherd Expecting the Red Army*, which can be traced back to the time of the Agrarian Revolutionary War (1927-37).<sup>17</sup>

In 1932, the Fourth Campaign of ‘encirclement and suppression’ was launched by the Kuomintang army against the Central Revolutionary Base Area where the Chinese Workers’ and Peasants’ Red Army was located.<sup>18</sup> As a result of the defeat in the battle, the main force of the Red Fourth Front Army was forced to withdraw from the base area but made a strategic decision to shift to the west.<sup>19</sup> Until

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<sup>16</sup> From the interview.

<sup>17</sup> The Agrarian Revolutionary War is also known as the Second Revolutionary Civil War.

<sup>18</sup> Zheng Cao, ‘Hongse jiyi: zhongyan suqu disici fan “weijiao”’ [The Red Memory: the Fourth Campaign against ‘Encirclement and Suppression’ in the Central Soviet Area] (红色记忆: 中央苏区第四次反“围剿”), *The CCP Member Net*, 2012 <<https://fuwu.12371.cn/2012/06/05/ARTI1338880215556702.shtml>> [accessed 21 March 2022].

<sup>19</sup> Jiangqiang Wang, ‘Chuan Shan gemin gejudi – zhonghua suweiai gongheguo de di’er ge da quyu (fengdou bainian lu qihang xin zhengcheng • zaoqi geming gejudi ji zhuyao chuangjian zhe)’ [Sichuan-Shaanxi Revolutionary Base – the Second Biggest Area of the Soviet Republic

December of the same year, the army, passing through southern Shaanxi, had arrived in the northern part of Sichuan Province. Receiving and absorbing power from the local revolutionary forces, in February 1933, the Chinese Communist Party established the Sichuan-Shaanxi Revolutionary Base.<sup>20</sup> In January 1934, according to Mao Zedong's *Report of the Central Executive Committee and People's Committee of the Soviet Republic of China to the Second National Soviet Congress*, 'the Sichuan-Shaanxi Revolutionary Base had developed as the second biggest area of the Soviet Republic of China'.<sup>21</sup>

In order to consolidate the development of the newly established base area, the Red Army began to lead the local people in the Agrarian Revolution. The essence of the revolution required the confiscation of land from landlords, the abolition of the exploitative feudal land system and the equal distribution of land resources according to population, implemented by the Chinese Communist Soviet regime.<sup>22</sup> However, such complicated policies had not been understood by the local people because of their low level of education and awareness. To propagate the ideology of the Chinese Soviet Government and encourage the masses to join the Agrarian Revolution and to understand the substance of the revolution, the Political Department of the Red Army launched a 'cultural movement': preserving the traditional tunes of local folk music from the Sichuan area but rewriting the lyrics in a

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of China (Struggling for one Hundred Years and Setting Sail on a New Journey • the Early Revolutionary Base and the Main Founders)] (川陕革命根据地—中华苏维埃共和国的第二个大区域 (奋斗百年路启航新征程 • 早期革命根据地及主要创建者) ), *The Sichuan Party History Literature Net*, 2021  
<<http://www.scds.org.cn/2021-12/16/536-6002-8107.htm>> [accessed 21 March 2022].

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Zedong Mao, 'Zhonghua Suweiai gonghe guo zhongyang zhixing weiyuanhui yu renmin weiyuanhui dui di'erci quanguo Suiweiai daibiao dahui de baogao' [the Report of the Central Executive Committee and People's Committee of the Soviet Republic of China to the Second National Soviet Congress] (中华苏维埃共和国中央执行委员会与人民委员会对第二次全国苏维埃代表大会的报告), *Jiangxi Social Sciences*, 12 (1981), 94-122 (p. 97).

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 104-06.

straightforward style,<sup>23</sup> to turn them into revolutionary songs that met the political needs of the time. Under such historical conditions, the song *A Cowherd Expecting the Red Army* was arranged from a traditional folk song, *Tune of Pasturing Cattle*, and became one of the representative examples of this type of revolutionary songs.<sup>24</sup> The rewritten lyrics echo the mainstream orthodox values of the time, describing a story: a cowherd is forced to work for a landlord because of his poor family, but is cruelly exploited until he is rescued by the Red Army's revolution. The six verses of lyrics are translated as follows:<sup>25</sup>

A cowherd is very sad because the family has no money unless they work in a landlord's house, and his parents cannot bear to do so.

When the cowherd gets up early in the morning before dawn, he opens the cattle pens with both hands and puts the cattle in the woods.

The cowherd doesn't come home until afternoon when the family has finished their meal and there is only one plate of radish left.

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<sup>23</sup> Min Li and Tingting Shen, 'Chuan Shan suqu minzhong zhengzhi xinli jiedu – yi hongse geyao wei shijiao' [Interpreting the Political Psychology of the People in the Sichuan-Shaanxi Soviet Region] (川陕苏区民众政治心理解读 – 以红色歌谣为视角), *Journal of the Party School of the Central Committee of the CPC*, 16.1 (2012), 62-65 (p. 62).

<sup>24</sup> The source indicates the fact that the revolutionary song, *a Cowherd Expecting the Red Army* is based on the folk music of *Tune of Pasturing Cattle*. See: Tianqi Kuang, 'Sichuan geming lishi mingge jianli' [Biography of Sichuan Revolutionary History Folk Songs] (四川革命历史民歌简历), *Explorations in Music (Journal of Sichuan Conservatory of Music)*, 4 (1985), 34-38 (p. 35). Nevertheless, the music sheet (especially, the original lyrics) of *Tune of Pasturing Cattle* is not found in the existing sources. One possible reason can be assume that the version of *Tune of Pasturing Cattle* has been completely replaced by the piece of *a Cowherd Expecting the Red Army*.

<sup>25</sup> The lyrics of this revolutionary song have more than six verses. There are other disappearing verses tells the story about the cowherd join the revolution with the Red Army. But the current exiting literatures only record these six. See: Tianqi Kuang, p. 35; Guozhi Chen, 'Baqu mingge fangniu wa'er pan hongjun de yishu tese' [The Artistic Features in the Folk Song of *a Cowherd Expecting the Red Army*] (巴渠民歌《放牛娃儿盼红军》的艺术特色), *Sichuan University of Arts and Science Journal*, 26.1 (2016), 18-21 (p. 21).

He has worked for the landlord for three to four years, coming home every year with no money and no clothes.

The landlord is dressed in thick clothes, but the cowherd can only wear one layer in winter and his heels are already hurt and bloody.

He is expecting the Red Army, and when the army comes, the sky gets clear and poor people attain the days of emancipation.

In the 1970s during the period of the Cultural Revolution, Dan Zhaoyi worked as the principal timpani player in the orchestra of the Sichuan Conservatory of Music. In the wider historical context, his long-term exposure to the environment of active political music activities (the orchestra only performed the Model Operas at that time) indirectly led him to arrange this revolutionary song as a piano transcription in 1973. According to Dan's explanation:

As early as 1957 during the time of my high school, I had already seen this song performed at the Sichuan Provincial Arts Festival... I was so impressed with this programme and I thought it could be arranged as a piano piece, because the melody of the music had the typical style of Sichuan folk songs and I was also deeply affected by the story of the song. But at that time, I was not competent enough to compose music, so it was just a wish and I didn't start to write this music... By the later years of the Cultural Revolution, after the appearance of the Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* and the Model Operas, it became possible to play the piano... During the 1970s, [the main work in the conservatory was] political studies, so I didn't have much to do.<sup>26</sup>

Thus the song *A Cowherd Expecting the Red Army* become another art product as a piano piece composed by Dan, renamed as *The Story of a Cowherd*.

Historical revolutions and political practices influence the creation of cultural products, which in turn are an important reflection of historical reality. Until March 1935, due to the adjustment of strategic deployment, the Red Fourth Front Army left the Sichuan-Shaanxi base area.<sup>27</sup> Over the course of 27 months, the Chinese

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<sup>26</sup> From the interview.

<sup>27</sup> Mu Ge, 'Lun hongjun disi fangmian jun fangqi Chuan-Shan suqu de yuanyin' [Discussion on the Reasons why the Red Fourth Front Army Abandoned the Sichuan-Shaanxi Revolutionary Base] (论红军第四方面军放弃川陕苏区的原因), *Inheritance & Innovation (Version of Academic Theory)*, 5 (2008), 14-15 (p. 14).

Communist Party was motivated by the 'revolutionary utilitarianism' to achieve a clear political objective, which led to the creation of a concentrated mass of musical works in a particular style (according to the record, the number of revolutionary songs created by the government and also the local people themselves was over four hundred).<sup>28</sup> For practical reasons, the revolutionary songs of this genre all maintain a consistent characteristic: they have to use traditional tunes and simple musical structures as the foundation to accompany revolutionary lyrics which assume the dominant position. The revolutionary and political value of this genre of songs has completely outweighed and overridden the artistic value of the musical works. These songs also became a preliminary cultural expression of the Chinese Communist Party's later choice of populist politics. Because of the context of *A Cowherd Expecting the Red Army*, even in a period of high social tension in the Cultural Revolution, Dan's piano version became a logically safe and regime-friendly composition. Yet by changing its title to omit the most recognisable words of 'expecting the red army' from the name of the original song, and by recasting the piece as a piano transcription without the lyrics that constitute the most important part of the song, Dan attempts to create more musical value and creative expression in his transcription. The next step in the musical analysis is to investigate the musical features of the revolutionary song and to determine how far the piano piece progresses beyond the original version to achieve the piano composer's individual will.

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<sup>28</sup> Yingtao Bi, 'Chuan Shan geming genjudi shiqi hongse geyao de tedian fenxi' [An Analysis of the Characteristics of Red Songs in Sichuan-Shaanxi Revolutionary Base Area] (川陕革命根据地时期红色歌谣的特点分析), *Sichuan University of Arts and Science Journal*, 30.1 (2020), 32-35 (p. 33).

# Musical and Aesthetic Analysis of the Piano Transcription and the Original Folk Song

## The change of title

The original name of the revolutionary song is *A Cowherd Expecting the Red Army*, which carries a distinct political orientation. However, when Dan arranged it as a piano transcription, he intentionally abandoned the words with a tendency towards political orthodoxy and revised it as *The Story of a Cowherd*. Dan explained his purpose:

When I was composing, I paid more attention to compositional techniques, musical expression and artistic characteristics. Or it can be considered that my composition was comprehensive, [for instance] with more rhythmic techniques... The original title is too specific... I think the kind of hope for the Red Army is really too representational... My changed title is better... [It suggested that this composition would] depict different scenes [through music], [including] the story of the cowherd who plays with various things... When other pianists performed this work, they also wanted to be more imaginative and not too limited... Meanwhile, I think that removing some of the politicised core will help more children to learn this music.<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, the title changed by Dan clearly weakens the political direction of this music piece at the outset. Instead, the musical and artistic expression that the composer wants to convey is placed in a more dominant position.

## Variation form, subtitles and programme music

After the first step of changing the title, the variation form in which this piano transcription is arranged and the subtitles used in its various sections achieve the main purpose for which Dan wrote this piano version: using music to depict scenes and to tell stories. In Kuohuang Han's research explaining 'the Chinese Concept of Programme Music', he defines three types of programme music as psychological, descriptive and imitative categories. Especially, a descriptive type of programme

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<sup>29</sup> From the interview.

piece usually represents a story.<sup>30</sup> Han also examines the relationship between Chinese compositions and their titles: its history can be traced back to ancient times when Chinese people developed a way of rational inquiry rather than a systematic science, which led them to be fond of naming instrumental pieces with descriptive or suggestive titles. These titles fulfilled the purpose of being nametags and accordingly impacted interpretations of the musical pieces.<sup>31</sup> Dan's piano transcription fits into Han's theory as a typical piece of descriptive programme music. The next step in the analysis investigates how the variation form and subtitles given in each section are integrated with musical materials, eventually influencing interpretations of this piano piece.

The piano transcription is structured in a considerably free-style variation form written by Dan with nine sections: a theme, seven variations and a coda. Each section (except Var VII which is only provided with an expression marking to indicate the general mood of the music) is given a subtitle with detailed words to suggest the storytelling in the music, though these are not completely aligned with each verse of the lyrics (see below).

Table 5.1. The details in each section in the piano transcription of *The Story of a Cowherd*

Sections	Subtitles (topics)	Tempo and expression markings	Modes
Theme	The miserable cowherd	Slightly slow tempo	A <i>yu</i> mode (in C <i>gong</i> system)
Variation I	Innocently	Slightly fast tempo	A <i>yu</i> mode (in C <i>gong</i> system)

<sup>30</sup> Kuohuang Han, 'The Chinese Concept of Program Music', *Asian Music*, 10.1 (1978), 17-38 (p. 25).

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 21.

Variation II	Going to the landlord's house for paying the debt	Fast tempo, suddenly	A <i>yu</i> mode (in C <i>gong</i> system)
Variation III	(Doing) heavy labour	Slow tempo	C <i>yu</i> mode (in E <sup>b</sup> <i>gong</i> system)
Variation IV	Resisting angrily	Presto	G <i>jue</i> mode (in E <sup>b</sup> <i>gong</i> system)
Variation V	Expecting the Red Army	Free tempo, expressively	G <i>yu</i> mode (in B <sup>b</sup> <i>gong</i> system)
Variation VI	Celebrating the liberation	Fast tempo; brightly and ardently	D <i>yu</i> mode (in F <i>gong</i> system)
Variation VII		Joyfully	A <i>yu</i> mode (in C <i>gong</i> system)
Coda	Participating in revolution with the Red Army	Fast tempo; unswervingly	A <i>yu</i> mode (in C <i>gong</i> system)

Dan recalled that he saw a performance of the song in the 1950s, and when he arranged it as a piano transcription in the 1970s, after more than 15 years, he could not remember the lyrics clearly, though he still remembered the storyline of how a cowherd suffered from his hard life.<sup>32</sup> Dan also added:

I didn't arrange the piano piece based on this lyric but on my own impression of the story from that performance. I couldn't remember the lyrics by the time I wrote the piano version. How could I write music for the cowherd in rags and the lack of food described in the lyrics and performance? The original tune had just several phrases with little room for development. So I devised some plot and wrote it in a variation form, which would be better [and facilitated the development of the music]. This arrangement is not because of any particular

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<sup>32</sup> From the interview.



compositional knowledge and techniques. It is all based on my own history of studying and playing the piano and also adding some of my own perceptual experience. This piece is written to a similar level as Carl Czerny's Etudes, Op. 849. It was written in a variation form also for my teaching purposes. Each variation has a different characterisation and performance requirements. The original piece was only several bars long, and the variation form in the piano version suits him better [reflecting the character of the cowherd]. The variation form is also suitable for this type of development [of a story]. These are the titles and stories with the logic I had in mind and gave to my piano music.<sup>33</sup>

While the original version of the revolutionary song demonstrates a simple musical structure, repeated with various verses of lyrics, and was composed simply using music as a vehicle for highlighting the role of the lyrics in conveying the political ideology of the leading class and achieving political aims, the use of variation form in the transcription becomes one possible solution to the problem of transcribing a piece in which the same simple melody is repeated many times. In other words, the changes of musical arrangement in the variations could be equivalent to the changes of lyrics among the song's verses set to the same melody. Meanwhile, based on Dan's interpretation, the piano version is developed to a large extent to accentuate the artistic value of the music itself, in the context of frequent changes of keys and modes, a wide range of topics for each section and a more complex structure. More specifically, the suggestive subtitles provided by the composer, combined with the notations in the music, depict particular stories and scenes and also set the general mood for the development of the music. For instance, in Variation I (Ex. 5.1), even though the music features the repetition of the theme, it is written staccato rather than legato, which corresponds to the specific topic of describing an innocent image of a cowherd. In Variation II, to show the abruptness of the music, the tempo shifts from the slightly fast speed in Variation I to a faster one, accompanied by the dynamic change from forte to fortissimo and an intense texture of second and third intervals written in semiquavers.

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<sup>33</sup> From the interview.

Example 5.1. The theme, Variation I and II in the piano transcription of *The Story of a Cowherd*<sup>34</sup>

The theme (slightly slow tempo, the miserable cowherd)

The image shows a piano transcription of the theme from 'The Story of a Cowherd'. The score is written in two systems. The first system starts with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature, followed by a 2/4 time signature. The music is marked 'mp' (mezzo-piano). Above the first staff, there are two Chinese labels: '主题' (Theme) and '稍慢' (slightly slow), with red arrows pointing to the first two measures. The second system starts with a 4/4 time signature, followed by a 2/4 time signature, and ends with a 4/4 time signature. The music is marked 'rit.' (ritardando). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

<sup>34</sup> The complete music score of *The Story of a Cowherd* is in: Zhaoyi Dan, 'Fangniu wa'er de gushi' [*The Story of a Cowherd*] (放牛娃儿的故事), in *Dan Zhaoyi gangqin zuopin xuanji* [Dan Zhaoyi's Selected Piano Works] (但昭义钢琴作品选集), ed. by the editorial board of the series of Dan Zhaoyi (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House & Shanghai Literature & Art Audio-Visual Electronic Publishing House, 2011), pp. 22-26.

Variation I (slightly fast tempo, innocently), representation of the theme

变奏 I 天真地  
稍快

*mf*

Variation II (fast tempo; suddenly) (intensive texture by second and third intervals)

变奏 II 抵债到东家  
快板 突然地

*ff*

*poco a*

*f rit.*

Representation of the first and second phrases of music from the folk tune

The subtitle in Variation III (Ex. 5.2) suggests the core information here that the cowherd is doing heavy labour. 'The cowherd is forced to go to the landlord's house, and he has to do whatever he is told to do.'<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the melody in Variation III applies relatively strong dynamics of mezzo forte to forte, even arriving at fortissimo later to depict such a picture of doing heavy work. The accompanying voice in the bass keeps a regular rhythm and stabilises the musical materials to deliver the composer's intention: presenting the scene of 'the cowherd's hard and shaky footsteps'.<sup>36</sup> Coordinating with the slow tempo, all materials are used together to complete the story in Variation III. When the melody of Variation III ends, there is a similar transition part to connect Variation IV immediately. The tempo moves from slow to fast (marked as *accelerando*), and the dynamics change from piano to forte with three crescendos. Dan wants to use the music here to describe the story that the cowherd is full of angry emotion and intends to fight back.<sup>37</sup> With the growing intense emotion, the music gets more exciting in the transition section. When the three notes in octaves appear suddenly with distinct accents at bar 49, the music reaches its climax. Meanwhile, it reveals the scene that the cowherd finally rushes out and breaks the constraints, as described by the composer. He resists strongly, so all the notes in the melody in this section are all accented (except the ending note which is written with a fermata). But he is still a little boy, in the end, captured by the landlord and imprisoned in a cell.<sup>38</sup> Then the music moves from high register to the bass at bar 55 and applies the tempo change of *poco ritardando*, with gradual weakening dynamics to evoke the cowherd's sorrowful feelings.

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<sup>35</sup> From the interview.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

Example 5.2. Variations III and IV

Slow tempo, (doing) heavy labour

变奏Ⅲ 沉重的劳动  
慢板

(depicting the picture of hard footsteps)

(Resisting angrily)

变奏Ⅳ 愤怒的反抗  
急板

(transition part)

(all emphasised notes to reveal the strong character of resisting from the cowherd)



(expressing the sad emotion)

Variation V, to a certain degree, repeats some melodic tones of the theme (Ex. 5.3). With the completely light dynamic indications (p – mp – p – pp – ppp), Dan explained that the soft music is used to express the thoughts of the cowherd. Combined with the ending story of Variation IV where he is imprisoned, the gradually weakening dynamics at the last several bars of Variation V depict that the cowherd's thoughts drift further and further away from the cage in which he is being held.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the music and the story both respond to the subtitle in Variation V: the cowherd expects the Red Army in his mind. The music from Variation VI to the coda is tightly integrated, with almost no pause among these three sections. The music turns to be fast and lively. It establishes the final story of this piece: the arrival of the Red Army saves the cowherd. So he emerges from his sadness and becomes joyful. In the end, he follows the army and participates in the revolution.

<sup>39</sup> Summarised from the interview.

### Example 5.3. Variation V

(Free tempo, expressively) (Expecting the Red Army)

变奏 V 盼红军  
自由地 有表情地

58

63

*p* *mp*

*p* *rit.* *pp* *ppp*

8<sup>va</sup>

showing the story that the cowherd's thoughts move away to the distance gradually

In addition, based on Dan's words, the melody from the original folk song is not the key point of his piano music, and if maintained strictly it would limit his scope for musical expression.<sup>40</sup> Thus, while the theme and also Variation I (see Ex. 5.1), reproduce the tune from the original song, when the music enters the subsequent variations the melody has been freely adapted. Variations II, III and V show the first and second phrases from the folk tune, but the rest of the music disappears; Variation IV, VI and the coda merely use fragments of the original music (the descending steps of a minor third or major second in the musical development), then develop creatively varied melodies which have some connection to the original tune but do not merely repeating the same music.

In this piano work, the transcribed music from the simple tune of the original folk song expresses the composer's creativity through variable melodies, which present the conventional and typical style and feature of a variation form. But more distinctively, with eight subtitles from the theme to the coda, each section has its own

<sup>40</sup> From the interview.

independence but still demonstrates a coherent and logical arrangement telling a continuous and complete story. Thus, based on a conventional variation form, the piano composer moves further, not only in the musical development of writing more creative melodies but also strongly underlining the effect of programme music, which points the way to understanding the aesthetic interpretations behind this piece.

## Melody

The original music of the revolutionary song, written in D *shang* mode (C *gong* system), is organised in a simple manner, with symmetrical four-bar phrases (the first and the second phrase are completely the same; the fourth phrase is the repetition of the third). In the first half, the concentration of the melody on the tones *yu – gong – shang* (the note *jue*, E merely appears twice, but appears to be basically ornamental, see example 5.4) shows the feature of *zhaisheng yun*, translatable as the Narrow Sound (with the span of a perfect fourth) in traditional Chinese music theory. More specifically, in the Chinese pentatonic scale, arranging three (or four or five) tones as a group constructs different structures of sounds. All the possibilities of three-tone groups in, for example, C *gong* system (C D E G A) are shown below:<sup>41</sup>

Table 5.2. The categories of three-tone groups in C *gong* system

A-C-E	D-E-G, E-G-A, G-A-C, <b>A-C-D</b>	C-D-E	G-C-D, D-G-A, A-D-E	C-E-G
<i>Xiaosheng yun</i> (Small Sound)	<i>Zhaisheng yun</i> (Narrow Sound)	<i>Zhongsheng yun</i> (Middle Sound)	<i>Kuansheng yun</i> (Wide Sound)	<i>Dasheng yun</i> (Large Sound)

Locating the Middle Sound as the centre, the left side of the Narrow Sound usually appears in the southern music of China (the Wide Sound belongs to the

<sup>41</sup> The chart of Chinese sounds theory is shown in: Yaohua Wang and Yaxiong Du, 'Zhongguo chuanyong yinyue de yishu tese' [The Artistic Characteristics of Traditional Chinese Music] (中国传统音乐的艺术特色), in *Zhongguo chuantong yinyue gailun* [Introduction to Traditional Chinese Music] (中国传统音乐概论), ed. by Yaohua Wang and Yaxiong Du (Fuzhou: Fujian Education Press, 1999), pp. 337-373 (p. 359).



musical feature of the Northern area; the Small and Large Sounds are normally presented in the music of ethnic minorities).<sup>42</sup> Therefore, the use of the Narrow Sound in the folk tune of *A Cowherd Expecting the Red Army* also demonstrates the musical characteristics of the southern area (Sichuan Province where this folk tune comes from is located in Southwest China).

Example 5.4. The first phrase in the folk song, *A Cowherd Expecting the Red Army*<sup>43</sup>

**1 = C  $\frac{2}{4}$**

$\dot{1}$   $\underline{6}$   $\dot{1}$   $\underline{6}$  |  $\dot{3}$   $\dot{2}$   $\dot{3}$   $\dot{2}$  |  $\dot{1}$   $\underline{6}$  0 |

yu (A) — gong (C) ————— shang (D)

The music of the third phrase in the original folk song starts its melody from the tone D. Nevertheless, in the piano music, the beginning tone differs from the folk song, as Dan chooses E rather than D to start the third phrase of the theme in his piano version (Ex. 5.5). Even though such an effect of connection in the folk tune has been ignored in the piano transcription, because the fourth phrase is a complete repetition of the third in the folk music, the selected use of E at the beginning of the third phrase and D as the start of phrase 4 in the piano version prevents the music from becoming monotonous.

<sup>42</sup> Yaohua Wang and Yaxiong Du, 'The Artistic Characteristics of Traditional Chinese Music', p. 359.

<sup>43</sup> The numbered notation of *A Cowherd Expecting the Red Army* comes from: Soopu, 'Fangniu wa'er pan hongjun' [*A Cowherd Expecting the Red Army*] (放牛娃儿盼红军), Soopu, [n.d.] <<https://soopu.com/html/54/54816.html>> [accessed 21 March 2022].

Example 5.5. The third and the fourth phrases in the piano version, *The Story of a Cowherd*



In the last bar after the syncopated rhythm at the end of the folk tune, in order to maintain the effect of a melodic sequence a perfect-fifth lower than bar 3 in the first phrase, the added note of *qingjue*, F in C *gong* system is shown (Ex. 5.6). Thus, phrase four demonstrates the feature of mode instability or dual modes in Chinese music theory.<sup>44</sup> Specifically, the last phrase (also the third) is written with four primary notes (C D G A) in C *gong* system. Due to the disappearance of E, the only major third interval in a pentatonic scale, that between the notes of *gong* and *jue*, which normally serves the function of mode stability, does not appear. All notes in this phrase conform to the scale of D *shang* mode (C *gong* system) and also D *yu* mode (F *gong* system). The music is unstable between the two systems and this complicates the identity of the modes (see Table 5.3). Thus, to avoid such instability, the piano transcription (Ex. 5.7) uses the principal and important note E to replace F at bar 6 in the third phrase. At the end of the theme, bar 8 is not a strict repetition of bar 6. Instead, the ending melody is presented an octave higher, then immediately repeated in the middle register. Such a different ending in the piano version confirms a tonal centre of A rather than D as in the original tune, evoking and echoing the melodic development in the first phrase and also creating a clear sense of musical closure.

<sup>44</sup> Yinghai Li, *Hanzu diaoshi jiqi hesheng, xiudingban* [Chinese Modes and Harmony, Revised Version] (汉族调式及其和声, 修订版) (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 2001), pp. 78-90.

Example 5.6. The first and the last phrase in the folk song, *A Cowherd Expecting the Red Army*

The image shows two lines of musical notation with fingerings. The first line has notes:  $\dot{1}$  6  $\dot{1}$  6 |  $\dot{3}$   $\dot{2}$   $\dot{3}$   $\dot{2}$  |  $\dot{1}$  6 0. The second line has notes:  $\dot{2}$   $\dot{6}$   $\dot{2}$   $\dot{1}$  |  $\dot{6}$  5  $\dot{6}$  5 |  $\dot{4}$   $\dot{2}$  0. A red horizontal line is drawn below the notes. A red arrow points from the text 'The use of only four notes: C D G A' to the first line. A blue box highlights the notes  $\dot{1}$  6 0 in the first line and  $\dot{4}$   $\dot{2}$  0 in the second line. A blue arrow points from the text '(melodic sequence of a perfect fifth)' to this box.

The use of only four notes: C D G A

(melodic sequence of a perfect fifth)

Table 5.3. The demonstration of the scale coincident in D *shang* mode (C *gong* system) and D *yu* mode (F *gong* system)

D <i>shang</i> mode (C <i>gong</i> system)	<i>shang</i>	<i>jue</i>	<i>qingjue</i>	<i>zhi</i>	<i>yu</i>	<i>gong</i>
The scale	D	E	F	G	A	C
D <i>yu</i> mode (F <i>gong</i> system)	<i>yu</i>	<i>biangong</i>	<i>gong</i>	<i>shang</i>	<i>jue</i>	<i>zhi</i>

Example 5.7. The theme in the piano transcription, *The Story of a Cowherd*

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff has a red box around a phrase of notes. The second staff has a red box around a phrase of notes. A red arrow points from the first box to the second box, indicating a melodic connection between the two phrases.

Dan explained such adjustments in the theme by saying that he did not prefer to copy the melody from the original song completely.<sup>45</sup> Instead, he made creative adaptations in the melodic voice, with the use of different accompaniment textures in the repeated phrases, to infuse more 'colour' and variability into the simple tune.

Meanwhile, except for the alteration in the thematic melody, another aspect of innovation in the piano music is the arrangement of the original melody in Dan's variation practice. In the piano transcription, the theme intentionally maintains the two intervals between *gong-yu* and *jue-shang* from the original melody, then becomes more flexible in Variations V, VI and the coda (Ex. 5.8). In particular, the varied melody in Variation V is enlarged, with a change of rhythm. This type of variation approach demonstrates the technique of melodic extensions characteristic of traditional Chinese music. In traditional Chinese music theory, melodic expansion is the further development of the typical segments in the thematic materials, a technique that deepens the character of the music. In this way, music is not only richly varied and developed, but also strengthens the inner connection and unity.<sup>46</sup> The adapted melody in Variation V, therefore, greatly emphasises the primary position of these two core intervals in the music, still closely connecting them with the original tune. In Variation VI and the coda, however, the melody is not extended, rather being tightened, though it still promotes these two intervals. This arrangement illustrates the composer's flexible use of the principal musical materials in melodic variation.

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<sup>45</sup> From the interview.

<sup>46</sup> See: Limin Fu, 'Chuantong minzu yuequ zhong de xuanlü fazhan shoufa tanjiu' [An Exploration of Melodic Development Techniques in Traditional Chinese Folk Music] (传统民族乐曲中的旋律发展手法探究), *Journal of Xinghai Conservatory of Music*, 2 (2000), 33-39.

Example 5.8. Comparison of the first phrase in the theme, Variation V, VI and the coda

C-D (*gong-yu*) E-D (*jue-shang*)

Variation V (in *bB-gong* system), bb. 58-61

B<sup>b</sup>-G (*gong-yu*) D-C (*jue-shang*)

Variation VI (in *F-gong* system), bb. 72-73

F-D (*gong-yu*) A-G (*jue-shang*)

The coda (in C-gong system), bb. 105-06

C-D (gong-yu) E-D (jue-shang)

## Rhythm

The rhythms applied in the folk tune of *A Cowherd Expecting the Red Army* are presented in a simple way, mainly characterised by the use of quavers and crochets, except the syncopations at bars 2 and 8. In the first phrase, at bars 1 and 3 the materials of the rhythm and even the melody are the same, while the syncopation used in the middle of them produces an unexpected contrast, which makes the progress of the music more variable (Ex. 5.9). At bar 8 in the revolutionary song, in a similar pattern, the syncopated rhythm appears again in the middle of a phrase, which is also in strict melodic sequence a perfect-fifth lower than bar 2.

Example 5.9. Comparison of the first and the third phrases in the folk tune of *A Cowherd Expecting the Red Army*

'exposition'	contrast	abbreviated repetition
$\dot{1}$ $\underline{6}$ $\dot{1}$ $\underline{6}$	$\dot{3}$ $\dot{2}$ $\underline{\dot{3}} \underline{\dot{2}}$	$\dot{1}$ $\underline{6}$ 0
$\dot{2}$ $\underline{6}$ $\underline{2}$ $\dot{1}$	$\underline{6}$ 5 $\underline{6}$ $\underline{5}$	$\underline{4}$ $\underline{2}$ 0 :
	<div style="border: 1px solid red; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <math>\dot{3}</math> <math>\dot{2}</math>    <math>\underline{\dot{3}} \underline{\dot{2}}</math>  <math>\underline{6}</math> 5    <math>\underline{6}</math> <math>\underline{5}</math> </div>	
	<p>melodic sequence</p>	

Another distinctive point presented at bar 2 (the same as bar 5, Ex. 5.10) is the special arrangement between the music and the lyrics: the syncopation note at bar 2 does not correspond to a content word in the lyrics but rather to a modal particle (啊 — ah), which embodies a characteristic of Sichuan folk songs. In traditional Chinese music theory, complementing words are one of the key components and traditional techniques of expression in Chinese folk songs, adding content or mood to main words (some complementing words are also used relating to particular folk tunes).<sup>47</sup> They become a special element of the lyrics in which musical expression takes precedence over literary expression.<sup>48</sup> In Sichuan folk music, modal particles are one type of complementary words, serving to intensify the tone of lyrics and enhance the mood of the music.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, the use of the modal particle on the syncopation note emphasises the strong accent on the tone D, which also allows the emotional expression of the music to be increased. In the last half of the piece, the music starts precisely from this stressed note of D (see Ex. 5.9) which takes the dominant position at bar 2, to make a coherent effect with the music in the first half. Another modal particle word (哪 — *na*) is applied at the end of each phrase (Ex. 5.11), with a short duration of only half a beat, to create a similar sound effect of prolongation of the tune and an expression of depressed emotion.

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<sup>47</sup> See: Daneng Song, 'Tan zhongguo minjian gequ zhong chenci, chenju de yundong' [Discussion on the Use of Complementing Words and Phrases in Chinese Folk Songs] (谈中国民间歌曲中衬词、衬句的运用), *Music Research*, 2 (1958), 62-71; Lei Zhao, 'Minge chenci de biao xian gongneng' [The Expressive Function of Complementing Words in Folk Songs] (民歌衬词的表现功能), *Chinese Music*, 4 (1991), 63-64.

<sup>48</sup> Mingchun Jiang, *Hanzu minge gailun* [Introduction to Han Folk Songs] (汉族民歌概论) (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 1982), p. 292.

<sup>49</sup> See: Jiali Wu, 'Qiantan Sichuan minge chenci de tese' [A Brief Discussion on the Characteristics of the Complementing Words of Sichuan Folk Songs] (浅谈四川汉族民歌衬词的特色), *Popular Arts and Literature: Academic Version*, 8 (2012), 189-190; Ying Zhao and Yuanping He, 'Baqu minge yinyue xingtai jixi — yi 755 shou minge yangban wei anli' [An Analysis of the Pattern of Folk Songs in Northeast Sichuan — Based on 755 Case Studies] (巴渠民歌音乐形态解析 — 以 755 首民歌样本为案例), *Explorations in Music*, 1 (2008), 43-46.

Example 5.10. The music and lyrics at bar 2 in the folk song

Example 5.11. The modal particle word, *na* presented at the end of the first (second) and the third (fourth) phrases

On the other hand, the piano version applies different arrangements in the melody. In the section of the theme, Dan writes slurs in each phrase but no marcato or accent markings on the syncopations (Ex. 5.12). With the slow tempo and the soft dynamics of mezzo piano, the melody sings as a whole. A similar situation also appears in Variation V. In Variation III, even though the music is still marked legato, the piano transcription attempts to achieve the sound effect of the folk tune by making the syncopations louder (Ex. 5.13). Meanwhile, the variational melodies in Variation VI (Ex. 5.14) and the coda (Ex. 5.15), written in accented syncopated rhythm, also show the same features. Dan explained that this detailed placement of rhythm does not proceed independently, but is based on the expression required by the narrative content in each variation.<sup>50</sup> According to the composer's words, for

<sup>50</sup> From the interview.



instance, the accented syncopations in Variation VI aim to imitate the sounds of the traditional Chinese percussion instruments, *gong* and drum, which are commonly used to perform festive music.<sup>51</sup> Thus, this particular rhythm, as well as the tempo and expression markings (fast and impassioned) given by the composer, all convey the scenes described in Variation VI: the cheerful mood of the music and the story that the cowherd celebrates his liberation. The same situation happens in the coda.

Example 5.12. The first phrase in the theme of the piano transcription, *The Story of a Cowherd*



Example 5.13. The first phrase in Variation III



Example 5.14. Bars 72-73 and bb. 82-83 in Variation VI



<sup>51</sup> From the interview.

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The image shows a musical score for Example 5.15, bars 105-12 in the coda. The score is in 2/4 time and features a treble and bass clef. A red box highlights a specific note in the treble clef staff.

Example 5.15. Bars 105-12 in the coda

105 结尾 跟着红军闹革命  
快板 坚定地

The image shows a musical score for Example 5.16, bars 105-12 in the coda. The score is in 2/4 time and features a treble and bass clef. A red box highlights a specific note in the treble clef staff. The score includes the lyrics "结尾 跟着红军闹革命" and "快板 坚定地".

The end of each phrase in the piano version, however, does not stop suddenly like the folk song, which ends each phrase on a quaver that corresponds to a modal particle word. To create a sound effect of prolonging the tune, the piano music adds the timing of the crotchet rest after the quaver of the modal particle so that the final note becomes a dotted crotchet (Ex. 5.16).

Example 5.16. The first phrase in the folk song (transcribed into staff notation) and in the piano version

The image displays two musical staves. The top staff is a single treble clef staff in 2/4 time, transcribing a folk song. The lyrics '放牛娃儿好 (啊) 伤心 (哪), ' are written below the notes. A red box highlights the final note of the phrase, which is a quarter note on the G line. The bottom staff is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) in 4/4 time, representing the piano version. It features a melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A red box highlights a specific note in the right hand, which is a quarter note on the G line, corresponding to the note highlighted in the folk song transcription. A red arrow points from the box in the piano version to the box in the folk song transcription.

Based on the explanations of the composer, the musical materials and aesthetic interpretations analysed above all closely revolve around Dan's primary intention in arranging this piano version: to present the storyline or the programmatic style in this transcription. To reflect this aesthetic interpretation practically, the following section on performance suggestions translates the analysis into practical approaches on the piano. According to the composer's words, Dan believes that art is transitive. It allows performers to imagine plots and scenarios of stories. After perceiving such content, they convey the emotional expression of artistic works in their performance.<sup>52</sup> Thus, the following analysis of performance reveals crucial performance methods not only to deliver and express the composer's innovation in programme music but also to illustrate the player's imagination.

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<sup>52</sup> From the interview.

# Performance Suggestions

## Pedalling and dynamics

The composer does not give any explicit pedalling instructions in the score. He does provide dynamic notations but these lack detail in some sections. For enriching the sound and adding more expression to the music, it is essential to apply pedalling and more specific dynamics in this piece to assist the presentation of the story scenes that the composer intends to represent.

In the section of the theme, as the music is transferred from the original folk song and also required by Dan to be melodic,<sup>53</sup> the sustain pedal is recommended to be used through this section to establish a legato melodic line. Meanwhile, in order to avoid destroying the clear line with blurring effects in the performance, the pedal should be changed once within each bar (see Ex. 5.17). At the end of the theme, because the composer chooses the rich texture of a chord in his piano music rather than a single note as in the folk song, the pedal should be changed more frequently, on each beat of the last bar, to prevent a muddy and heavy sound and create a soft ending.

According to the topic Dan provides to the theme, the music portrays the character of a miserable cowherd. The mood of music in this section is gloomy and dark. Dan merely offers the general dynamics of mezzo piano at bar 1. Certainly, the music here requires to be performed lightly. Due to the second phrase being a complete repetition of phrase one, to build variety in the development of the music, the *una corda* pedal is used for the first several notes (helping to create a subdued introduction), but abandoned at the entry of the second phrase in bar 3. At the same time, phrase 2 applies slightly stronger dynamics than the first phrase. In this way, the different arrangements of both pedalling and dynamics establish a musical contrast between the two phrases.

In phrase 3, the emotional expression gets more intensive. In the piano performance, first adding a soft accent by a mildly deep touching of the key on the

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<sup>53</sup> From the interview.

first note E at bar 5, phrase 3 applies a poco crescendo to reach the climax of the theme. Until near the end of this section in phrase 4, with the frequent pedalling changes, the dynamics gradually weaken to complete the theme.

Example 5.17. The suggested performance way in the theme of the piano transcription

主题 苦难的牧童  
稍慢

mp

Ped. \*

una corda tre corda

poco crescendo

5

rit.

Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

In Variation I, the music uses lively staccatos to reveal the naive figure of the cowherd, according to the composer.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, at bars 10, 12 and 16, Dan repeats the last two notes an octave higher to echo the end of each phrase. This response in the high register should not apply the mezzo forte used in the melody, but use softer dynamics with sustain pedal to create the sound effect of echoing (Ex. 5.18).

<sup>54</sup> From the interview.

Example 5.18. The suggested performance way in Variation I

When the music arrives at Variation II, a new scene suddenly happens. Thus, Dan offers a dramatic dynamics of fortissimo at the start of this section. A descending chromatic scale is directly followed by an accented chord. To increase the sound effect of accent on this chord, simultaneous pedalling is applied here (Ex. 5.19). Immediately, the intensive texture of the second and third intervals appears all the way through the connecting part. To organise the descending and upward movements as two groups, the sustain pedalling applied to the texture makes them more consecutive without any break, and also achieves the sound effect of legato. Meanwhile, using pedals in this section is consistent with the composer's explanation: Variation II demonstrates a very strong musical expression. It is also difficult to play evenly and accurately, as it requires the articulation of long passages with numerous intervals.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>55</sup> From the interview.

Example 5.19. The suggested performance way at bb. 17-22 in Variation II

变奏 II 抵债到东家  
快板 突然地

17 *ff* Ped. Ped. \*

21 Ped. \*

*poco a* *sf*

In variation III, the introduction in the first two bars uses double notes in the bass to depict the cowherd's hard foot steps. With the application of the sustain pedal here (Ex. 5.20), the quality of the tones is more coincident with the story scenes the composer wants to convey. Meanwhile, the performance suggestion from the composer in this section is to use the piano player's imagination: the performer needs some imagination of the storyline as a way of gaining some perceptual awareness that can be reflected in the performance.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, because of the double-note texture and low register, the use of the sustain pedal creates a relatively muddy sound effect. However, this unclear sound effect in performance contributes to the function of rendering the background and setting a heavier mood in the music. As Dan marks the particular dynamics from piano in the beginning then gradually stronger, the *una corda* pedal added in the first bar helps to present a delicate difference in dynamics. When the melodic line enters, the texture in the music gets more thick, which intensifies the blurring sound effect that the sustain pedal brings.

<sup>56</sup> From the interview.

Then the change of pedalling within the bars controls and neutralises the muddy sound effect, keeping the deliberately unclear background effect moderate enough to serve its function in the storytelling. When the melody moves to its end in Variation III, the musical materials are quite simple with an acciaccatura on tone D leading to the main note C. Because the dynamics here are forte and fortissimo, the sustain pedal should be slightly late on the main note rather than together with the grace note (Ex. 5.21). In this way, the tone quality remains rich and, most essentially, helps concentrate the distinct accent on the main note.

Example 5.20. The suggested performance way at bb. 29-32 in Variation III

变奏Ⅲ 沉重的劳动  
慢板

29

*p* *mf*

Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. \* Ped. \*

una corda tre corda

Example 5.21. The suggested performance way at b. 38

38

*ff*

Ped. \*



Similarly, the sustain pedal is used to reinforce the effect of accents in Variation IV. After the transition, the music goes to its climax with all notes accented to convey the cowherd's angry resistance. The sustain pedal not only helps create the stress and the completely strong dynamics from fortissimo to sforzando, but also allows the individual notes to flow into legato phrases (Ex. 5.22). This practical suggestion is demonstrated in a recording by Gu Jingdan who is a student of the composer, Dan Zhaoyi. In her playing, a clear sound effect of pedalling is illustrated in Variation IV.<sup>57</sup> The connection phrases in Variation VI are other places to use legato pedalling (Ex. 5.23). Also, in the last bar in Variation VII as the link to connect with the coda, pedalling appears briefly on the last three ending notes (Ex. 5.24). In the last three bars of the coda, to make a strong ending to respond the topic that the composer gives to this section (the cowherd unswervingly participating in revolution with the Red Army), simultaneous pedalling is applied to underline the stress on the first chord. After the rest, the pedal is used again and sustained until the end (Ex. 5.25). Combined with the accented strong dynamics on the chords, the performance establishes a deep and firm closure.

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<sup>57</sup> Gu's piano performance recordings are attached as a CD in the book of Dan Zhaoyi's Selected Piano Works. See: Jingdan Gu, 'Fangniu wa'er de gushi' [The Story of a Cowherd] (放牛娃儿的故事), Dan Zhaoyi gangqin zuopin xuanji [Dan Zhaoyi's Selected Piano Works] (但昭义钢琴作品选集) (Shanghai Music Publishing House & Shanghai Literature & Art Audio-Visual Electronic Publishing House, 2011) [on CD].

Example 5.22. The suggested performance way at bb. 49-57 in Variation IV

Musical score for Example 5.22, Variation IV, measures 49-57. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of two flats. It features a piano accompaniment with a right-hand melody and a left-hand bass line. Dynamics include *ff* and *sf*. Performance markings include "Ped." and an asterisk "\*". A "poco rit." marking is present in measure 55. The piece concludes in 3/4 time.

Example 5.23. The suggested performance way at bb. 68-71, 92-96 in Variation VI

Musical score for Example 5.23, Variation VI, measures 68-71 and 92-96. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of two flats. It features a piano accompaniment with a right-hand melody and a left-hand bass line. Dynamics include *mf* and *f*. Performance markings include "Ped.", "poco cresc.", and an asterisk "\*". The piece concludes in 4/4 time.

变奏VI 解放庆翻身  
明亮地

Example 5.24. The suggested performance way at b. 104 in Variation VII

Ped. Ped. \*

Example 5.25. The suggested performance way at bb. 117-19 in the coda

Ped. \* Ped. \*

## Performance approaches to connection phrases and tempo

In general, the theme is performed at a slightly slow tempo to deliver the sorrowful mood of the music. It ends in a gradually slowing down tempo, marked as *ritardando* by the composer at the last bar. Then the complete new Variation I follows, in a relatively fast tempo compared with the theme to depict the innocent cowherd's nature. Dan does not mark a fermata on the last chord at the end of the theme or write any rest between the end of the theme and the start of Variation I. However, a full stop with a short break is indispensable here (Ex. 5.26) to create a breath within the performance and prepare the entirely different new section of music

and story scenes happening next. The piano performance recording from Gu confirms this short break in her playing.<sup>58</sup>

Example 5.26. The suggested performance way at bb. 8-9, the last bar of the theme and the first of Variation I

A short break between

Variation V is performed in a free tempo. When the music arrives at Variation VI, the melody does not appear directly, but only through a series of arpeggios descending then rising back up to the high register. Dan does not indicate a clear tempo for these connection phrases. Based on his story behind the music, after the cowherd expects the Red Army for a long time depicted in Variation V, they finally come in Variation VI. The mood of the music is no longer depressing but shifts to be bright (expression marking as bright in Variation VI) and lively. To evoke this contrastive expression in music, the first arpeggio with appoggiatura should be emphasised by performing with an accent and slowing down the tempo (Ex. 5.27). From the second arpeggio, the tempo gradually gets faster, eventually grouping the connection phrases as a whole. When the syncopated note in the melodic line appears at bar 72, Dan suggests an accent on it. Thus, slowing down the tempo for a moment at this bar assists the accented note to be heard. Then, the tempo returns back to fast at the following bar 73, as the composer has given a fast tempo marking for the melody in Variation VI. Gu applies the same method of temporary tempo slowing at the start of Variation VI and the syncopation bar when the melody comes in Variation VI.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Jingdan Gu, 'The Story of a Cowherd'.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

Example 5.27. The suggested performance way at bb. 68-76 in Variation VI

变奏VI 解放庆翻身  
明亮地

68 *mf* 3 3 3 *poco cresc.* *f*

Slowing accel down

快速 热烈、欢腾地

72 *ff* 3 4 *sub. p*

Slowing down back to the normal tempo

Nevertheless, the connection phrases between the end of Variation VI and the beginning of Variation VII are performed continuously, linking these two sections without any pause. These descending scales do not require a tempo change but maintain a consistent speed from Variation VI which is also used in Variation VII (Ex. 5.28). The original tempo retention also applies to the end of the coda. To establish an unequivocal and agile ending, Dan only wrote three bars mainly on the tonic chord performed three times. Also, the ending needs to be simple by keeping to the original speed (Ex. 5.29), not slowing down or getting faster. In this way, all the materials come together to complete the music and the story.

Example 5.28. The suggested performance way at bb. 92-98, the connection phrases in Variation VI and the first phrase in Variation VII



Keeping in original tempo all the way through

变奏Ⅶ  
喜悦地



Example 5.29. The suggested performance way at bb. 113-19, the ending bars in the coda



Maintaining the original tempo

## Conclusion

After studying at the Sichuan Conservatory of Music, the experience of studying at the Central Philharmonic in Beijing provided more scope and possibilities for Dan's development in his music career. As an official institution, the Central Philharmonic had always worked under the guidance of the governing party. Dan had a long-term association with this institution that was closely related to politics. In turn, the political ideology had a subtle impact on him. Although, from his own explanations, his composition did not stem from policy requirements or serve the politics of the time, in the 1950s to 1970s the whole society was enveloped in a particular political context. This strong atmosphere in the society did provide a general direction for his compositions: the first piano concerto composed in the 1960s was under the political premise of Mao's demand for intellectual youth to work in the countryside; the piano etudes written in the 1970s were based on government-approved Model Operas.

Within the framework of the social environment, Dan found a balance between artistic creation and politics: in his works, he tried to emphasise more his musical innovation and artistic values. From his beginning as a (piano and percussion) performer, he accumulated his knowledge and perception of music through practice. This piano transcription, *The Story of a Cowherd*, was inspired by a performance that Dan saw in 1957. Referring to the composing motivation and purpose of this work, he explained more than once that he was not a professional composer and that the arrangements in the piano music were based on his feelings as a pianist. Thus, from the first step of changing the title in his piano transcription from the original version, the political soul that was injected into this originally revolutionary song was relatively diminished in the piano version and replaced by the composer's own creativity. Similarly, all the more detailed changes in the piano music from the original song are intended to better shape his cultural product with more artistic value. In addition, Dan described different but logically continuous narrative scenes for each variation. Even though this storyline depicts a cowherd's tragic life experience, the content associated with CCP's Red Army conveyed by the later part of the story is still under the political framework. It is this 'programme' aspect that still shows a connection with politics, presumably making Dan's musical creativity permissible at the time.

Therefore, this piano transcription skilfully manages and demonstrates the balance in Dan's musical writing between musical and political perspectives.

The final analysis in this chapter from the perspective of performance and suggestions of practical approaches is also intended to serve the purpose of presenting the narrative style of programme music in this transcription. In the aspects of pedalling and dynamics as well as performance approaches to connection phrases and tempo, the aim is to deliver the complete story of the cowherd in a manner that responds to the title and expresses the composer's creative intention that the musical analysis above illustrates.



# Conclusion

The Cultural Revolution period of 1966-76 is well known as the time when the Chinese Communist Party's control over the arts reached its most extreme in the twentieth century. All types of artistic productions, forms and content were subject to severe government censorship. During the two years of 1966-67, the piano and its music, as representatives of Western art, were placed at the heart of a storm: 'the threat of Western bourgeoisie and individualism', as defined by the dominant government guiding ideology, led Chinese society to direct class conflict towards all Western art, including piano music, and all people and activities associated with this culture. It was not until the advent of two Chinese piano pieces, *The Piano Accompaniment to The Red Lantern* and *The Yellow River Piano Concerto*, which are both based on previous Chinese musical works and linked with traditional Chinese culture and the Chinese revolution, that a positive possibility emerged for piano transcriptions to be accepted as orthodox in the national political path. This led to a confirmed development in the 1970s when the Chinese government took the initiative to ask composers to arrange piano transcriptions based on traditional Chinese sources.

Thus, the conclusion here firstly reviews the history of applying nationalism in cultural products, requested by the government. Then, the conclusion extends the understanding and illustration of nationalism from the perspective of Chinese composers' awareness that they also chose a path coincident with the Chinese government's ideology, in the times when composers were experiencing the intense social environment of the Cultural Revolution period and when they stepped into the more open subsequent era in China. Meanwhile, regarding Chinese piano transcriptions and music with nationalism, not only the native perceptions within China but also the external recognitions from the West are explored.

From this discussion of nationalism in music, the conclusion moves to the question of defining the style of piano transcriptions in the Chinese cultural context. Due to the inability of politics to provide professional guidance on the methods of arranging transcriptions, Chinese composers gained more relative independence in terms of compositional techniques. Additionally, compared with the Western

convention of arranging piano transcriptions, the situation in China is more complicated, allowing for transcriptions into be categorised into three types: 'transplantation', 'adaptation' and 'creation'. Finally, the implications of the analysis for performing piano transcriptions are considered, with the suggested performance approaches in this research being informed by both traditional Chinese culture and the composers' intentions.

## Applying nationalism to cultural products in CCP's political context

In the 1930s, the CCP established a proletarian Soviet regime in Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region. To ensure that the new regime would be known, understood and supported by the Chinese masses who had never been exposed to Marxism-Leninism before, the CCP launched a cultural campaign in the revolutionary base area. They used old traditional tunes fitted with new revolutionary lyrics to make people accept the new political ideology and thus promote the stability and development of the regime. This was the starting point of the party's approach to composing musical works, in other words, the recreation of old pieces and the political demand for artistic works to reflect national identity. This basic policy towards artistic creation was sustained through subsequent periods when the CCP was actually in power. Particularly, Mao Zedong's political talk in 1956 to music workers (affirming the value of traditional Chinese culture and stressing that China's cultural development must manifest national styles) and his instruction to the Central Conservatory of Music in 1964 ('making the past serve the present'), as well as Zhou Enlai's demands for music and dance (to be revolutionary, national and popular) in the early 1960s, all demonstrated the political agenda of applying nationalism to cultural products under the CCP government. Those policies finally facilitated the formation of the policy during the Cultural Revolution when the government demanded composers to collect materials from ancient to modern times in Chinese history, and from traditional and revolutionary sources in Chinese music, to launch the 'campaign' of writing Chinese piano transcriptions. These piano transcriptions of traditional music reflected the musicians' subordination to orthodox ideology, and ultimately served the goal of promoting the cohesion of all levels of society and their full acceptance of the nation led under the proletarian government.

## The perception of nationalism from Chinese composers

When the direction of nationalism in the composition of musical works becomes politically orthodox and socially acceptable (the path of populism), the next consideration is whether nationalism is merely a political slogan or whether it still reflects the awareness of composers in music. Certainly, as it was a direct request from the government to arrange old works on the piano, the first manifestation of nationalism in these piano transcriptions was the direct adoption of traditional tunes as themes for piano music. The five musical cases chosen in this research, *Autumn Moon over a Calm Lake*, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*, *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon*, *Music at Sunset* and *The Story of a Cowherd*, all use melodies based on the Chinese scales and modes in the pentatonic system. In other words, the use of pentatonic melodies in piano transcriptions is not a choice left to the composers, as they have to meet government requirements. With the exception of *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* which was originally a traditional ensemble piece, the other four original pieces are all typical Chinese monophonic music. Therefore, in arranging single-line music as piano pieces with multiple voices, composers need to add more materials, and these are often inherited from traditional Chinese music. Specifically, Li Yinghai uses the pentatonic harmony theory he developed throughout the whole piece of *Music at Sunset* to add homophonic texture to the originally monophonic *pipa* piece. In illustrating traditional aesthetics, Chen Peixun wanted to convey the artistic expression of the title *Autumn Moon over a Calm Lake* in his music. So when he arranged the monophonic original *gaohu* piece for the piano, the accompaniment formed by an arpeggiated texture throughout the piece created a particularly programmatic effect. When Dan Zhaoyi arranged a revolutionary song which merely contained six bars of traditional tune with multiple verses of lyrics into a piano version, he creatively established independent but still continuous storylines for each variation of the piano transcription, ultimately completing this work as a typical piece of programme music. In *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon*, Wang Jianzhong adapts a phrase originally played by different traditional instruments together to be performed by left and right hands alternately on the piano, in order to suggest the lively scene of 'chasing' movement in the title of the work. Also, in Wang's arrangement, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* is accompanied by the harmony of polymodality in pentatonicism. All of these become

indications of the composers' musical pursuit of national identity in composition. These materials enable nationalism in music to become less of an abstract concept and more of a concrete expression and illustration through specific musical elements. In that era of social tension, the negotiation between the demand of politics and the choice of individual desires of the composers did not contradict but led to unity in the aspect of nationalism.

In the post-Cultural Revolution period, when the political regime allows greater freedom for artistic creation and the society has more acceptance for diverse forms and content of musical works, it is worth considering whether the expression of cultural identity in piano music is still the goal of these Chinese composers who worked through the Cultural Revolution period. The composer Dan Zhaoyi, who still persistently takes the path of arranging Chinese piano transcriptions based on traditional music, explains his perspective:

As far as Western music is concerned, each composer has a different style of composition. For example, Isaac Albéniz Pascual's works have a distinctive Spanish musical style. On the contrary, I think after the Reform and Opening-up policy [of 1978], our composers are desperately trying to learn Western composing techniques nowadays. Chinese tones are not to be heard in their writing. That is something I don't like. We need to learn our own techniques [from traditional Chinese music]. Only the national ones are international. Chopin brought the Mazurka and Polish dance music into the mainstream of the Western music field. What a great contribution! If we had such composers in China, it would be a great contribution to the diversity of music in the world. It is important to compose in a way that sounds Chinese, in a Chinese style. So I would not write a piece that people think is a Western composition.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, composer Yin Chengzong says: 'Today, in an era of artistic pluralism, what is national should be valued all the more. It is one of my motivations to introduce Chinese piano art to people worldwide as far as possible.'<sup>2</sup> Chen Peixun believes, 'I think we should continue tradition[al culture], writing music with a combination of

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<sup>1</sup> From the interview with Dan conducted for this research.

<sup>2</sup> Yin's words come from an interview by Nanfang Daily with him. See: Nanfang Daily, '73 sui gangqin jia Yin Chengzong: zhongguo gangqin yishu xuyao zhagen chauntong wenhua' [The 73-Year-Old Pianist Yin Chengzong: Chinese Piano Art Needs to be Rooted in Traditional Culture] (73 岁钢琴家殷承宗: 中国钢琴艺术需扎根传统文化), *China News Service*, 2014 <<https://www.chinanews.com.cn/cul/2014/04-09/6043303.shtml>> [accessed 2 July 2023].

realism and romanticism.<sup>13</sup> Li Yinghai expresses his national affiliation: ‘My aspiration and national pursuit is to enable our unique national style... a high level of culture and art with a distinctive Chinese charm stands in the forest of the world’s nations, to make a new contribution to human music culture.’<sup>14</sup> Wang Jianzhong explains the style of his piano compositions:

For my own habit or preference or aesthetics, I always want to have national style in it [musical compositions]. The meaning of national style, in my opinion, is specific but not philosophical. My understanding of national style is that [musical compositions] have pentatonic characteristics... In my own works, I may sometimes emphasise pentatonicism to a large extent... This is also the natural reflection of being a Chinese person [composer].<sup>5</sup>

It is evident from these Chinese composers' contemporary expressions of self-consciousness when composing piano music that they remain proactive in asserting cultural identity in their works. Meanwhile, the expression of nationalism is no longer confined to the populism that served the previous politics of making piano music accessible to Chinese audiences. It becomes a way for Chinese piano music to show itself on the international stage, moving into the mainstream of global cultural diversity. On the other hand, Dan's interpretation refers to another reflection for Chinese composers: the position of Chinese piano compositions in a European-centred piano music culture whose framework and order had been established by Western composers long ago. In Li Yinghai's concept of letting the world know more about Chinese piano music, he also criticised the idea of taking Chinese music to the world:

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<sup>3</sup> Chen's explanations are documented in a journal article written by Chen's student, Chang Jingyi. See: Jingyi Chang, ‘Xin chao zhu lang gao – Chen Peixun jiaoshou fangtanlü’ [The Surging Emotions – An Interview with Professor Chen Peixun] (心潮逐浪高 – 陈培勋教授访谈录), *Piano Artistry*, 3 (2000), 4-8 (p. 8).

<sup>4</sup> Li's statement comes from an interview by Chen Yong with him, recorded in a journal article. See: Yong Chen, ‘Ji yu Li Yinghai xiansheng de yici fangtan’ [Recording an Interview with Li Yinghai] (记与黎英海先生的一次访谈), *Chinese Music*, 1 (2008), 160-61, 180 (p. 161).

<sup>5</sup> Wang's words come from an interview documented in the appendix of a Master dissertation. See: Jie Song, ‘Wang Jianzhong gangqin zuopin yanjiu’ [Research on Wang Jianzhong's Piano music] (王建中钢琴作品研究) (unpublished Master dissertation, Northwest Normal University, 2003), pp. 47-48.

There is a problem with the idea of Chinese music going into the world: towards which world? Aren't we in this world... This 'going to the world', I don't think in any way means that Chinese music is going to an Africa-centred world, nor to Sri Lanka. It's towards the European and American world, centred on Europe.<sup>6</sup>

The question arises whether these works are always identified as Chinese music or are in fact just a genre of piano music. (Andrew Killick discusses a similar issue in his chapter, 'Composing at the Intersection of East and West: Beyond Nationalism and Exoticism?', about the unequal relationship between the cultural centre of classical music and the secondary status of composers from the periphery.)<sup>7</sup> This is what Dan refers to as his personal musical ambition: to bring Chinese piano works into the mainstream of piano culture. Although the understanding of Chinese piano music from an external perspective is uncertain, from the indigenous perspective, the expression of nationalism in Chinese composers' creative awareness has certainly continued from the twentieth-century history into the contemporary era. Therefore, this research does not simply define the requirement of nationalism through the integration of traditional culture in musical works as a politically invented tradition; it is also a tradition of composition in music for Chinese composers.

## The style of arranging Chinese piano transcriptions

Another aspect of negotiation between the government and composers during the Cultural Revolution was the style in which these piano transcriptions should be arranged. As mentioned above, the initial impetus for the collective practice of Chinese composers adapting piano works based on traditional music during the Cultural Revolution period came from direct governmental demand. But the government's intervention in musical composition stopped there. Politics defined a macro framework for the development of music, whereas the specific micro strategies to achieve the eventual establishment of the macro goals were

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<sup>6</sup> Li's own explanation are recorded in: Yong Chen, 'Recording an Interview with Li Yinghai' p. 161.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew P. Killick, 'Composing at the Intersection of East and West: Beyond Nationalism and Exoticism?', in *Routledge Handbook of Asian Music : Cultural Intersections*, ed. by Lee Tong Soon (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2021), pp. 47-71 (pp. 51-59).

unspecified. In other words, official government documents did not indicate how Chinese composers should use specific compositional methods and techniques to create the piano transcriptions required by the authorities. One possible reason for this is that none of the senior Chinese government officials had a professional background in Western music.<sup>8</sup> So the government could only make demands on composers in terms of a general direction to achieve political ends. This situation left the composers with a large degree of freedom. Among the five musical examples chosen for this research, *Autumn Moon over a Calm Lake*, *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* and *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* follow the conventional approach of adaptation in that the piano transcriptions maintain, to a large extent, the same musical forms as the original works, with several adjustments to the details. For example, the piano version of *Autumn Moon over a Calm Lake* adds two bars of introduction compared with the original *gaohu* version and increases the scale of the coda. The piano version of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* ends with the melody from the theme and a gradually calming mood, replacing the emotional coda from the original revolutionary song. The third section of the piano version of *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon* removes Section C of the original ensemble music and replaces it with a repetition of Section A. However, the other two selected musical examples depart to a greater extent from the original compositions. The piano version of *Music at Sunset* retains some parts of the original *pipa* piece but removes others and adds some new sections with newly created music. The piano transcription of *The Story of a Cowherd* adds seven entire variations and a new coda compared with the original revolutionary song of merely six bars.

As can be seen from these five specific musical examples, Chinese piano transcriptions all present more or less liberal approaches to musical arrangement by the composers. The situation of arranging Chinese piano transcriptions is in contrast to the condition of a transcriber of Western classical music, who usually has to decide what notes to leave out. This is because all but one of the selected Chinese piano transcriptions are based on either monophonic, heterophonic or vocally

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<sup>8</sup> Even though Yu Huiyong who became the Minister of Culture of the PRC from 1975 to 76 was a senior official with a professional Chinese music background, there were no officials with a background in Western music in the government to be able to tell Chinese composers how to write piano transcriptions during the Cultural Revolution.

strophic pieces of traditional Chinese music. In other words, as mentioned above, when Chinese composers arrange piano versions, they always have to add more materials. The question is not whether, but to what degree, the composer adds new elements.

Based on the circumstances of Chinese piano transcriptions, Wei Tingge, a Chinese music scholar studying in the field of musicology and piano art, argues that no Chinese piano transcriptions are identical in musical form to the original works.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, he also suggests that the use of the universal term 'transcription' is inappropriate and inaccurate, and that 'transplantation' (*yizhi*, 移植), 'adaptation' (*gaibian*, 改编) and 'creation' (*bianchuang*, 编创) are required to distinguish specific approaches.<sup>10</sup> A genre in which the original melodies and musical forms are retained to a large extent in the piano versions (the same as the first three musical cases in this research) is defined as the category of 'transplantation'.<sup>11</sup> A genre that preserves melodies and to some extent composes new music based on the original works (such as *Music at Sunset*) is understood as 'adaptation'. Finally, a genre that takes themes and tunes from folk songs and develops them freely in musical forms using modern compositional techniques (e.g. *The Story of a Cowherd*) is defined as the type of 'creation'.<sup>12</sup> Thus, in the context of Chinese piano transcriptions, the arranging styles from Chinese composers have departed from the conventional way of Western piano culture. These piano versions originate from works of the past and the melodies of the original works are still clearly identifiable in the piano music. Yet through the innovative treatment by Chinese composers and the application of modern compositional techniques, Chinese piano transcriptions have become, to a

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<sup>9</sup> Tingge Wei, 'Lun Wangjianzhong de gangqin gangbian qu' [Discussion on Piano Transcriptions arranged by Wang Jianzhong] (论王建中的钢琴改编曲), *Musicology in China*, 2 (1999), 64-73 (p. 66).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Tingge Wei, 'Cong zhongguo gangqin qu kan chuantong yinyue yu dangdai chuanguo de guanxi' [The relationship between Traditional Music and Contemporary Composition in the Context of Chinese Piano Music] (从中国钢琴曲看传统音乐与当代创作的关系), *Musicology in China*, 3 (1987), 79-85 (p. 80).

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 82.



certain degree, independent and mature pieces of piano music. They have endowed traditional and ancient works with the evolving aesthetic standards, values and perceptions of modern society. Their practical significance lies in achieving a successful continuation and development of traditional works which will not disappear into history with the passage of time.

## Approaches to culturally informed piano performance

While the understanding of nationalism and the style of arranging Chinese piano transcriptions from the perspectives of politics and music establishes the theoretical framework of this research, the final step moves to the practical perspective of piano performance of the selected transcriptions. The first concept considered here is the meaning of 'authenticity' in piano performance. In the context of historically informed performance of Western classical music, 'authenticity' often refers to the use of historically accurate instruments and the original musical text as a basis for performing historical repertoires and styles.<sup>13</sup> More deeply, the meaning of 'authenticity' can extend to aspects of the composers' intentions when the works were created, or scholars' historical interpretations of the process of composition. These perspectives could inspire pianists to create their own 'authentic' performances.<sup>14</sup> Alternatively, Gary Tomlinson proposed a more abstract meaning of 'authenticity' in music that looked beyond any particular notations or performances to the context behind the music and its association with human acts in society.<sup>15</sup>

However, in this research, the meaning of 'authentic' approaches to the performance of piano transcriptions is concrete. It first implies a strong relationship between the piano performance approach and the performance forms of the original works. More particularly, in its analysis of *Autumn Moon over a Calm Lake, Red*

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<sup>13</sup> See Nicholas Kenyon, 'Introduction – Authenticity and Early Music: Some Issues and Questions', in *Authenticity and Early Music: A Symposium*, ed. by Nicholas Kenyon (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 1-18.

<sup>14</sup> See Gary Tomlinson, 'The Historian, the Performer, and Authentic Meaning in Music', in *Authenticity and Early Music: A Symposium*, ed. by Nicholas Kenyon (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 115-17.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 118-36.

*Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* and *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon*, the tempo settings suggested in this research are all informed and determined by the performances of the original pieces. The second dimension to define 'authenticity' in this research is to reflect the composers' innovative design in arranging these piano transcriptions, to reveal their compositional thinking in the practice of piano performance. Therefore, when exploring the performance approach of *Music at Sunset*, the analysis emphasises using the piano to convey similar sound effects to the traditional Chinese instruments that the composer Li Yinghai aimed to evoke in his piano writing. The practical analysis of *The Story of a Cowherd* completely rests on the point of narrating the programme story that the composer Dan persistently referenced in the interview conducted by this research.

Even though the concept of 'authenticity' is not completely the same between historically informed performance of Western classical music and this research, the issue raised here is similar: to consider the relationship between theoretical scholarship and piano performance. In this research, the gap has been diminished. The theoretical analysis and research findings in the first step, such as the degree of faithfulness in arranging the piano versions from the original works and the amount of creative invention in the piano versions, guides the final decision of the suggested approaches to performance. Thus, this research applies literature- and practice-based methods synchronously. Furthermore, whether discussing the association between the piano performance approaches and the performance forms of the original works, or demonstrating composers' aims in piano performance (which also reflect traditional Chinese culture in their nationalist aspirations, as discussed), theory and practice combine to reveal an authentic Chinese national identity in these piano transcriptions, and to form a culturally informed approach to their performance. Naturally, different pianists with different backgrounds have their own performing styles in playing these piano transcriptions. The culturally informed approach to performance of these pieces is not the only valid one, but is offered as a new possibility for any pianists worldwide who may favour an approach to performance interpretation founded on the theoretical insights of this research.

## Research findings and limitations

It is fortunate that this research was able to approach the Chinese composer Dan Zhaoyi through an interview to attain rich primary sources for interpreting the piano transcription, *The Story of a Cowherd*. Also, another composer, Chu Wanghua, who was one of the primary composers in the group to arrange *The Yellow River Piano Concerto*, was successfully contacted. Both of them provided valuable sources and historical evidence that have been overlooked or undiscovered in previous studies (more detailed evidence is presented in Chapters 1 and 5).

In discussing the piano recordings of the selected five piano transcriptions by different Chinese pianists, only Yin Chenzong's performance of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* was recorded within the time of the Cultural Revolution period (in 1974), while other recordings consulted in this research were made between the 1980s and the present. In analysing Yin's historical performance, some of his approaches are revealed again in Li Yundi's contemporary recording made in 2011, showing that the style of Yin's historical performance is not necessarily especially different compared with modern recordings. Additionally, because it was hard to find enough historical recordings of the selected transcriptions and due to the lack of sufficient performance evidence, this research planned to approach more Chinese pianists who had performed those pieces during the Cultural Revolution period and included them in their albums in recent years. The intention was to investigate whether they had specific approaches to piano performance restricted by the past politics, or if they changed their performance style in their contemporary albums according to the different times or informed by their awareness as pianists. However, they failed to respond to this research's invitation. This is one of the limitations encountered during the process of this research, and future studies in a similar area could attempt to approach them for more evidence.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, quite a large number of piano transcriptions were arranged during the Cultural Revolution. Due to the length of this thesis and the time limitation of four years for this research, only five piano transcriptions were selected, and all the research findings are drawn from these five works. Therefore, future studies could expand the scope by examining some of the other piano transcriptions made during the Cultural Revolution period. When more transcriptions are

considered in future studies, it may be possible to reach more comprehensive conclusions about the genre of Chinese piano transcriptions arranged in this specific historical time.

In sum, among the perspectives of politics, music theory and piano performance, this research hopes to have shed some light on musical nationalism and Chinese cultural identity in piano pieces, the style of one group of transcriptions and performance approaches informed by Chinese culture.

# Appendix

## Section 1. English Translation of the Chinese Primary Sources Used in Chapter One

### 1.1 A more detailed summary of Mao's discussion at Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art in 1942:<sup>1</sup>

#### 1) The function of culture

Firstly, Mao explains and establishes the military and cultural fronts in the war, the need for literature and art to be an integral part of the entire revolutionary 'machine' and a powerful 'weapon' in armed warfare.

#### 2) The guiding ideology of cultural activities

Mao demands that the ideology literary artists as proletarians are required to construct is a worldview based on Marxism-Leninism. Only by understanding the superstructure of the proletariat and within the framework of this ideology can literary and artistic activities be performed in the 'correct' direction.

#### 3) The service targets of cultural activities

Mao identifies the service objects of literary and artistic activities as the masses of people, which is the fundamental issue and principle of the proletariat's cultural activities. Meanwhile, the proletariat defines the people into four social groups: the working class leading the revolution, the most

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<sup>1</sup> Mao's talks at the Yan'an Forum are summarised and reorganised by the author. The original version can be found: (Chinese version) Zedong Mao, 'Zai Yan'an wenyi zuotanhui shang de jianghua' [Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art (May 1942)] (在延安文艺座谈会上的讲话 (一九四二年五月)), *Marxists*, [n.d.] <<https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-194205.htm>> [accessed 20 October 2022]; (English version) Zedong Mao, 'Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art May 1942', *Marxists*, [n.d.] <[https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3\\_08.htm](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_08.htm)> [accessed 20 October 2022].

numerous peasants in society, the armed forces in the revolution and the urban petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals. Mao also specifies that it is impossible to serve the revolutionary masses by adhering to an individualistic bourgeois position. Therefore literary and artistic workers must penetrate the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, standing in the proletariat's position to serve the masses

#### 4) Pathways and approaches to cultural creation

Having clarified the target audiences, Mao indicates a particular way in which art serves the people: from the sources of artistic creation ultimately to the popularisation of cultural works among social groups. Mao believes that the raw materials for literary and artistic creation exist in the lives of the people and stresses that they are the only inexhaustible sources of all creations of literature and art. 'China's revolutionary writers and artists, writers and artists of promise, must go among the masses; they must for a long period of time unreservedly and whole-heartedly go among the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, go into the heat of the struggle, go to the only source, the broadest and richest source, in order to observe, experience, study and analyse all the different kinds of people, all the classes, all the masses, all the vivid patterns of life and struggle, all the raw materials of literature and art. Only then can they proceed to creative work.' In general, in a proletarian society, artists need to be closely aligned with and express the masses, putting their real life into creative procedure and thus forming cultural products in conceptual form. On this basis, Mao also indicates that the real life reflected in literary and artistic works should be deeper and more typical than actual situations: artists concentrate on real phenomena, and then creatively typify the contradictions and struggles in them, finally putting them into the content of works to achieve the aim of influencing people's psychology and thoughts and feelings. Furthermore, Mao identifies the problem of peasants and workers as that they are historically undereducated and therefore an urgent need for a general cultural enlightenment movement. The cultural works created by using the materials of their lives solve the problem of the masses' inability to

understand and appreciate artworks, thus reaching the goal of popularising proletarian art.

#### 5) The relationship between culture and politics

Mao believed that all cultures in the world belonged to a particular class and that a culture created only for the sake of art was impossible. Proletarian art, therefore, is part of the whole revolutionary cause of the proletariat.

‘Literature and art are subordinate to politics, but in their turn exert a great influence on politics’. It is requested to obey and fulfil the political tasks of the party in the different revolutionary periods.

#### 6) Criteria for literary and artistic criticism

Mao considers that there are two standards of literary and artistic criticism, political and artistic criteria. On the one hand, in the context of politics, the fundamental problems of real society are then the political criteria for examining literature and art. On the other hand, criticism according to artistic criteria, Mao argues that the creation of literature and art must be adapted to the demands of the revolutionary struggle of the masses. In Mao's ideology, artistic and political criteria are merged into one, and artistic criteria are also subordinate to political criteria and serve political ends. Meanwhile, Mao demonstrates the relationship between motivation and the effect of cultural creation: the standard for examining an artist's motivations is the effect works produce in society (social practice). Specifically, the politics of the proletariat demands a people-centred revolution. The motives for the creation of cultural products must be situated in this context. Achieving good results in social practice requires the use of appropriate means of expression. Therefore, liberalism, individualism, pessimism and any ideology linked to the bourgeoisie which is contrary to the revolution and construction of the proletariat, are forbidden expressions of proletarian cultural creation. The cultural activity of the proletariat must have politics as its basic task, thus realising the unity of politics and art, content and form.

## 7) The content of literary and artistic works

Mao considered it undesirable for intellectuals (cultural workers) to express their personal creative ideas in their works. However, works must serve politics and proclaim the political ideas of the proletariat. Also, Mao illuminates the reason for the need for cultural creation: audiences no longer need to repeat old stories from history, but to see new characters and the world from the revolution that are linked to reality.



## 1.2 The selected words from Chairman Mao's Talk to Music Workers on 24 August 1956:<sup>2</sup>

- 1) The fundamentals of art have their commonality, but the forms of expression have to be diverse, with national forms and styles... It is wrong to say that there are no regulations for Chinese national things... Chinese language, music and painting, all have their own laws.... Music always has to feature national characteristics, its own particular style, and be unique.

We certainly advocate national music. As Chinese people, it is not possible not to promote Chinese music.

- 2) In China, the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism have to be combined with the revolutionary reality of China. The October Revolution was the national form of the Russian Revolution. The content of socialism, in its national form, is as true in politics as it is in art. The general musical principles from the West have to be combined with the reality of China, so that a very rich variety of expressions can be produced.

Dogmatism has to be opposed. In politics, we have suffered. Learning everything from Russia as dogma resulted in a big failure.

- 3) We should critically assimilate the useful elements of the West based on China's own.

Music can employ foreign reasonable principles and can be played on foreign instruments... Instruments are tools. Of course, it matters if the instrument is good or bad, but the essence is how the instrument is used. Foreign instruments can be used, but compositions cannot be copied from the West.

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<sup>2</sup> Mao's words presented here are reorganised by the author. The original version and complete content of Mao's Talk to Music Workers can be found in: Zedong Mao, *Jianguo yilai Mao Zedong wengao diliu ce*) [Mao Zedong's Documents Since the Founding of the PRC Book Six] (建国以来毛泽东文稿 第六册), pp. 175-85. Marxists Internet Archive.

Chinese culture should be developed. It is not good if [we] can't listen to foreign music or play it... [We] have to learn from foreign countries and learn to compose Chinese things.

Don't be afraid of performing some foreign music. Playing it does not make our own music extinct, but our music continues to develop. If we can absorb foreign music and its strengths, it will be beneficial to us. It is wrong to culturally reject everything foreign or to absorb it all.

By accepting foreign strengths, we will be able to leap forward on our own. The Chinese and the foreign should be combined 'organically', rather than copying Western things. [We] learn from foreign ways of knitting hats, to knit Chinese hats. Whatever is useful in foreign countries should be learnt and used to improve and develop Chinese things, to create something new and uniquely Chinese.

[We have to] acknowledge that the modern West has advanced a step forward. Not to admit this, only to say that they are dogmatic, cannot convince people... [We should] value national things and not westernise them all. We should learn from their strengths to create something of our own with a unique national style. In this way reasoning can be made sense, and only then will we not lose our national confidence.

- 4) It would be detrimental to the revolutionary cause if the question of the bourgeoisie, of the intelligentsia, was not addressed properly.... The bourgeoisie is superior to the other classes in these aspects of modern culture, and modern technology. Therefore they must be united and converted. Many of the musicians were bourgeois in their ideology. Those of us who did used to be like that too. But we have turned from that, so why shouldn't they come over? In fact, many have already come. It is in the interests of the revolutionary cause that the working class unite them. We have to unite them and help them to reform.

### 1.3 The Selected Words from Yin Chengzong himself:

#### 1.3.1 Yin's explanation of studying at the Leningrad Conservatory from 1960 and his return to China in 1963:

In 1960 I went to study at the Leningrad Conservatory as planned... The Leningrad Conservatory was the oldest and largest music college in the Soviet Union at the time. Tchaikovsky graduated from here. Shostakovich was there during the time [I studied at the conservatory], and I still have a photograph of myself with him... The original programme in the Soviet Union was for five years, ending in 1965. However, in 1963 we returned to China for 'anti-revisionist studies'. As I came back from this competition (Yin won the second place in the Second Tchaikovsky Piano Competition in Moscow on behalf of China in 1962), I was transferred to the Central Conservatory of Music under the pretext of 'protection'. I later learned that the reason I was not allowed to continue to go back to the Soviet Union was because I was suspected of 'defecting'. Perhaps due to the 'Fou Ts'ong incident', China was more sensitive to our going abroad to study the piano.<sup>3</sup>

#### 1.3.2 Yin's words sharing the story when the piano was criticised in Chinese society:

At the time of the Cultural Revolution, I couldn't understand why our Chinese didn't want the piano. It was such a good instrument. Because [this trend of thought] started in 1958... In 1958, we debated in school whether the piano or the erhu was useful. Because at that time, we were all required to go to the steelmaking furnaces...they could play the traditional Chinese instrument there, but we couldn't play for the workers. But I always insisted [on not abandoning the piano].<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Sanlian Life Weekly, 'Yin Chengzong: wo jingli de gangqin "geming" niandai' [My Experience in the Revolutionary Era for the Piano] (殷承宗: 我经历的钢琴“革命”年代), *Sohu*, 2007 <[https://www.sohu.com/a/253643490\\_276648](https://www.sohu.com/a/253643490_276648)> [accessed 31 October 2022].

<sup>4</sup> Ifeng, 'Yin Chengzong: wo gao yanbanxi bingfei quyue Jiang Qing' [Yin Chengzong: I Did the Work for the Model Opera not to Please Jiang Qing] (殷承宗: 我搞样板戏并非为取悦江青), *Ifeng*, 2013

After the start of the revolution, the ‘theory of the death of the piano’ once again erupted in general. In Beijing, Shanghai and many other cities, pianos were crushed or confiscated and locked up in some places. In some churches in Beijing at that time, pianos were piled up like mountains. I was very unconvinced and had the simple idea that I had to prove that the Chinese people still needed the piano and that they could still be of service to the times.<sup>5</sup>

### 1.3.3 The situation of Yin performing the piano in Tiananmen Square:

I didn't know what would happen if I went to Tiananmen Square to play the piano, whether it would be acceptable or smashed. So we all went with shaving our heads clearly, dressed as Red Guards and wearing armbands. We were there for three days - at first I played Chairman Mao's quotations songs, followed by songs I arranged from the countryside's new folk songs. With our performing and singing, audiences grew gradually – thousands of people gathering almost every day! There were also many people ordering their preferred songs.<sup>6</sup>

One of the audiences asked at the time if I could play a Peking opera on the piano. I started to think how was that possible? Peking opera is so complex, with singing, reading, acting and playing. Merely the percussion accompaniment even can't be arranged on the piano. But since there was such a demand for it, why not give it a try? I didn't know anything professionally about Peking Opera at the time. But the Central Philharmonic had already done the *Shajiang* Symphony project and I was familiar with the tune, so (after the first day) I went back and arranged one section of *Shajiang*'s music on the piano from memory. On the second day, I found

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<[http://phtv.ifeng.com/program/mrmdm/detail\\_2013\\_10/07/30098549\\_0.shtml](http://phtv.ifeng.com/program/mrmdm/detail_2013_10/07/30098549_0.shtml)> [accessed 2 November 2022].

<sup>5</sup> Sanlian Life Weekly, ‘My Experience in the Revolutionary Era for the Piano’.

<sup>6</sup> Xinghai Concert Hall, ‘Yin Chengzong: zhiyao hai keyi tan gangqin’ [Yin Chengzong: As Long as I can Still Play the Piano] (殷承宗: 只要还可以弹钢琴), *Xinghai Concert Hall*, [n.d.] <<https://www.concerthall.com.cn/newpage.php?id=6958>> [accessed 31 October 2022].

someone who could sing the opera and went to Tiananmen Square to play and sing. By the third day, audiences were already in the thousands. The responses on site were overwhelming and the letters from people sent to the philharmonic a few days later were incredibly enormous. We were all very excited and felt that this was a 'revolutionary movement'. During this time we carried the piano toured on the street around the whole city of Beijing. I attained the conclusion that Chinese people needed the piano from their enthusiastic feedback. So I wrote many documents to a high rank, and words from them expected me to do more composing.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Sanlian Life Weekly, 'My Experience in the Revolutionary Era for the Piano'.

## 1.4 The detailed words of reporting about The Piano

Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* from the People's Daily during the week between 1 July to 7 July:

### 1) The report from Xinhua News:

The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* jointly composed by the Central Philharmonic and the revolutionary literary workers of China Peking Opera Troupe, was guided under the shining light of the great leader Chairman Mao's glorious thoughts that literature and art serve the workers, peasants and soldiers and that 'making the past to serve the present and making foreign things to serve China', as well as on the instructions of Comrade Jiang Qing... Under the auspicious situation of the proletarian Cultural Revolution, the revolutionary literary 'fighters' demonstrated their fearless spirit of revolutionary initiative, dispelling superstition, daring to think, act and revolutionise... The piano, a Western instrument, was first introduced to the Peking Opera stage. The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern*, not only retains the characteristics of Peking Opera singing but also exerts the broad range, majestic and expressive characteristics of the piano to the fullest extent, better accentuating and portraying the heroic images of Li Yuhe and Li Tiemei (two characters from the opera story). This successful attempt to use foreign things to serve China is a new creation and variety of revolutionary proletarian literature and art, building a new path for Western instruments and symphonic music, as well as a form of accompaniment to theatre arts in our great motherland. It fully illustrates the powerful vitality of the new revolutionary proletarian literature and art, and once again presents the incomparable power of revolutionary proletarian literature and art line constructed by Chairman Mao!<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Xinhua News, 'Zai zhanwu busheng de Mao Zedong sixiang de guanghui zhaoyao xia wuchan jieji geming wenyi de xin pinzhong gangqin banchang hongdengji dansheng zhongyang wenhua geming xiaozu tongzhi jiejian yan chu ren yuan' [Under the Light of the Invincible Mao Zedong's Thoughts, a New Genre of Proletarian Revolutionary Literature and Art with The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* Created, Comrades of the Central Cultural Revolutionary Group Meeting the Performers] (在战无不胜的毛泽东思想的光辉

2) Review by Wang Wenyue, a worker from a factory:

We workers were all very excited when we listened to The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern*. It expresses the feelings of our working class. It is a stirring ode to Mao Zedong's thoughts, a great flower of proletarian literature and art. The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern*... succeeded in creating a glorious image of the proletarian heroes... What kind of stuff did the piano play in the past? It was all about the thoughts and feelings of foreign lords and ladies, but not at all about the workers and peasants. Today, under the light of Chairman Mao's revolutionary literary line, under the leadership of Comrade Jiang Qing, a new genre of proletarian literature and art has been created. It pioneers the new paths for symphonic music, Western instruments and accompaniment to theatre arts. The eight model operas opened a new chapter in the history of human literature and art, and The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* has added another flower to the garden of proletarian revolutionary literature and art. We enthusiastically hail the birth of this work and the great triumph of Mao Zedong's thoughts.<sup>9</sup>

3) Words by Yang Bofang from People's Commune:

A new genre of proletarian revolutionary literature and art was born with The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern*. In the past few days, we have listened to it several times on the radio, and the commune has even organised for poor peasants to listen to it. The more we listened to it, the more we liked it. We were not familiar with the piano. We merely heard it on the radio a few times before... We didn't understand it at all... The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* is very different, and from the bottom of our hearts, we understand it and

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照耀下 无产阶级革命文艺的新品种钢琴伴唱《红灯记》诞生 中央文化革命小组同志接见演出人员), *People's Daily*, 2 July 1968, 2nd section.

<sup>9</sup> Wenyue Wang, 'Yangguang yulu yu xinhua – gongnongbing, geming wenyi zhanshi relie zanyang gangqin banchang hongdengji' [Sunshine and Rain Nourish New Flowers - Enthusiastic Praise from Workers, Peasants and Revolutionary Literary Soldiers on The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern*] (阳光雨露育新花 – 工农兵、革命文艺战士热烈赞扬钢琴伴唱《红灯记》), *People's Daily*, 4 July 1968, 3rd section.

love it. The piano is a foreign instrument, but today it can serve the workers, peasants and soldiers and contribute to socialist construction. This is another great triumph of Chairman Mao's ideology of 'using the past to serve the present and the foreign things to serve China'. It is the result of Comrade Jiang Qing's efforts to break the foreign framework, to expose the old dogmas and to nurture [cultural works] carefully. We poor peasants applauded for such good music a thousand times. In the final conclusion, it is beneficial from Chairman Mao, his thoughts, and his proletarian revolutionary line! The great proletarian Cultural Revolution is good! It has created a brand new path of practising Mao's ideology of 'using the past to serve the present and the foreign things to serve China'.<sup>10</sup>

4) Comments from Li Jiefu, a contemporary Chinese composer and social revolutionist:

The composition of The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern* achieved the unity of revolutionary political content and perfect artistic form... The birth of this work established a model and opened the way for piano art to serve the workers, peasants and soldiers and to serve the proletariat politically. Another chance fully expresses the powerful vitality of the new proletarian revolutionary literature and art and demonstrates the incomparable power of proletarian revolutionary literature and art line set by Chairman Mao!<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Bofang Yang, 'Sunshine and Rain Nourish New Flowers - Enthusiastic Praise from Workers, Peasants and Revolutionary Literary Soldiers on The Piano Accompaniment to *The Red Lantern*'.

<sup>11</sup> Huiyong Yu, 'Huanhu Mao zhuxi geming wenyi luxian de xin shengli' [Celebrating the New Victory of Revolutionary Literary Line Built by Chairman Mao] (欢呼毛主席革命文艺路线的新胜利), *People's Daily*, 6 July 1968, 2nd section.



## 1.5 The words by the Chinese composer, Chu Wanghua:

### 1.5.1 The detailed words from Chu when he saw Chen's big-character poster and began to work with Yin when they started to arrange the *Yellow River* piano concerto in 1968:

Chen Lian wrote a letter to Chairman Mao in September 1964 and was instructed by Mao on 27 September, requiring to make the past serve the present and make foreign things serve China. Then, Chen was received by Jiang Qing in October. Four years later, in October 1968, Chen wrote some of the original words that Jiang said during the meeting and published them in a big-character poster on the wall of the Central Conservatory of Music. I then saw this poster. It said – Jiang considered that the *Yellow River* Cantata was so magnificent and it could be written as a piano concerto. I immediately phoned Yin Chengzong. Yin and I were classmates at the Central Conservatory of Music, and collaborated to compose music together before. At that time, he was a soloist working in the Central Philharmonic. Both as pianists and composers who wrote works for the piano, we were very excited to see this poster. Yin proposed to go to Chen immediately. Chen expressed her supportive attitude at that time, saying that we were now going to undertake a piano revolution and endeavour for the nationalisation of the piano. Soon afterwards, Yin wrote a formal report to Jiang Qing, indicating our plans for this piano concerto and expecting to receive Jiang's commission. Jiang then gave her approval to the report, stating that *The Yellow River* Cantata was very good and powerful and that the music could be reserved without original lyrics.<sup>12</sup>

### 1.5.2 Chu's recall of the first version of the concerto auditioned:

Everyone was quite happy to hear it, as it had been a long time since we had heard a new piece played and composed. Towards the end, Li Delun made a different comment. He felt that there was something wrong with our creative

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<sup>12</sup> Chu's words come from his online masterclass, 'The Little-known Story of the Birth of the *Yellow River* Piano Concerto', on 23 May 2021.

thinking. We were too much in our heads with the foreign model. The first movement of the concerto was written in the sonata form. Li believed that it was wrong for us to write in this style in accordance with Western compositional techniques because Chinese people would not understand it. We should smash the foreign frames in our heads. Our second version, the one we hear now, is no longer arranged based on the Western convention [of a piano concerto], but is more like a suite in its structure. In other words, the main movements of *The Yellow River Cantata* are arranged on the piano. This has the advantage of staying loyal to the original composition by Xian and not breaking the original melodic development.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> From Chu's masterclass.

## Section 2. Two Ancient Chinese Poems Related to Musical Expression Discussed in Chapter Four

2.1.1 The poem, *Song of a Pipa Player*, the translated English version:<sup>14</sup>

One night by riverside I bade a friend goodbye;  
In maple leaves and rushes autumn seemed to sigh.  
My friend and I dismounted and came into the boat;  
Without flute songs we drank our cups with heavy heart;  
The moonbeams blended with water when we were to part.  
Suddenly o'er the stream we heard a pipa sound;  
I forgot to go home and the guest stood spell-bound.  
We followed where the music led to find the player,  
But heard the pipa stop and no music in the air.  
We moved our boat towards the one whence came the strain,  
Brought back the lamp, asked for more wine and drank again.  
Repeatedly we called for the fair player still.  
She came, her face half hidden behind a pipa still.  
She turned the pegs and tested twice or thrice each string;

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<sup>14</sup> This translated version is from a Chinese translator, Xu Zhouchong who is a professor working at the Peking University. See: Docin, 'Xu Zhouchong yingyu yiwen pipa xing' [English Translated Version of *Song of a Pipa Player* by Xu Zhouchong] (许渊冲英语译文琵琶行), Docin, 2011 <<https://www.docin.com/p-217597478.html>> [accessed 8 August 2020].

Before a tune was played we heard her feelings sing.  
Each string she plucked, each note she struck with pathos strong,  
All seemed to say she'd missed her dreams all her life long.  
Head bent, she played with unpremeditated art  
On and on to pour out her overflowing heart.  
She lightly plucked, slowly stroked and twanged loud  
The song of 'Green Waist' after that of 'Rainbow Cloud'.  
The thick strings loudly thrummed like the pattering rain;  
The fine strings softly tinkled in a murmuring strain.  
When mingling loud and soft notes were together played,  
You heard orioles warble in a flowery land,  
Then a sobbing stream run along a beach of sand.  
But the stream seemed so cold as to tighten the string;  
From tightened strings no more song could be heard to sing.  
Still we heard hidden grief and vague regret concealed;  
Then music expressed far less than silence revealed.  
Suddenly we heard water burst a silver jar,  
And the clash of spears and sabres come from afar.  
She made a central sweep when the music was ending;  
The four strings made one sound, as if silk one was rending.  
Silence reigned left and right of the boat, east and west;

We saw but autumn moon white in the river's breast.  
She slid the plectrum pensively between the strings,  
Smoothed out her dress and rose with a composed mien.  
'I spent,' she said, in the capital my early springs,  
Where at the foot of Mount of Toads my home had been.  
At thirteen I learned on the pipa how to play,  
And my name was among the primas of the day.  
I won my master's admiration for my skill;  
My beauty was envied by songstresses fair still.  
The gallant young men vied to shower gifts on me;  
One tune played, countless silk rolls were given with glee.  
Beating time, I let silver comb and pin drop down,  
And spilt-out wine oft stained my blood-red silken gown.  
From year to year I laughed my joyous life away  
On moonlit autumn light as windy vernal day.  
My younger brother left for war, and died my maid;  
Days passed, nights came, and my beauty began to fade.  
Fewer and fewer were cabs and steeds at my door;  
I married a smug merchant when my prime was o'er.  
The merchant cared for money much more than for me;  
One month ago he went away to purchase tea,

Leaving his lonely wife alone in empty boat;  
Shrouded in moonlight, on the cold river I float.  
Deep in the night I dreams of happy bygone years,  
And woke to find my rouged face crisscrossed with tears.”  
Listening to her story, I signed again and again.  
Both of us in misfortune go from shore to shore.  
Meeting now, need we have known each other before?  
“I was banished from the capital last year  
To live degraded and ill in this city here.  
The city’s too remote to know melodious song,  
So I have never heard music all the yearlong.  
I dwell by riverbank on a low and damp ground  
In a house with wild reeds and stunted bamboos around.  
What is here to be heard from daybreak till nightfall  
But gibbon’s cry and cuckoo’s homeward-going call?  
By blooming riverside and under autumn moon  
I’ve often taken wine up and drunk it alone.  
Thought I have mountain songs and village pipes to hear,  
Yet they are crude and strident and grate on the ear.  
Listening to you playing on pipa tonight,  
With your music divine e’en my hearing seems bright.

Will you sit down and play for us a tune once more?

I'll write for you an ode to the pipa I adore."

Touched by what I said, the player stood for long,

Then sat down, tore at strings and played another song.

So sad, so drear, so different, it moved us deep;

Those who heard it hid the face and began to weep.

Of all the company at table who wept most?

It was none other than the exiled blue-robed host.

## 2.1.2 The poem, *Song of a Pipa Player*, the Chinese version:<sup>15</sup>

浔阳江头夜送客，枫叶荻花秋瑟瑟。  
主人下马客在船，举酒欲饮无管弦。  
醉不成欢惨将别，别时茫茫江浸月。  
忽闻水上琵琶声，主人忘归客不发。  
寻声暗问弹者谁，琵琶声停欲语迟。  
移船相近邀相见，添酒回灯重开宴。  
千呼万唤始出来，犹抱琵琶半遮面。  
转轴拨弦三两声，未成曲调先有情。  
弦弦掩抑声声思，似诉平生不得志。  
低眉信手续续弹，说尽心中无限事。  
轻拢慢捻抹复挑，初为《霓裳》后《六么》。  
大弦嘈嘈如急雨，小弦切切如私语。  
嘈嘈切切错杂弹，大珠小珠落玉盘。  
间关莺语花底滑，幽咽泉流冰下难。  
冰泉冷涩弦凝绝，凝绝不通声暂歇。  
别有幽愁暗恨生，此时无声胜有声。  
银瓶乍破水浆迸，铁骑突出刀枪鸣。  
曲终收拨当心画，四弦一声如裂帛。  
东船西舫悄无言，唯见江心秋月白。  
沉吟放拨插弦中，整顿衣裳起敛容。  
自言本是京城女，家在虾蟆陵下住。  
十三学得琵琶成，名属教坊第一部。

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<sup>15</sup> Juyi Bai, 'Pipa xing' [Song of a Pipa Player] (琵琶行), *Gushiwen*, [n.d.]  
<[https://so.gushiwen.cn/shiwenv\\_0581b0ba8bb4.aspx](https://so.gushiwen.cn/shiwenv_0581b0ba8bb4.aspx)> [accessed 8 August 2020].



曲罢曾教善才服，妆成每被秋娘妒。  
五陵年少争缠头，一曲红绡不知数。  
钿头银篦击节碎，血色罗裙翻酒污。  
今年欢笑复明年，秋月春风等闲度。  
弟走从军阿姨死，暮去朝来颜色故。  
门前冷落鞍马稀，老大嫁作商人妇。  
商人重利轻别离，前月浮梁买茶去。  
去来江口守空船，绕船月明江水寒。  
夜深忽梦少年事，梦啼妆泪红阑干。  
我闻琵琶已叹息，又闻此语重唧唧。  
同是天涯沦落人，相逢何必曾相识！  
我从去年辞帝京，谪居卧病浔阳城。  
浔阳地僻无音乐，终岁不闻丝竹声。  
住近湓江地低湿，黄芦苦竹绕宅生。  
其间旦暮闻何物？杜鹃啼血猿哀鸣。  
春江花朝秋月夜，往往取酒还独倾。  
岂无山歌与村笛，呕哑嘲哳难为听。  
今夜闻君琵琶语，如听仙乐耳暂明。  
莫辞更坐弹一曲，为君翻作《琵琶行》。  
感我此言良久立，却坐促弦弦转急。  
凄凄不似向前声，满座重闻皆掩泣。  
座中泣下谁最多？江州司马青衫湿。

2.2.1 The poem, *Spring, River, Flower, Moon, Night (A Moonlit Spring Night on the River)*, the translated English version:<sup>16</sup>

The spring river swells, level with the sea  
Wherein, the moon rises with tide, so fair.  
Her light follows waves for ten thousand li,  
And the spring river is bright everywhere.  
The river winds across a fragrant mead;  
The moon snows the blooms with her snowy light.  
Of hoarfrost in the air one takes no heed,  
And on the shoal you fail to see sand white.  
No dust, of one hue are river and sky;  
So lone, the moon above shines bright and bright.  
Who riverside did the moon first espy?  
To whom the moon riverside first shed light?  
From older generations new ones grow  
And find the moon this year just like that last.  
For whom the moon's waiting for I don't know  
And only see the river flowing past.  
Away, away floats a wisp of cloud white;

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<sup>16</sup> This English version is translated from a Chinese translator, Zhao Yanchun who works as a professor at the Tianjin Foreign Studies University: Yanchun Zhao, 'Zhao Yanchun yingyi *Chun jiang hua yue ye*' [Zhao Yanchun's English version of *Spring, River, Flower, Moon, Night*] (赵彦春英译《春江花月夜》), *Sina*, 2012  
<[http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_698085bf0102e10f.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_698085bf0102e10f.html)>[accessed 24 July 2020].

On the Green Maple Shoal I feel so sad.  
Who's rowing a canoe against the night?  
Who's by a moonlit rail missing her lad?  
Over her roof the moon lingers to stay  
And illumines her dresser through the door.  
The screen rolled down, the light won't go away;  
Brushed off the block, it comes along once more.  
They gaze far, each out of the other's sight  
She'd go with the moonbeams to fondle him.  
But wild geese can never outfly the light.  
Nor can fish leap over the ocean's brim.  
Last night some flowers fell he had a dream;  
Though spring's half over, he can't go back yet.  
Spring's fleeting off with the water downstream  
And the moon's westering again to set.  
The slanting moon looms amid the sea brume;  
From him to her stretches an endless way.  
How many can by moonlight return home?  
The moon moves the riverside trees to sway.

## 2.2.2 The poem, *A Moonlit Spring Night on the River*, the Chinese version:<sup>17</sup>

春江潮水连海平，海上明月共潮生。  
滟滟随波千万里，何处春江无月明。  
江流宛转绕芳甸，月照花林皆似霰。  
空里流霜不觉飞，汀上白沙看不见。  
江天一色无纤尘，皎皎空中孤月轮。  
江畔何人初见月？江月何年初照人？  
人生代代无穷已，江月年年望相似。  
不知江月待何人，但见长江送流水。  
白云一片去悠悠，青枫浦上不胜愁。  
谁家今夜扁舟子？何处相思明月楼？  
可怜楼上月裴回，应照离人妆镜台。  
玉户帘中卷不去，捣衣砧上拂还来。  
此时相望不相闻，愿逐月华流照君。  
鸿雁长飞光不度，鱼龙潜跃水成文。  
昨夜闲潭梦落花，可怜春半不还家。  
江水流春去欲尽，江潭落月复西斜。  
斜月沉沉藏海雾，碣石潇湘无限路。  
不知乘月几人归，落月摇情满江树

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<sup>17</sup> Ruoxu Zhang, 'Chun jiang hua yue ye' [A Moonlit Spring Night on the River] (春江花月夜) *Gushiwen*, [n.d.]  
<[https://so.gushiwen.cn/shiwenv\\_3aed26d1fa99.aspx](https://so.gushiwen.cn/shiwenv_3aed26d1fa99.aspx)> [accessed 8 August 2020].

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# List of Recordings

(of the five selected pieces)

## Recordings of *Autumn over the Calm Lake*

1. Lü Wencheng's *gaohu* performance:

Jun, Ng Rui, *Autumn Moon Over a Calm Lake (Guangdong Gaohu) - Lü Wencheng*, online video recording, YouTube, 12 July 2020, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsAEZQRMop4>> [accessed 31 May 2023]

2. Yu Qiwei's *gaohu* performance

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3. Bao Huiqiao's piano performance

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4. Yin Chengzong's piano performance

Yin, Chengzong, 'Pinghui qiuyue' [*Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake*] (平湖秋月), *Minren minqu (shidie zhuang)* [Celebrated Composers and Compositions (Ten CDs)] (名人名曲 (十碟装)) (Pacific Audio & Video Cooperation, 2000) [on CD]

5. Lang Lang's piano performance

Lang, Lang, *Wencheng: Autumn Moon on the Calm Lake*, online video recording, YouTube, 23 August 2018, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rv01hstNEpo>> [accessed 30 January 2022]

6. Chen Jie's piano performance

Chen, Jie, *Pinghu qiu yue (Chen Jie yanzou) [Autumn Moon over the Calm Lake (Chen Jie's Performance)]* (平湖秋月 (陈洁演奏)), online audio recording, HQGQ, 20 December 2013, <[https://www.hqqq.com/song/album\\_show/35](https://www.hqqq.com/song/album_show/35)> [accessed 30 January 2022]

## Recordings of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain*

1. The first performance of the revolutionary song in 1971

Bilibili, [*Shanbei minzu tese nvgaoyin*] 1971 nain Yang Qiao lingchang <*shandandan kaihua hongyanyan*> luyin (*Shanxi gewu juyuan guanxian yuedui banzou hechangdui yanchang*) [The Characteristic Soprano from Northern Shaanxi, the Recording of *Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain* with Yang Qiao as the Leading Singer (Accompanied by the Orchestra and Chorus of Shaanxi Provincial Opera and Dance Theatre)] ([*陕北特色民族女高音*] 1971 年杨巧领唱 《山丹丹开花红艳艳》录音 (陕西舞剧院管弦乐队伴奏 合唱队演唱)), online video recording, Bilibili, 1 December 2022, <[https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV1wg411W7Ed/?spm\\_id\\_from=333.788.recomm\\_end\\_more\\_video.0](https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV1wg411W7Ed/?spm_id_from=333.788.recomm_end_more_video.0)> [accessed 15 May 2023]

2. Yin Chengzong's piano performance

Yin, Chengzong, *Chinese Music - Piano - Red Lilies Crimson and Bright* 山丹丹开花红艳艳, online video recording, YouTube, 24 February 2011, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTcN3WnK6nY&list=PLNjq3V-mrn0PfYrd4BhfV5ulVq7TWihCi&index=2>> [accessed 10 September 2021]

3. Li Yundi's piano performance

Yundi – Zhuti (主题), *Glowing Red Morningstar Lilies*, online video recording, YouTube, 15 April 2015, <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPMqICtr9MI&list=OLAK5uy\\_mCONgdm3w7sAXj8ADDCrvN7LesAClbsAo&index=6](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPMqICtr9MI&list=OLAK5uy_mCONgdm3w7sAXj8ADDCrvN7LesAClbsAo&index=6)> [accessed 10 September 2021]

4. Chen Jie's piano performance

Chen, Jie, *Shandandan kaihua hongyanyan (Chen Jie yanzou)* [*Red Lilies Glowing on the Mountain (Chen Jie's Performance)*] (《山丹丹开花红艳艳》(陈洁演奏)) online audio recording, HQGQ, 20 December 2013, <[https://www.hqqq.com/song/album\\_show/35](https://www.hqqq.com/song/album_show/35)> [accessed 10 September 2021]

## Recordings of *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon*

1. Traditional ensemble performance by EMI Traditional Orchestra

Chan, H M, *Caiyun zhuiyue – baidai guoyuedui hezou (1935)* [*Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon – Performed by EMI Traditional Orchestra (1935)*] (彩云追月 – 百代国乐队合奏 (1935)), online video recording, YouTube, 7 August 2020, <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2YGXMF48\\_w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2YGXMF48_w)> [accessed 19 May 2023]

2. Yin Chengzong's piano performance

Zhou, Wenzheng, *Caiyun zhuiyue (Guangdong yinyue/ Wang Jianzhong & Yin Chengzong, bianqu)* [*Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon (Cantonese Music/ Wang Jianzhong & Yin Chengzong for the Arrangement)*] (彩雲追月 (廣東音樂 / 王建中 & 殷承宗, 編曲)), online video recording, YouTube, 23 February 2021, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBCMjx0qcEw>> [accessed 19 May 2023]

3. Chen Jie's piano performance

Chen, Jie, *Caiyun zhuiyue (Chen Jie yanzou)* [*Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon (Chen Jie's Performance)*] (彩云追月 (陈洁演奏)), online audio recording, HQGQ, 20 December 2013, <[https://www.hqqq.com/song/album\\_show/35](https://www.hqqq.com/song/album_show/35)> [accessed 2021]

4. Li Yundi's piano performance

Yundi – Zhuti (主题), *Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon*, online video recording, YouTube, 15 April 2015, <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p6HKu1BVV&list=OLAK5uy\\_mCONgdm3w7sAXj8ADDCrvN7LesAClbsAo&index=11](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4p6HKu1BVV&list=OLAK5uy_mCONgdm3w7sAXj8ADDCrvN7LesAClbsAo&index=11)> [accessed 5 March 2021]

5. Xu Lujia's piano performance

Professor Xu Lujia, *Caiyun zhuiyue, zhu dajia haomeng* [*Colourful Clouds Chasing the Moon, and Wish Everyone a Good Night*] (《彩云追月》, 祝大家好梦), online audio recording, Xiaohongshu, 18 July 2020, <[https://www.xiaohongshu.com/discovery/item/5f129eb700000000010012cb?xhs\\_share=CopyLink&appuid=5ac5f31ae8ac2b1b0b116679&apptime=1613558808](https://www.xiaohongshu.com/discovery/item/5f129eb700000000010012cb?xhs_share=CopyLink&appuid=5ac5f31ae8ac2b1b0b116679&apptime=1613558808)> [accessed 18 February 2021]

## Recordings of *Music at Sunset*

1. Xu Lujia's piano performance

90-Year-Old Pianist, Xu Lujia, *Chunjianghuayueye – gangqin yanzou Xu Lujia* [*A Moonlit Spring Night on the River – Piano Performance by Xu Lujia*] (春江花月夜 - 钢琴演奏 许路加), online video recording, YouTube, 28 April 2020, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDnqrWNfeTY&feature=youtu.be>> [accessed 26 July 2020]

2. Chen Jie's piano performance

Chen, Jie, 'Xiyang xiaogu' [*Music at Sunset*] (夕阳箫鼓), *Zhongguo gangqin mingqu* [*Chinese Piano Favourites*] (中国钢琴名曲) (NAXOS, 2013) [on CD]

### 3. Li Yun's piano performance

Li, Yun, 'Xiyang xiaogu' [Music at Sunset] (夕阳箫鼓), *Li Yinghai gangqin zuopin xuanji* [Li Yinghai Piano Works] (黎英海钢琴作品选集) (the Central Conservatory of Music and Beijing Global Audio & Video Company, 2002) [on CD]

## Recordings of The Story of A Cowherd

### 1. Gu Jingdan's piano performance

Gu, Jingdan, 'Fangniu wa'er de gushi' [*The Story of a Cowherd*] (放牛娃儿的故), *Dan Zhaoyi gangqin zuopin xuanji* [*Dan Zhaoyi's Selected Piano Works*] (但昭义钢琴作品选集) (Shanghai Music Publishing House & Shanghai Literature & Art Audio-Visual Electronic Publishing House, 2011) [on CD]