

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: EAST MEETS WEST: INFLUENTIAL
ELEMENTS OF WESTERN PIANO MUSIC
ON CHINESE PIANO MUSIC

Yao Lin, Doctor of Musical Arts, 2023

Dissertation directed by: Professor Larissa Dedova
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The inspiration for my doctoral dissertation came from my participation in UMD's concerto competition, where I had the opportunity to perform and record both the Liszt Piano Concerto No. 1 and the Yellow River Piano Concerto during my DMA study. It was fascinating for me to observe how the Yellow River Concerto had been influenced by Western piano concertos.

Piano compositions with national characteristics have long been cherished and adored by audiences and performers alike. Chinese composers have masterfully crafted piano music that exudes a distinct Chinese flavor by integrating folk tunes and emulating the timbre of folk instruments. These pieces convey the unique culture of Chinese music to audiences and musicians alike. Through the combination of traditional folk modes, rhythms, melodies, and musical forms, numerous exceptional piano works showcase the aesthetic national color and style.

As a Chinese pianist who received my music education in China, Ukraine, and the USA, I am excited about the prospect of recording both Chinese and Western repertoire. I find it extremely intriguing to explore the influential elements of Western music on Chinese music, while identifying their similarities and differences. Although this will be a challenging endeavor, it is also highly rewarding, and I look forward to presenting my findings in this dissertation.

For the purposes of my study, I have classified the music I have recorded into three categories: compositions inspired by scenery, compositions with themes related to children, and dance music with diverse folk elements and characteristics. The repertoire presented in this dissertation is included in a two-CD album that I recorded at the DeKelboum Concert Hall at the University of Maryland, College Park. These recordings will be available in the Digital Repository at the University of Maryland (DRUM) for all to enjoy.

EAST MEETS WEST:
INFLUENTIAL ELEMENTS OF WESTERN PIANO MUSIC ON
CHINESE PIANO MUSIC

By

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Preface

This dissertation is the culmination of my doctoral studies at the University of Maryland and is divided into two parts: recordings of selected works by Western and Chinese composers, and this written document. The program was recorded in three sessions at the Dekelboum Concert Hall of the Clarice Performing Arts Center, University of Maryland, College Park, by Antonino d'Urzo. For all the recordings, a Steinway concert grand piano model D was utilized.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my mother for introducing me to music and the piano, which became one of the most valuable aspects of my life. Her unconditional love and support throughout my journey have been invaluable. I am also indebted to my teacher, Professor Larissa Dedova, whose guidance and mentorship have not only made me a better musician but also a better person. Her unwavering support and belief in me have been instrumental in my success.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to Chengzong Yin, who premiered the Yellow River Concerto in China in 1970, for his invaluable guidance on my Yellow River Concerto study and for inspiring me in my exploration of Chinese piano music. I am also grateful for Dr. Susan Chan's insights and assistance with my other Chinese works in this dissertation. My sincere thanks to Antonino d'Urzo for his exceptional work on recording and editing all my music. I am grateful to Professor Donald Manildi for his assistance with my dissertation.

To my beloved family, my husband Shouhui Yang, my son Andrew, and my twin daughters Angela and Anderlin, I am forever indebted to you for your unwavering support and love, which have enabled me to complete my doctorate studies.

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6. Prelude No. 7 from Book II “*La Terrasse des audiences du clair de lune*” by Claude Debussy [4:49]
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East Meets West: Influential Elements of Western Piano Music on Chinese Piano Music

INTRODUCTION

History and Background

The influence of Western music on Chinese music can be traced back to around 100 years ago when the Qing Dynasty came to an end due to famine, war, and rebellion in 1912. The newly established Republic of China embraced global values, aesthetics, and began exploring Western harmony, notation, and instruments. The introduction of Western music education and techniques started with the founding of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 1927 by Xiao Youmei, a graduate of the Leipzig Conservatory¹. In 1939, during the Japanese invasion of China, Xian Xinghai composed the first Chinese cantata, "The Yellow River," which was inspired by and named after the Chinese patriotic poem of the same name². This cantata advanced Chinese orchestras, who had limited access to Western instruments at the time.

¹ Jindong Cai, in *Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese* (New York: Algora Pub. 2004), p. 106.

² Ibid, p.166.

Despite political upheaval after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, many pianists and composers were sent to study in Europe and the Soviet Union. This led to the application of Western music knowledge and techniques, such as counterpoint, in Chinese compositions. However, beginning in 1966, Mao Zedong's order resulted in the ban of Western music during the Cultural Revolution. Chinese conservatories were closed, and musicians were sent to hard labor camps in remote areas. All piano music, mostly modeled after revolutionary Chinese operas, had to be approved by Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, to serve as political propaganda.

The end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 marked the reopening of conservatories and the re-emergence of the influence of Western classical music on Chinese music. With greater political freedom, Chinese composers traveled abroad and absorbed musical influences since 1980. As a result, many Chinese piano compositions incorporated Western musical elements combined with Chinese characteristics.

Despite the piano being a Western musical instrument, Chinese piano art adds its own characteristics when combined with Chinese national traditions. The development of piano works in China can be divided into four stages: the early 20th century marked the first stage, initiated by Mr. Zhao Yuanren's "Peace March," which led to the creation of Chinese piano works in the 1930s and 1940s³. The second stage

³ Wendy Lee, in *Chinese Composers, Western Piano Works: Unpacking Aspects of Musical Influence* (Saarbrücken, Germany: AV Akademikerverlag, 2012), p. 1.

is represented by He Luting's "The Cowherd's Flute" in the 1950s-1960s. The third stage is exemplified by Ding Shande's "Children's Suite" in the 1960s and 1970s⁴. The fourth stage includes the works composed by Wang Jianzhong and others slightly later.

Thematic Plan of the Dissertation

As a Chinese pianist who has received music education in China, Ukraine, and the USA, it is extremely interesting for me to record both Chinese and Western repertoire. Exploring the influential elements of Western music on Chinese music and looking for similarities and differences between them has been a challenging, yet rewarding endeavor for this dissertation. I have classified the music I record into three categories.

Chapter 1. Scenery - influenced compositions:

- 1). Autumn Moon on the Calm Lake by Chen Peixun / Lu Wencheng
- 2). Spring on the Moon Light River Li Yinghai
- 3). Colorful Clouds Chasing the Moon by Wang Jianzhong
- 4). Two Springs Reflect the Moon by Chu Wanghua
- 5). *Clair de lune* by Claude Debussy

⁴ Ibid, p.1.

6). Prelude No. 7 from Book II “*La Terrasse des audiences du clair de lune*” by Claude Debussy

7). Images II (Book 2) No. 2, “*Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut*” by Claude Debussy

Claude Debussy is widely regarded as the first impressionist composer, and many of his works were influenced by the impressions of scenery and pictures. One of his most famous pieces, *Clair de lune*, is the most well-known movement from the Suite Bergamasque. In addition, his Prelude No. 7 from Book II, “*La Terrasse des audiences du clair de lune*”, and Images II (Book 2) No. 2 “*Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut*” also depict the scenery of the moon.

Similarly, the Chinese composers mentioned in this dissertation also found inspiration in the moon's scenery to compose their works. "Autumn Moon on A Calm Lake," "Spring on the Moon Light River," "Colorful Clouds Chasing the Moon," and "Two Springs Reflect the Moon" are the four most famous moon pieces in the Chinese piano music repertoire.

Chapter 2. Compositions with themes related to children:

1). *Kinderszenen, Op.15* by Robert Schumann

2). Children's Suite by Ding Shande

3). Children's Corner by Claude Debussy

4). Eight Memories in Watercolor by Tan Dun

5). The Cowherd's Flute by He Luding

Kinderszenen, Op. 15 by Robert Schumann is a set of thirteen pieces for piano written in 1838. In this work, Schumann provides us with adult reminiscences of childhood. "Children's Corner" by Claude Debussy is a six-movement suite. Debussy dedicated this suite to his daughter Chou-Chou in 1908, when she was five years old⁵. Debussy loved being a father and composed "Children's Corner" to entertain his daughter and explore music through the eyes of a child. "Children's Suite", composed by Ding Shande in 1953, is a set of five pieces. It shows the bright future and happiness of Chinese children after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Similar to Schumann's "*Kinderszenen*," "Eight Memories in Watercolor" by Tan Dun is also about a composer's recollection of his childhood and the inspiration he received from Chinese culture. It is Tan Dun's opus one, a set of eight pieces. It was his first composition after he left his hometown (Hunan) and began studying at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing just after the Cultural Revolution had ended⁶. Tan Dun was homesick and also immersed in studying Western classical and modern music. Therefore, he composed his first piano work as he longed for the folksongs and savored the memories of his childhood.

These four children's compositions are all in the genre of cycles consisting of

⁵ E. Robert Schmitz, *The Piano Works of Claude Debussy*, by E. Robert Schmitz. Foreword by Virgil Thomson (New York, Dover Publications, 1966), 118.

⁶ Dun Tan, *Eight Memories in Watercolor by Tan Dun*. (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc, 2004).

several pieces. There are many titles of the pieces that even share the same names, such as "Hide and Seek," "Lullaby," "Dream," "Herdboy's Song," and "The Little Shepherd," etc. These children's pieces recall the composers' childhoods, while amusing little ones through the technical prowess of the piano. It is interesting to see the Western influential elements on Chinese music in these compositions.

Chapter 3. Dance music with different folk elements and characteristics:

1). Selections from Romeo and Juliet Ballet Suite, Op. 75, by Sergei Prokofiev

No. 2 Scene

No. 4 The Young Juliet

No. 5 Masks

No. 6 Montagues and Capulets

No. 8 Mercutio

2). The Mermaid Ballet Piano Suite by Wu Zuqiang and Du Mingxin

No.1 The Dance of Coral

No.2 The Dance of Waterweeds

No.3 The Dance of Ginseng

No.4 Wedding Scene

The piano version of the ballet suite Romeo and Juliet Op. 75 by Sergei Prokofiev, was arranged by the composer from his ballet score Op. 64, composed in

1937, based on William Shakespeare's play. This suite consists of ten pieces, of which I selected five to record. The Mermaid Ballet Suite consists of six pieces, of which I selected four to record. Like Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet Suite, it was also originally an orchestral piece and was adapted as piano music in 1961. The ballet suite depicts the underwater world, showing a vivid scene of ginseng, coral, and waterweeds, and the wedding dance. There are many similarities between these two ballet suites, providing an opportunity for comparison.

The Yellow River Concerto

It is impossible not to mention the Yellow River Concerto when discussing the influential Western elements on Chinese music. The Yellow River Piano Concerto, arranged from Xian Xinghai's "Yellow River Cantata", is the most famous Chinese piano concerto and was created during the time of the Cultural Revolution. During my DMA studies at UMD, I had the privilege of participating in the concerto competition twice, playing and recording Liszt Piano Concerto No. 1 and the Yellow River Piano Concerto. It is interesting to note the Western influence on the Yellow River Piano Concerto.

The Yellow River Piano Concerto is heavily influenced by Western piano concerto traditions. Xian Xinghai, the composer of the Yellow River Piano Concerto, was trained in Western classical music and was familiar with the works of European composers

such as Beethoven and Chopin. As a result, he blended traditional Chinese music elements with Western classical music techniques in the composition of the concerto.

For example, the concerto features a prominent role for the piano, which is a hallmark of Western piano concertos. The use of the orchestra to accompany and complement the piano also follows the Western concerto tradition. In addition, the virtuosic and technical passages in the concerto are reminiscent of the virtuosity often found in European classical music.

However, despite the Western influence, the concerto also incorporates traditional Chinese music elements such as the pentatonic scale and the use of Chinese folk tunes. This fusion of Western and Chinese musical styles make the Yellow River Piano Concerto a unique and distinctive piece of music in the classical music repertoire.

Conclusion

In my dissertation and recording project, I have thoroughly discussed music from various categories, including moon scenery-influenced compositions, compositions with themes related to children, dance music with different folk elements and characteristics, and the Yellow River Concerto. My focus has been on identifying the influential elements of Western piano tradition on Chinese piano music, while also investigating the similarities and differences between them. Through performing and recording all of this music, I have been able to point out the contrasts within them, providing a deeper understanding and appreciation of these pieces.

Overall, this project has allowed for a deeper exploration of the intercultural exchange between Western and Chinese music, and the impact that this exchange has had on piano composition in China. As a pianist, this project has allowed me to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of the unique qualities and characteristics of Chinese piano music, as well as the ways in which Western influences have been integrated into the genre. By recording these pieces, I hope to share this knowledge and appreciation with a wider audience and contribute to the ongoing dialogue around the cultural exchange of music.

Chapter 1. Scenery-influenced compositions

1). Autumn Moon on the Calm Lake by Chen Peixun/ Lu Wencheng

Lu Wencheng (1898-1981) was a Guangdong music performer and composer from Zhongshan County, Guangdong Province. He was greatly influenced by the folk music of the southern Yangtze River region and Western music culture. Wencheng composed more than one hundred pieces and recorded a large number of Cantonese music pieces. He was skilled in playing and singing all pieces, and particularly excelled in playing the Gaohu, an instrument similar to the Erhu, but with a slightly smaller resonance box. Additionally, Wencheng was the first to replace gut strings with steel strings for the Erhu.

Chen Peixun (1922-2006) was a renowned musician and educator who were born in Hong Kong. He started his musical journey by studying the piano with his uncle during his childhood. Later, he went on to study organ and composition in Hong Kong and Shanghai⁷. Chen traveled extensively across China during the Sino-Japanese War. In 1939, he enrolled in the Shanghai National Conservatory of Music and studied composition techniques under the guidance of Tan Xiaolin, focusing on Hindemith's compositions since Tan Xiaolin used to be a student of Hindemith. During the war, he taught in art schools in Hong Kong, Chongqing, and Shanghai. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Chen became an associate professor and director of

⁷“Grove Music,” Grove Music Online, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/>.

the composition department at the Central Conservatory of Music.

“Autumn Moon on the Calm Lake” is a famous piece from the Jiangnan region of China. Its original name is “Drunk Taiping”. In the 1930s, Lu Wencheng visited the West Lake in Hangzhou during the Mid-Autumn Festival⁸. The beautiful scenery of the West Lake moved and touched him deeply, so he created this song describing the scenery of the West Lake on a moonlit night, praising the beautiful scenery of nature. The melody is smooth, and the tone is mellow. In 1975, the composer Chen Peixun adapted it into a piano solo piece. The adaptation uses rich and colorful accompaniment textures to express the sparkling and flickering scenes in a more nuanced mood, making it an excellent piano solo piece that combines the characteristics of Chinese folk music with impressionist sound effects and western romantic composition techniques.

The original score of "Autumn Moon on the Calm Lake" by Lu Wencheng was mainly based on the pentatonic scale⁹, with the Gaohu as the main instrument. Many *glissando* passages were used in its performance to depict the peaceful atmosphere of the autumn moon over a calm lake. The Gaohu's bright and clear timbre was used to convey the serene mood of the piece.

Chen Peixun's solo piano adaptation consists of only 25 measures, which are

⁸ 30 Famous Chinese Piano Pieces Edited by Wei Tingge, People's Music Publishing, Beijing, 1991.

⁹ Daojin Tong and Qinyan Wang, ed., in *In Series of Piano Works by Famous Chinese Composers: Peixun Chen Selected Works For The Piano*. (Shanghai: Shanghai Music, 2010).

divided into four sections: Beginning (M1-9), Inheritance (M10-13), Turning (M14-22), and Combination (M23-25). The piece employs 32nd and 64th notes throughout to depict the shimmering surface of the lake.



Figure 1: Autumn Moon on the Calm Lake, Measures 1-3.



Figure 2: Debussy *Clair de lune*, Measures 27-30.

One similarity that can be noted between “Autumn Moon on the Calm Lake” and Debussy’s *Clair de lune* is that they both utilize soft, delicate and flowing melodies with a slower tempo to evoke a sense of calmness and tranquility. Both of them use the same key of D flat major and clear texture with melody and accompaniment.

2). Spring River Flower and Moonlight Night by Li Yinghai

Li Yinghai (1927-2007) was a renowned contemporary Chinese composer, music theorist, music activist, professor, and Vice President of the China Conservatory

of Music. Born in Fushun, Sichuan, he made significant contributions to the nationalization of Chinese music and received numerous awards and accolades for his achievements. He authored several books, including "Han Modes and Their Harmony," "Piano Fingering Exercises in Pentatonic Tones," and "Fifty Piano Folk Songs."

The music for “Spring on the Moon Light River” has been popular in the Jiangnan area since the eighteenth century, and the composer is unknown¹⁰. It is one of the most representative works of ancient Chinese pipa music and is considered one of the most familiar ancient Chinese songs. In the 1920s, it was adapted for guzheng and bamboo ensemble and renamed “Spring River Flower and Moonlight Night”. The piano pieces were originally written in 1975, but they have been revised and reprinted several times.

Li Yinghai adapted the ancient Pipa song "Spring on the Moon Light River" into a piano piece that maintains the musical image and traditional simplicity and elegance while enriching it with expressive techniques¹¹. The composition is divided into ten sections.

The first section (*Tempo a piacere*) serves as the introduction, where the piano softly imitates the sounds of drums, flute, and water to create an ancient scene where the sun sets and the night approaches, and the flute and drum sing together.

¹⁰ 30 Famous Chinese Piano Pieces Edited by Wei Tingge, People's Music Publishing, Beijing, 1991.

¹¹ Daojin Tong and Qinyan Wang, ed., in *In Series of Piano Works by Famous Chinese Composers: Li Yinghai Selected Works For The Piano* (Shanghai: Shanghai Music, 2010).

The second section (*Moderato*) features the main theme, played by the right hand, echoed by the octave sound of the left hand. The Jiangnan-style melody mimics the moonlight reflection and sets off a buoyant, distant, and poetic artistic conception.

The third to fifth sections (*Ad lib. Dolce - Piu mosso - sostenuto*) are free impromptu variations on the basic theme. The piano sometimes plays a crisp octave sound or an arpeggio pattern imitating the guzheng, which mimics the sound of sparkling water. At times, the piano produces a vibrato-like tremolo on the Pipa.

The sixth section (*Lento - Andante - Allegretto*) is the only contrasting section in the piece. A new melody is introduced in the middle register and played with an empty fifth chord in the left hand, creating a stable and smooth sound, resembling a bell floating in the night sky.

The seventh to ninth sections (*Andante - Moderato - Presto*) contain three additional variations, and the character of the theme changes in tone, especially in the eighth section, where the theme varies with softness and rigidity. The ninth section employs toccata techniques, making the drum image richer.

The tenth section (*Largamente - Lento ad lib - Tranquillo*) leads to the finale, where the theme is played alternately by both hands. The music returns to a light and distant artistic ending.

Like Debussy's *Clair de lune*, the whole work is written in D-flat Major and consists of simple and flowing arpeggios that suggest the gentle flow of the river. The

melody is accompanied by delicate harmonies and occasional embellishments, creating a sense of serenity and calmness.



Figure 3: Spring River Flower and Moonlight Night, Measures 18-23.

"Spring River Flower and Moonlight Night" could be influenced by Claude Debussy's *Clair de lune* ("Moonlight") as Debussy's *Clair de lune* captures the mood of a moonlit night with its dreamy and atmospheric music, and Li Yinghai's piece also aims to evoke a similar mood.

However, it's worth noting that there are significant differences between the two pieces. While Debussy's *Clair de lune* is more harmonically complex and uses more chromaticism and dissonance, Li Yinghai's "Spring River Flower and Moonlight Night" is more straightforward in its harmonies and melodies. Additionally, "Spring River Flower and Moonlight Night" incorporates Chinese elements such as pentatonic scales and arpeggios, which distinguish it from Debussy's more European style.

Overall, while it's possible that "Spring River Flower and Moonlight Night" was influenced by Debussy's *Clair de lune*, it also has its own unique qualities that set it apart as a distinct work of Chinese piano music.

3). Colorful Clouds Chasing the Moon by Wang Jianzhong

Wang Jianzhong (1933-2016) was a composer and pianist born in Shanghai. He began learning the piano at the age of 10 and was admitted to the Composition Department at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 1950. After graduating in 1958, he stayed on to teach. He founded the Central Orchestra in 1970 and many of his piano works successfully integrate Chinese folk music with Western instruments, winning appreciation from audiences both in China and abroad.

"Colorful Clouds Chasing the Moon" is a famous piece of Guangdong music that describes the free-spirited life of ordinary people, highlighting the typical style of Guangdong folk music¹². It first appeared during the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) when Li Hongzhang was the governor of Guangdong and Guangxi, and he sent a copy of this song to be performed in the palace. It was arranged for the National Orchestra in 1935 by Er Nie and Guang Ren, with the orchestral music making use of a pentatonic melody full of national characteristics.

In 1975, Wang Jianzhong adapted the orchestral music into a piano work that became one of his most famous pieces¹³. It not only contains the "color" factor, but also interprets the darkness of the night sky, with the word "chasing" reinforcing a vivid picture of the moon being chased by colorful clouds. The piece fully integrates elements

¹² Daojin Tong and Qinyan Wang, ed., in *In Series of Piano Works by Famous Chinese Composers: Wang Jianzhong Selected Works For The Piano* (Shanghai: Shanghai Music, 2010).

¹³ 30 Famous Chinese Piano Pieces Edited by Wei Tingge, People's Music Publishing, Beijing, 1991

of both East and West and reflects a strong national identity, making it a favorite among Chinese and Western music lovers. The musical form is in ternary A B A, with Wang Jianzhong adopting the rhythm of European tango dance music and incorporating the beautiful and relaxed tone of the National Orchestra.



Figure 4: Colorful Clouds Chasing the Moon, Measures 8-12.

Although "Colorful Clouds Chasing the Moon" is a Chinese folk song, it's obvious that the composer was influenced by Western piano music to some extent. The piano work "Colorful Clouds Chasing the Moon" reveals a high degree of integration. It not only maintains the original national style, but also provides a full display of the expressive range of the piano.

4). Two Springs Reflecting the Moon by Chu Wanghua

"Two Springs Reflecting the Moon" is a renowned Erhu piece by the blind Chinese folk musician A Bing, which has distinct national characteristics and deep musical content. Yinliu Yang transcribed the work into notation in the early 1950s, based on A Bing's performance, and the name of the piece was discussed with A Bing¹⁴. The title reflects a beautiful clear spring at the foot of Huishan Mountain, described as the "Second

¹⁴ Daojin Tong and Qinyan Wang, ed., in *In Series of Piano Works by Famous Chinese Composers: Chu Wanghua Selected Works For The Piano* (Shanghai: Shanghai Music, 2010).

Spring in the World,” and A Bing often played this piece in the pavilion of Huishan Mountain. The piece reveals the thoughts and emotions of the blind artist A Bing, who experienced the bitterness and pain of the world, and showcases the unique charm of the Chinese Erhu art. It won the “20th Century Chinese Music Classic Award” and was chosen as one of the most popular pop songs by western listeners in 1985. It was even described as a “Chinese Beethovenian” composition¹⁵.

A Bing (1893-1950), whose original name was Hua Yanjun, was a folk musician born in Wuxi, Jiangsu, and was a Taoist priest. After he became blind due to an eye disease, he became a street performer and composed and performed over 270 folk music pieces during his life. His works are permeated with the essence of traditional music, characterized by sincere, touching feelings and great artistic vitality.

Chu Wanghua (1941-) was born in Lantian, Hunan. He showed early interest in music and was admitted to the middle school attached to the Central Conservatory of Music in 1952, where he majored in piano. However, his passion for composition grew over time, and in 1956 he transferred to a major in theoretical composition. In 1982, he went to the University of Melbourne in Australia to pursue his studies in modern composition, under the guidance of Peter Talton. During his time there, he also studied piano performance. Chu Wanghua earned a Master of Music degree in 1985.

¹⁵ Jindong Cai, in *Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese* (New York: Algora Pub.2004), p. 286.

Chu Wanghua is one of the composers of Yellow River Piano Concerto. His piano solos, "Jiangnan Scene Suite" and "Variations," were selected as "National Excellent Teaching Materials for Colleges and Universities" and widely published and used. His adaptations and original piano compositions, such as "The Days of Turning Over," "The Sky in the Liberated Area," "The Moon Reflected in Two Springs," "Xinjiang Capriccio," "Small Sentinel in the South China Sea," and "Prelude," have been performed by numerous Chinese pianists, used as standard teaching materials and repertoire in amateur grade examinations or competitions, and beloved by audiences in concerts (and recordings) at home and abroad.

The piano adaptation of The “Moon Reflected in Two Springs” by Chu Wanghua focuses on the passion of melodic beauty and retains the style and characteristics of the original Erhu piece, with the same aesthetic characteristics. In order to create the effect of a beautiful moonlit night, Chu Wanghua uses arpeggios in continuous pentatonic scales to paint the “moonlight” and “flowing water”¹⁶. The original Erhu work was composed using the pentatonic scale of Chinese music principle, with many portamento and vibrato techniques used in the performance of Erhu. The adapted piano work was improved further in terms of sound, harmony, and timbre by using the full tonal range of the piano, applying multiple voices, beautiful timbres, and deep bass to suggest A Bing's depression. This greatly enriches the harmonic texture and subtly integrates the single-line melody,

¹⁶ Daojin Tong and Qinyan Wang, ed., in *Series of Piano Works by Famous Chinese Composers: Chu Wanghua Selected Works For The Piano* (Shanghai: Shanghai Music, 2010).

transforming it into a kind of national symphonic music with rich harmony and polyphony. Chu Wanghua added many second and third appoggiaturas to deliberately imitate the unique effect of Erhu's portamento and vibrato, making the artistic treatment of the piano texture sadder than the expression of the original Erhu piece, while highlighting the unique charm of the national style.

The dynamics of the piano version are varied with six levels of *f*, *mf*, *mp*, *p*, *pp*, and *ppp*, which articulate A Bing's heart and emotion vividly. The piano version adopts the “circular variation” structure of the original song, consisting of an introduction, five variations, and an epilogue. Although the adapted piano music retains the emotional tone of calm, elegance, and sadness to some extent, it also shows the author's strong and persistent courage to break away from feudal bondage. Especially in Variation 5, at the climax of bars 47-50, the dynamics and timbre span are relatively large, the chords in the left hand are full, and the sound effect is brilliant, expressing the courage to fight against the suffering fate and intensive yearning.



Figure 5: Two Springs Reflecting the Moon, Measures 25-30.

There are some commonalities between "Two Springs Reflecting the Moon"

and Western moon-related works. Both Chu's piece and Western moon-related works evoke a sense of beauty and mystery through their portrayal of the moon. They use soft, flowing melodies and harmonies to create a dreamy and romantic atmosphere, and both are beloved works of classical music. The piece is characterized by its delicate and flowing melodies, which are accompanied by rippling arpeggios that evoke the sound of flowing water.

In conclusion, the piano adaptation of “Two Springs Reflecting the Moon” is not only a convincing expression of Chinese national music with the piano as a Western instrument, but it also adds an outstanding composition to the artistic treasure of Chinese piano works.

5). *Clair de lune* by Claude Debussy

Claude Debussy (1862-1918) was a highly influential and innovative French composer, credited with originating the musical movement known as "impressionism." He was heavily influenced by impressionist paintings from an early age and incorporated elements of oriental music, Spanish dance music, and jazz into his work. His unique harmonic language, which applied French impressionist artistic techniques, had a profound impact on the music of European and American countries.

One of Debussy's most well-known works is *Clair de lune*, which is the third movement of his Suite Bergamasque¹⁷. Composed in 1895 during his early period, the

¹⁷ Gurminder Kaur Bhogal, *Claude Debussy's Clair de lune* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press,

piece is inspired by a poem by Verlaine and is filled with delicate, romantic feelings that convey the silvery atmosphere of moonlight.

Clair de lune is in the key of D-flat major and is divided into three parts. The first section is slow and expressive, evoking the peaceful scenery of a moonlit night. In the middle section, the melody of the right hand is composed of long, singing phrases, while the left hand matches them with broken chords, creating a sense of a gentle breeze shaking the branches and rustling leaves. The third section is essentially a reproduction of the first, but with changes in tone, and the piece concludes with an epilogue that incorporates elements from the middle section.

6). Prelude No. 7 from Book II *La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune* by Claude Debussy

Debussy's 24 preludes were published in two volumes in 1910 and 1913, fully demonstrating his rich compositional techniques and earning the title "The essence of impressionist music."¹⁸ To help listeners understand what each prelude was "portraying," Debussy gave each one a descriptive title.

La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune, or "The Moonlight on the Terrace," is the seventh piece in the second volume of the 24 preludes. As with other works by

2018), 55.

¹⁸ E. Robert Schmitz, in *The Piano Works of Claude Debussy*, by E. Robert Schmitz. Foreword by Virgil Thomson (New York, Dover Publications, 1966), p.129.

Debussy, his melodic writing is often short, ambiguous, fragmented, and intertwined with colorful harmony¹⁹. Debussy used parallel third chords, diatonic chords, and parallel chords to construct the harmonic framework of this prelude.

The prelude has a ternary form, consisting of measures 1-12 as the first section. The opening two measures establish a lonely mood, while the next measures (3-4) introduce a waltz rhythm to activate the middle section. The second section comprises measures 13-31 and develops the stylized waltz into two new motifs at measures 13-15 before the theme returns in measures 16-18. The third section begins at measure 32 with the return of the motif of the opening melody at measure 42.

Like a master painter in the music world, Debussy applied titles, melodies, rhythms, harmony, and other creative techniques to capture the listener's momentary imagination. *La terrasse des audiences du clair de lune* is similar to Monet's oil paintings and vividly depicts a scene of moonlight shining on a courtyard full of silence, emptiness, and mystery.

7). Images II (Book 2) No. 2 *Et la lune descend sur le temple qui fut* by Claude Debussy.

Debussy's Images I and II were composed in 1905 and 1907, respectively. The title of "Descent of the Moon upon the Ruined Temple" refers to the moon being a divine symbol of soft and transparent light. The piece has an oriental theme, and mostly

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 175.

consists of slow, parallel chords, often with thirds or fifths. The opening features persistent consecutive chords utilizing fourths and fifths, with the same patterns reappearing later on. The tone texture evolves at times into the Aeolian mode, and then shifts into the Hypodorian and Mixolydian modes.

Chapter 2. Compositions with themes related to children

1). *Kinderszenen*, Op.15 by Robert Schumann

Robert Schumann was a German composer and music critic who lived from 1810 to 1856²⁰. He showed an early aptitude for piano playing and composition, beginning both at the age of seven. At 16, he was sent by his mother to the University of Leipzig to study law, but he abandoned this pursuit and returned to music after hearing a performance by the violinist Paganini at the age of 19. After a hand injury prevented him from pursuing a career as a concert pianist, Schumann turned to serious composing and became a music critic for his own publication, the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* (New Journal for Music).

Schumann is known for his large output of piano music, much of which was premiered by his wife Clara, who was the daughter of his piano teacher Friedrich Wieck. One of his most famous piano works is *Kinderszenen*, Op. 15, which is a suite of 13 pieces written in 1838²¹. Although the title translates to "Scenes from Childhood," Schumann did not attempt to directly portray the lives of children in the music. Instead, he recollects childhood scenes from an adult perspective. Interestingly, Schumann initially composed 30 pieces for the suite, but ultimately selected only 13 for the final version.

²⁰ Alan Walker, ed. *Robert Schumann: The Man and His Music* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1972), 1-40.

²¹ Gerald Abraham, *Schumann A Symposium* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), 12-98.

(1). About foreign lands and peoples

The steady quarter notes are mixed with dotted rhythm, while the accompaniment contains the broken chords of a waltz.

(2). Curious story

The lively and exaggerated rhythm of the music leaves a deep impression on children, despite the strange stories being told.

(3). Catch me if you can

The music depicts a scene of children jumping up and down and chasing each other while playing a game of hide and seek.



Figure 6: Schumann *Kinderszenen*: Catch me if you can, measures 1-6.

(4). Pleading child

The kind and gentle melody is full of childish pleading, resembling a children's fantasy inspired by their prayers. The piece ends on the seventh note of the dominant seventh chord, like a question mark.

(5). Happiness

The cheerful melodic patterns appear in both high and low voices with a fixed syncopated rhythm in the inner voice, subtly portraying a child's satisfaction after

receiving what they are pleading for.

(6). Important event

The march-like rhythms and the strict melody present a serious and determined mood, reflecting the importance of seemingly small things in a child's life.

(7). Dreaming

This is the most famous piece in the suite and is often played separately as a concert piece. It has also been adapted for various instruments and widely circulated. The rhythm of the music is slow and steady, while the melody flows evenly and delicately. It is like sweet poetry that transports listeners into a dreamland.

(8). At the fireside

The gentle and expansive melody vividly paints a picture of a family full of joy, warmth, and love.

(9). Knight of the hobby horse

The melody with syncopated rhythm is played with a maintaining tone. It is concise and vivid, reminiscent of a child having a lot of fun while rocking back and forth on a wooden horse.

(10). Almost too serious

The monotonous theme and pattern flow continuously across the bar lines, properly reflecting a child's expression of deep contemplation or serious thought.

(11). Frightening

The calm melody is intertwined with tense chromatic chords, creating a sense of unease and fear. The music suggests a child's fear after being told a scary ghost story.

(12). Child falling asleep

The swaying rhythm and the use of canon techniques create a lullaby-like, gentle and peaceful atmosphere. The transition to the major key adds a dreamy quality to the music. The calm and soothing ending indicates that the child has finally fallen asleep.

(13). The poet speaks

The finale is written in an adult tone, with a slow melody and a sense of melancholy, perhaps reflecting the composer's nostalgia for his childhood.

2). Children's Suite by Ding Shande

Ding Shande (1911-1995) was born in Shaoxing, Zhejiang, and enrolled at the Shanghai National Conservatory of Music in 1928 to study Pipa. However, in 1934, he switched to piano. Ding premiered and recorded Luting He's "The Cowherd's Flute" and "The Lullaby", becoming the first pianist in China to make recordings. He later became a professor and the director of the composition department at the Shanghai Conservatory, and his repertoire included large-scale instrumental music, symphonies, chamber music, choral works, songs, and piano pieces.

"Children's Suite" was composed in 1953 and uses concise and refined

brushwork to portray intelligent, innocent, and lively images of children in new China²².

The suite consists of five pieces, each depicting a different aspect of children's lives, such as their happiness in nature and scenes of their entertainment and play. The work also reflects people's hopes for a better future after the founding of the new China.

All five pieces are in ABA ternary form and share common characteristics such as the use of legato, staccato, and toccata techniques. Toccata, a Western composition technique, involves playing a single note, double notes, or chords alternately at a fast speed with both hands. This technique is now commonly found in Chinese works, and the Children's Suite adapts it to depict lively scenes of children running, jumping, and playing.

(1). Going to the Suburbs

The piece mainly depicts the scene of children happily going hiking in the Chinese suburbs, vividly reflecting their lively and carefree nature. The melody connection between the lefts and right hands is smooth and beautiful, and the tune is natural and friendly.

(2). Butterfly Catching

This piece is written in toccata form. The two hands alternately play brisk double notes and staccato with neatness, lightness, and speed, vividly evoking the image of children catching butterflies. The B section features a rapid repetition of notes

²² Daojin Tong and Qinyan Wang, ed., *In Series of Piano Works by Famous Chinese Composers: Ding Shande Selected Works For The Piano* (Shanghai: Shanghai Music, 2010).

with accents to depict the children's nervousness and the unpredictable behavior of the butterflies.

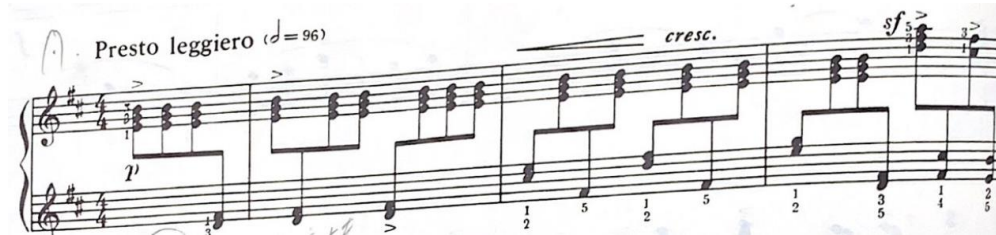


Figure 7: Ding Shande: Children Suite, Fighting butterflies, Measures:1-4.

(3). Rope Skipping

In this piece, the melody consists of single and double notes played staccato, along with chords, creating the impression of children jumping rope either individually or in a group.

(4). Hide and Seek

The A section portrays children chasing each other in a playful manner, with a free and lively melody that alternates between accelerating and slowing down. The middle section features a lyrical tone that requires singing legato, creating a soothing and calm atmosphere that reflects the children's confidence as they search for their hiding companions.



Figure 8: Ding Shande's Children Suite, Hide and Seek, Measures 1-8.

(5). Dance of Festival

The music primarily conveys a festive and enthusiastic atmosphere. It also employs the techniques of toccata, with both hands playing chords alternately at a fast tempo, with precision and lightness.

Ding Shande skillfully blended traditional Western music techniques with elements of Chinese national music, creating piano works with a distinct Chinese flavor that greatly enriched the treasury of Chinese piano music. "Children's Suite" is replete with colorful and vivid national imagery.

Schumann's "*Kinderszenen*" may have had some indirect influence on Ding Shande or served as a source of inspiration for him. Schumann was a highly influential composer in the Romantic era of Western classical music, and his works were widely studied and performed throughout the world, including in China. Ding Shande may have been familiar with Schumann's music and drawn some inspiration from it in his own compositions.

3). Children's Corner by Claude Debussy

Debussy was inspired to compose this work while playing with his beloved five-year-old daughter, Chouchou. He dedicated the suite to her and wrote at the beginning of the publication, "For everything tomorrow, I dedicate this book to my dear little one with a father's kind words."²³ Debussy may have been influenced by Mussorgsky's

²³ Margery Halford, *An Introduction to His Piano Music* (New York: Alfred, 2006), 6.

song collection, "The Nursery," when creating this piano suite. The suite was composed between 1906 and 1908 and consists of six pieces.

(1). Doctor Gradus ad Parnassum

Debussy put "Doctor" in the title of this etude as a joke on one of Clementi's boring finger etudes, which includes many scales, broken chords, and arpeggios. It resembles a child's deliberate imitation of Clementi's etudes, but handling it as a clever and interesting piece.

(2). Jimbo's Lullaby

The elephant is Chouchou's favorite crafted toy, and the music reflects this fact. This piece has a relaxed and lazy style, and it is also pure, simple, and stable in tempo. The steady bass melody at the beginning of the piece is reminiscent of the baby elephant's pace. Then there is a lullaby sung by a child to the baby elephant. The last unresolved chords sound as if both the child and the elephant have fallen asleep.

(3). Serenade for the Doll

This is a serenade that expresses the musical imagination of a child singing a song to her cute doll. Debussy wrote, "Emma's doll Lucy seems to have caught a cold tonight. In order to make Lucy happy, Emma sang a happy song to Lucy all night, and Lucy fell asleep gradually." The piece features a simple and beautiful melody that is accompanied by the sound of plucked string instruments throughout, creating a pattern

that runs through the entire piece.

(4). The Snow is Dancing

The music uses a rapid flow and continuous repetition of dense sound patterns, the dissonance of chord progressions. The changeable timbre vividly draws a scene of dancing snow in the sky suggesting that it was snowing and winding heavily. The children cannot play outdoors. The tone expresses the melancholy mood of children staring at the snowflakes flying outside the window in the winter and eagerly looking forward to the early arrival of spring.

(5). The Little Shepherd

This piano piece vividly imitates the tune played on a flute by a small toy shepherd, and is divided into three parts, each with its own unique expression. The first part serves as an introduction to the later narration, while the second is a complete statement of the song. The third part is the most moving and personalized section of the piece. The music has an oriental flavor and incorporates the use of the Dorian mode.



Figure 9: Debussy Children's Corner: The Little Shepherd, Measures 1-7.

(6). Golliwog's Cakewalk

The music vividly depicts a comical dancing black puppet. This piece is one of the earliest examples of incorporating African dance music into European musical works. The middle section also includes a quote from the prelude of Wagner's opera "Tristan und Isolde," which Debussy used as a playful jab at the prevalent Wagnerian operas of his time.

4). Eight Memories in Watercolor by Tan Dun

Tan Dun (1957-) is a Chinese American composer and conductor born in Changsha, Hunan. His compositions include symphonic and instrumental works, vocal music, operas, and original film music. He composed his first symphony "Li Sao" and "Ode to the Feng Ya," both of which won international composition awards²⁴. His album "Crouching Tiger and Hidden Dragon" won him the Best Original Music Award at the 73rd Academy Awards in 2001 and the Best Original Film Music Award in 2002. He was appointed as the Dean of the Bard Conservatory of Music in the United States and became a judge of the Munich International Music and Drama Competition in 1995, as well as organized the "Tan Dun Music Week" in Germany.

Tan Dun's piano work "Eight Memories in Watercolor" was his first work while he was a student at the Central Conservatory of Music²⁵. He was in Yinghai Li's class at that time and was strongly influenced by him, as Li often used folk elements in his

²⁴ Jindong Cai, in *Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese* (New York: Algora Pub., 2004), p. 328.

²⁵ Dun Tan, *Eight Memories in Watercolor by Tan Dun*. (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc, 2004).

music. The Cultural Revolution had just ended, China had just opened its doors, and the composer was immersed in the study of Western classical and modern music. The composer became homesick, longing for the folksongs and memories of his childhood. Thus, he wrote his first piano work as a diary of longing.

Lang Lang presented the U.S. premiere of "Eight Memories in Watercolor" at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. on April 12, 2003, and recorded it live for Deutsche Grammophon on November 7, 2003, in a Carnegie Hall recital²⁶.

"Eight Memories in Watercolor" takes the ancient Hunan and Chu culture as its theme, expressing the author's childhood folk tunes, local opera (Huagu Opera), and mourning, among others. It provides impressions of a series of celebrations and sacrificial activities.

(1). Missing Moon

Tan Dun depicts the moonlit night of the Mid-Autumn Festival in this piece. It is inspired by a Chinese poem written by the famous Tang dynasty poet Li Bai: "I raise my head to gaze at the bright moon; I lower my head and think of my hometown". The serene and poetic lines of the music are intertwined with drifting melodies, expressing the composer's longing for his hometown on a quiet moonlit night and his determination for the future. Although the composer was busy preparing for his future,

²⁶ Ibid.

he could never shake off his feelings of homesickness. In this work, the Chinese folk instrument guzheng is imitated, and the playing has a strong national character.

One similarity that can be noted between “Missing Moon” and Debussy’s *Clair de lune* is that they both utilize soft, delicate and flowing melodies with a slower tempo to evoke a sense of calmness and tranquility.

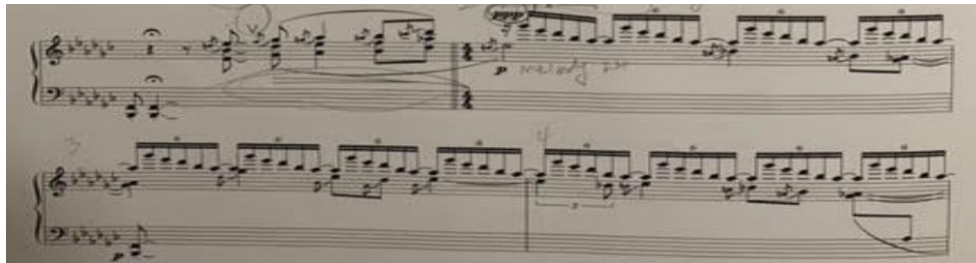


Figure 10: Tan Dun: Eight Memories in Watercolor, Autumn Moon Measures 1-4.

(2). Staccato Beans

The style of the music is lively. It reminisces on the composer's childhood joy and innocence, reflecting on the fond memories of that time. The piece incorporates the Xiangchu folk nursery rhyme's signature tonality, resulting in a playful and clever musical style.

(3). Herdboy's Song

This piece of music showcases the typical characteristics of folk songs from Central Hunan, with its beautiful and lengthy melody. It uses the Chinese pentatonic mode. The melody is soft and distant, with a free and relaxed rhythm. The music imitates the clear and gentle sound of the guzheng, expressing the openness and spirit

of the mountains. The flowing notes subtly reflect the music style of the Hunan Flower Drum Opera, which has a strong national flavor. The composer vividly depicts the scene of a shepherd boy, green willows, skylarks, and mountains in this charming piece of music. Like Debussy's "The Little Shepherd" from his Children's Corner, they share the similarity with free improvisation and tempo.



Figure 11: Tan Dun: Eight Memories in Watercolor, Herdboy's Song Measures 1-4.

(4). Blue Nun

In this piece, the composer reminisces about snuggling in his mother's arms while listening to her tell stories during his childhood. The melody used in the introduction is also from Hunan and employs polyphonic technique. The emotions expressed in the music are profound and evocative, conveying the selfless love and warmth of family, particularly that of a mother. The simple and uncomplicated rhythm and melody, reminiscent of a mother's gentle tone, further enhance the sentimental and nostalgic nature of the music.



Figure 12: Tan Dun: Eight Memories in Watercolor, Blue Nun Measures 9-16.

(5). Red Wilderness

This piece immediately contrasts with the earlier warm atmosphere. The melody is slow and steady, painting a bleak picture as if the composer's current life is tough and his ideal future is moving farther away. It describes the conflict between the composer's youthful ambition and the confusion of real life.

(6). Ancient Burial

The piece "Ancient Burial" is inspired by the sacrificial rituals of Hunan and Xiangchu and incorporates traditional elements of mourning and sacrificial offerings from these regions. The music is sad and solemn in style, displaying a strong spirit. The middle part of the piece has a thick texture, and the left hand utilizes a bass extension effect to convey the heavy and gloomy atmosphere of the ancient burial rituals. The piece reflects the passing of life, and is full of mystery, embodying the essence of the worship of gods and ghosts. The repeated melody creates a mystical and spellbinding effect, reflecting the strong witchcraft elements of Hunan and Xiangchu culture.

(7). Floating Clouds

It portrays the scene of changing clouds and reflects the composer's carefree childhood. The piece is full of rural atmosphere, depicting a child's life when the spring is warm, the flowers are blooming, and everything is awakening after winter. The children are shown watching the clouds in the sky with their friends in their leisure time. The melody in the right hand sometimes adopts a dotted rhythm, while at other times,

the melody alternates between the right and left hand.

(8). Sunrain

The Chinese title of the piece is "Huan", which means joy and enthusiasm. Dun Tan portrays a lively scene of beating gongs and drums with a clear rhythm typical of local traditional folk festivals, imitating the timbre of flower drums in the Hunan and Xiangchu area. The whole piece has a jubilant and lively atmosphere, reflecting the composer's nostalgia for his childhood life.

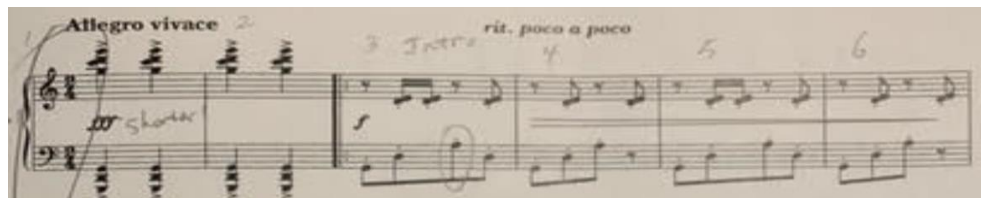


Figure 13: Tan Dun: Eight Memories in Watercolor, Sunrain Measures 1-6.

The publication of Dun Tan's works is a significant step forward in the development of Chinese piano music. "Eight Memories in Watercolor" imitates various folk instrumental music with national tones, folksongs, and dance elements, and ingeniously integrates local Chinese music with western composition techniques. It has both a rural flavor and impressionistic color.

It's important to note that Tan Dun is a highly original and innovative composer who draws inspiration from a wide range of sources, including traditional Chinese music, Western classical music, and contemporary avant-garde techniques. It's likely

that his creative process for "Eight Watercolor Memories" was influenced by a combination of factors, of which "Children's Corner" may have been one.

5). The Cowherd's Flute by He Luting

He Luting (1903-1999) was born in Hunan and was a composer and music critic. He served as the president of Shanghai Conservatory and the vice president of the Chinese Music Association. He founded the middle school and primary school of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, where he trained a large number of outstanding young music talents for the country²⁷. He is known as the pioneer of Chinese folk music, and his compositions include hundreds of songs, choral works, string works, wind ensemble music, piano pieces, and a large number of movie theme songs. He inherited the essence of traditional Chinese music culture and witnessed the development of new Chinese music in the 20th century, providing valuable creative experience and musical wealth for the development of Chinese national music culture. His music has important historical and social significance.

"The Cowherd's Flute" by He Luting was composed in 1934, and it is the first Chinese piano piece with a distinct and mature Chinese style. The integration of western theory and Chinese music tradition presents a unique Chinese pastoral style, opening a new page for the Chinese piano literature. Ding Shande premiered and recorded this

²⁷ Jindong Cai, in *Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese* (New York: Algora Pub., 2004), p.335-336.

piece in 1934²⁸.

The music is in a simple ternary form. The exposition A is in measures 1-24 in 4/4 time, which includes six phrases in total. Each phrase has four measures, and the materials between phrases are in contrast. The tempo of the entire exposition is relatively slow, and the melody is very cantabile and peaceful. The composition adopts the technique of two contrasting polyphonic parts with the upper and lower parts responding to each other. The two independent music lines between the right and left hands complement each other alternately to form echoes and clear contrasts.

The middle B section is in measures 25-52 in a 2/4 time signature. The tempo has accelerated, and the rhythm of folk dances appears. It is divided into three phrases, each phrase having four measures. The melody is cheerful and interesting, vividly displaying a scene of innocent shepherd boys happily playing the flute. The tempo, harmony, musical texture, and character of the B section are in sharp contrast to the exposition A section.



Figure 14: Cowherd's Flute, Measures 25-31.

²⁸ In *Series of Piano Works by Famous Chinese Composers: He Luting Selected Works For The Piano* (Shanghai: Shanghai Music, 2010).

The recapitulation section A is in measures 52-76. It is entirely based on the exposition section A, although some decorative notes are added, mostly by creating sixteenth notes. The decoration makes the melody of the theme smoother and more expressive. It is basically a variation of the exposition with more moving and deeper dynamic contrasts.



Figure 15: Cowherd's Flute, Measures 52-61.

As a result, He Luting's music for "The Cowherd's Flute" features some elements of Western music, such as the use of Western-style harmonies and chord progressions. For example, the song uses simple and straightforward harmonies, which are more typical of Western music than traditional Chinese music.

Despite these Western influences, "The Cowherd's Flute" remains firmly rooted in Chinese folk music traditions. The melody and lyrics of the song reflect the beauty and simplicity of rural Chinese life, and the use of traditional Chinese instruments gives the song a distinctly Chinese character.

The composer has successfully painted a picture of a light-colored Chinese rural

landscape with the setting sun, using a village as the background. The shepherd boy rides on a cow and plays his flute. This is one of my favorite Chinese piano works, which I performed when I was very young. It brings back great memories of my early piano studies.

Chapter 3. Dance music with different folk elements and characteristics

1). Selections from *Romeo and Juliet Ballet Suite*, Op. 75 by Sergei Prokofiev

Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953) was a famous composer and pianist of the Soviet Union in the 20th century. He lived in the United States and France from 1918 to 1936 before returning to his country in 1936. He was awarded the Soviet State Prize six times, as well as the Lenin Prize and the People's Artist of the Russian Federation in 1947. His compositions include seven symphonies, five piano concertos, two violin concertos, three cello concertos, ballets, music for string and wind ensembles, operas, chamber music, vocal works, and piano works.

“Romeo and Juliet” is a famous play by William Shakespeare. Although it is written in English, Russians love it and have adapted it into music. Tchaikovsky composed his *Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture* in 1869. The Kirov Ballet successfully premiered the ballet in 1940 at the Kirov State Opera and Ballet Theater with Galina Ulanova and Konstantin Sergei in the leading roles²⁹. During the performance, the dancers used mime gestures, and with the dance language and movements, they portrayed the Shakespeare tragedy perfectly.

The piano suite “Romeo and Juliet” Op.75 dates back to 1937³⁰. This suite

²⁹ Sergey Prokofiev, *Autobiography, Articles, Reminiscences*, trans. Rose Prokofieva (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1959), p. 289.

³⁰ Ibid, p.309.

contains ten pieces in total, taken from the original ballet score, with most of them in ternary form. Prokofiev did not follow the sequence of the plot in this piano suite. Instead, he designed the sequence of the pieces to make them more suitable for a piano suite. Regardless of the dance drama, this suite still has a clear musical logic as independent piano music.

No. 2. Scene

This piece evokes a deserted street and gradually becomes lively with the arrival of young people. The piece follows a simple ternary form, in the key of D major, marked *allegro*. The music is cheerful and upbeat, with the introduction starting at measures 1-3 and beginning softly with a piano dynamic. Section A, from measures 4-39, is followed by section B, from measures 40-60, before returning to section A in measures 61-93. The left-hand introduces a relaxed theme in the fourth measure, with a clear rhythm and accent as if the young people are dancing and swaying to the music.

No. 4. The Young Juliet

The piece is in *rondo* form, set in the key of C major with a lively tempo. The music expresses the innocent love and confusion of Juliet, a young girl. Measures 1-8 and the B section, measures 9-18, represent Juliet's fast running and jumping. The A section returns in measures 19-26. The C section, in A-flat major from measures 27-34, portrays Juliet's melancholy in contrast to her carefree image in the A section. The A section returns in measures 35-42.

The D section, which runs from measure 43 to measure 63 in C major, is quiet and almost andante in tempo. The continuous quarter notes in the right hand convey a sense of musical stability, while the melody with the crescendo dynamics in the left hand gradually lifts the mood above the quiet and stable background. The hands come together in unity at the end.

Part of the C section is recalled as an interlude following measures 63-71, before the A section returns in measures 72-79. The coda, from measure 80 to measure 88 in G major, depicts Juliet's dream with fading dynamics *pianissimo* at the end.

No. 5. Masks

The music represents Romeo and his friends wearing masks as they attend a ball at Juliet's home. It is in a simple ternary form built in B-flat major with a march style andante tempo. The introduction is in measures 1-4. The A section is in measures 5-21, with each sentence consisting of four measures. The left-hand accentuates every beat with a strong rhythm, while the melody alternates between legato and staccato. The jumping on the second beat creates a playful effect and always leads to the falling of the third beat. The B section is in measures 22-29, and the A section returns in measures 30-39. The music is bright and powerful, yet light as a whole.

No. 6. Montagues and Capulets

The music depicts the hostility between the two families in the story. It is in a ternary form, built in the key of E minor with a heavy and intense musical mood. The

piece starts with eight powerful chords on the left hand, followed by the melody of the right hand with a continuous dotted rhythm. This dotted rhythm pushes the music forward and enhances the sense of conflict. At measure 29, the music modulates into F minor with a minor second modulation. Both hands play continuous octave chords, each having four measures of progression, which further increases the musical tension. The composer adds a lyrical tune in the middle section, with the melody in the left hand and the eighth notes in the right hand providing the background.

No. 8. Mercutio

This piece has a simple ternary form built on the key of A-flat major. The music presents the humorous character of Mercutio. The A section is in measures 1-44. The music is in allegro tempo with a witty character, full of vitality. The music uses many jumps and pauses, showing Mercutio's sense of banter that makes everyone laugh. It provides great contrast with the other characters in the ballet, highlighting the drama of the work. The bantering B section is in measures 45-64 in E minor, departing from the major of the A section. The A section returns in measures 65-94 with a short coda in measures 95-98 at the end.

Each of these five pieces is full of vivid artistic expression with distinctive musical ingredients and prominent dramatic features.

2). The Mermaid Ballet Piano Suite by Wu Zuqiang and Du Mingxin

Du Mingxin (1928-) was born in Hubei, China. He is a famous Chinese

composer and music educator. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, he went to the Moscow Tchaikovsky Conservatory to study composition. After returning to China, he taught in the composition department of the Chinese Central Conservatory of Music. His compositions mainly focused on the genre of instrumental music, including symphonies, three piano concertos, two violin concertos, three symphonic overtures, five symphonic poems, chamber music, trios, quartets, symphonic chorus, duets, solos, large-scale folk music ensembles, film music, television drama music, and many other works. As a well-known professor at the Chinese Central Conservatory of Music, Du Mingxin has trained many talented Chinese musicians, and many of his disciples are major figures in the Chinese music industry.

Wu Zuqing (1927-2022) was born in Beijing and was a contemporary Chinese composer. He was admitted to the Department of Composition of the Nanjing National Conservatory of Music (now the Chinese Central Conservatory of Music) in 1947. After graduation, he went to study in the Soviet Union and entered the Department of Composition of the Moscow State Tchaikovsky Conservatory of Music in 1952³¹. After returning to China in 1958, he worked as a professor at the Composition Department of the Chinese Central Conservatory of Music. He became the dean of the Chinese Central Conservatory of Music in 1982 and the chairman of the Chinese Musicians Association

³¹ Jindong Cai, in *Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese* (New York: Algora Pub., 2004), p.199-200.

in 1979.

Wu Zuqiang's music combines the classical music traditions of Western Europe and Russia with the characteristics of Chinese folk music. He is the author of "Musical Form and Analysis of Music Works". Two of his most famous works are the dance dramas "Mermaid Suite" and "The Red Detachment of Women", both of which were composed together with Du Mingxin.

Mermaid Suite background

In 1959, on the 10th anniversary of China's National Day, P.A. Gushev, a former Soviet Union dance expert who taught at the Beijing Dance School, proposed the creation of a dance drama as a contribution to the celebration. He hoped that students who had returned from studying in the Soviet Union could be chosen to compose the music for this dance drama. Wu Zuqiang was selected for the task, but due to time constraints and heavy teaching duties, he found it difficult to complete it independently³². He thus chose Du Mingxin as his collaborator, who had just returned from studying in the Soviet Union. The two composers had similar ideas on music style and other aspects, having received the same educational and compositional training in the Soviet Union. The high degree of mutual agreement enabled their work to achieve perfection and unity.

³² Ibid.

The music was premiered in Beijing in 1964, directed by P.A. Gusev, with Li Chengxiang as the choreographer, and starring Chen Ailian. The music was co-composed by Wu Zuqiang and Du Mingxin. The story of "The Mermaid" is based on a Chinese folk love fairy tale. The theme highlights the struggle between good and evil, beauty and ugliness. The composition extensively absorbed the elements of Chinese folk dance, creating a female image of Yumei, who is kind, innocent, and brave. The premiere was a huge success and became a great contribution to the Chinese dance drama repertoire.

In 1961, Wu Zuqiang and Du Mingxin adapted the music from the original dance drama into a piano suite consisting of six movements: "Ginseng Dance," "Coral Dance," "Waterweeds Dance," "Straw Hat Flower Dance," "Twenty-Four Mermaids Dance," and "Wedding Scene Dance." Each piece has a sub-title relating the scenes and plots to the dance drama. This suite has become widely popular and is often used in piano teaching and performance.

No. 1. The Dance of Ginseng

The Dance of Ginseng is a selection from the opening music in the first act of the dance drama "The Mermaid". It depicts a misty morning where the old ginsengs in the jungle wake up from their sleep and emerge from the soil one by one, full of youthful vigor, moving their dexterous bodies, and happily chasing and playing with each other.

The piece is humorous and is in a ternary form. The tempo is marked *moderato*

scherzando. The introduction has a total of 23 measures, in which three tones appear with a B-Eb-E key cycle reflecting the color changes. The exposition is in measures 24-42 in E major. The left hand uses eighth note staccato to imitate the dance steps of the old ginseng man, while the melody resonates with humorous dance steps. It expresses the simple and honest nature of the old ginseng man.

The B section is in measures 43-58 and is an extended middle section. It is a development of the basic material from the A section, but it adopts a different mode for the same theme, transferring it to the tonic minor to make the characters more vivid. Section A returns in measures 59-77. The melody line in the recapitulation part is thicker than in the exposition, and the dynamics also change from *mp* to *f*, but the rhythmic pattern remains the same. The recapitulation develops to a very sonorous, brilliant chord at the end.

The whole piece provides the audience with a vivid picture of the old ginsengs springing out of the soil, while those old ginseng fellows dance slowly and clumsily to the cheerful and entertaining music.

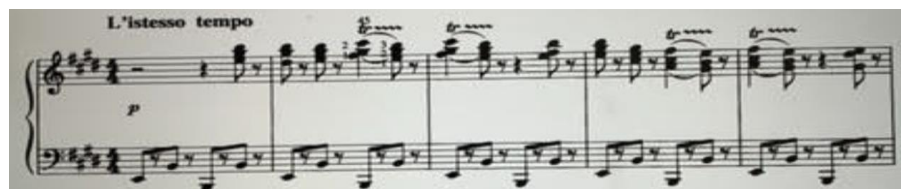


Figure 16: Mermaid Ballet Piano Suite, The Dance of Ginseng, Measures 24-28.

No.2. The Dance of Waterweeds

“The Dance of Waterweeds” is a group dance in the second scene of the first act of the dance drama. It depicts the scene of small fishes swimming back and forth in groups while the waterweed girls dance with the waves, bathing and floating in the middle of the sea.

The piece has a simple ABA ternary form with an introduction and conclusion. The waterweeds are amiable figures in this dance, along with several other loving characters such as ginseng and coral who are good friends of the hunter. Together, they finally rescue the mermaid.

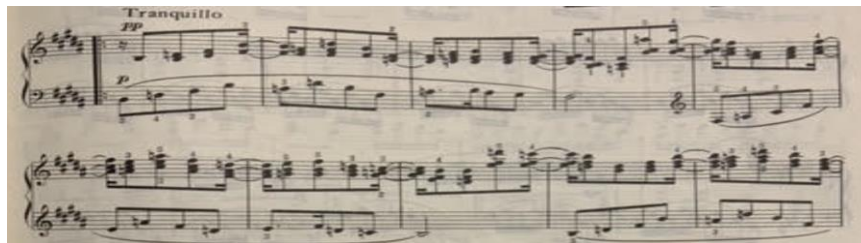


Figure 17: Mermaid Ballet Piano Suite, Dance of Waterweeds, Measures 31-40.

The music is smooth and light, with different colors as if there are flowing waves and light at the bottom of the sea. The introduction, in measures 1-8, ushers in the emergence of the theme of the waterweeds' dance with beauty and elegance in the clear water. The exposition, in measures 9-30, features an arpeggio running through the high-pitched section, presenting the picture of waterweeds and blue waves. The A section, based on the first phrase in measures 9-12, starts when the theme appears in B major. The major triad arpeggio on the right hand seems to show the ups and downs of

the movement of the waterweeds rippling with a carefree spirit. The subsequent second phrase, in measures 13-16, is transferred to A minor. The mood of the music feels as if the waterweeds have changed their color. Then, measures 17-24 return to the bright color of the B major key. The accompaniment of the left hand in the whole A section adopts a pattern of broken chords in sixteenth notes, simulating the rippling water waves.

The development part starts in measures 31-50 with new material similar to Pachelbel's Canon. A special rhythmic pattern is used to create a mysterious atmosphere. The first beat in the right hand is a sixteenth rest, thus the passage forms a syncopated pattern for the whole paragraph, as if the overlapping green grass and green leaves are lingering and flowing with each other, and a group of aquatic plants are chasing and echoing each other.

The recapitulation part starts from measure 52. It echoes the exposition part to form a melody while the arpeggio continues to show the charm of the aquatic plants. The music turns clearer and more transparent in the recapitulation section. The coda starts from measure 64 and is completed by alternately using the materials of the exposition and development sections. It ends in a smooth and light arpeggio, depicting the rippling water and the swaying waterweeds going far away. The major and minor phrases alternate in the whole passage, and the color flickers, mimicking ocean waves. The melody is romantic and poetic. This part vividly expresses the soft and beautiful

characteristics of aquatic plants and has a lively dance style.

No. 3. Coral Dance

“The Dance of Coral” is a selected group dance from the second scene of the first act of the dance drama. It portrays a scene of a group of fishes blessing the mermaid and the hunter, and six coral girls present a dance for the loving couple. The piece has a simple ternary form with an allegro tempo, and the music is relaxed and lively.

The exposition section, in measures 1-15, consists of two phrases, followed by the development section in measures 16-26, which has three phrases. The use of sixteenth notes throughout the whole passage simulates flowing water, and the melody is in the left hand, sweeping continuously through both ends of the keyboard with intervals and chords. The rising and falling tones of the line vividly portray the exquisite and lively image of coral in a magical and unpredictable underwater world.

The recapitulation section is in measures 27-41, followed by the coda starting from measure 42, which continues to the end with a slightly mysterious and magical atmosphere. The piece includes two kinds of basic materials, a fluid musical melody depicting the atmosphere of the dance scene, and a lyrical melody portraying the colorful corals in the sea.

The cheerful rhythm of the “Dance of Coral” runs throughout the piece, with a soft dynamic balanced with the steady dance rhythm, creating an interesting and

humorous atmosphere for the audience. The music leads the listeners into the magical seabed to explore the mysteries of corals. The composer pursues a lively, witty, interesting, and elegant style in a weaker volume, making the coral dance one of the most amazing parts of this dance drama.

No. 4. Wedding Scene

“The Wedding Scene” is a part of the second act's large group dance in the ballet. It portrays the mermaid's decision to give up her underwater life and follow the hunter to the land, moved by his sincerity. The wedding ceremony takes place in a coastal village amidst a grand and cheerful atmosphere with festive Chinese music full of gongs and drums. The *rondo* structure “A+B+A1+C+A2” is used in this scene, which is commonly employed in dance music and perfectly blends with the music's jubilant mood.

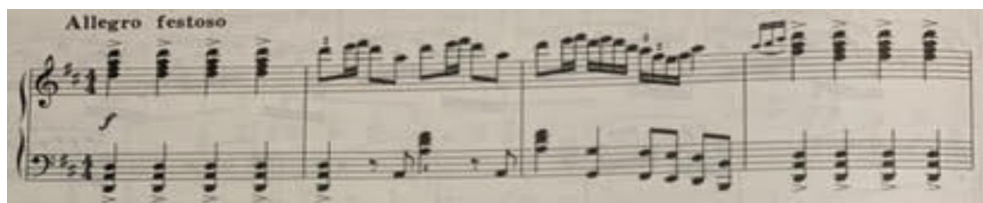


Figure 18: Mermaid Ballet Piano Suite, Wedding Scene, Measures 1-4.

The piece's first appearance of the main part occurs in measures 1-6, where powerful chords are used to replicate the noisy and lively wedding music. The piano imitates the percussion sounds to create a lively atmosphere. Measures 7-10 are the first interlude marked *mp*, with the right hand playing fast-running sixteenth notes that

symbolize the busy people at the wedding. The second appearance of the main theme is in measures 11-18, and the music returns to a festive ambiance. The third appearance of the main part in measures 27-58 is in the subdominant, forming a larger section using the expansion method from the main part. The piano imitates the band's effect, showcasing the grand scene of the guests welcoming the newlyweds. The chords on the right hand are an essential expression to promote the development section.

Measures 19-26 represent the second interlude, and the syncopated rhythm of the left hand gives a powerful impetus. The short material motive represents people chasing each other, creating a playful dialogue with a happy and amusing spirit. Like most rondos, the main part is not entirely reproduced, and variations are added to it. The right hand plays the melody part with chords when the rhythm changes. At measure 35, the fast sixteenth notes step down with both hands imitating the sound effect of firecrackers. Measures 48-51 create brewing emotions for the climax of the entire piece through tremolos, gradually leading to the climax at measures 55 and 56 with strong octave progressions in crescendo dynamic. The climax creates a powerful and strong driving force, forming the culmination *fff* of the whole piece. The piano mimics the suona, gongs, and drums' strong and powerful sound effects, with people singing and dancing against the music's background. The piece ends with alternating octaves and chords by both hands under the *ffff* dynamic, as if calling people to participate in the grand wedding ceremony of the mermaid and the hunter.

In comparing the “Mermaid Piano Suite” and Prokofiev’s “Romeo and Juliet” Piano Suite, Wu Zuqiang and Du Mingxin's suite is written in a more traditional, tonal style, with clear melodies and harmonies that evoke a sense of nostalgia and romanticism. Prokofiev's suite, on the other hand, is more dissonant and unconventional, with jarring harmonies and unexpected twists and turns that create a sense of tension and drama.

In terms of structure, "Mermaid Ballet Suite" is a six-piece suite that follows a linear narrative, telling the story of the Little Mermaid's journey from her underwater home to the surface world. "Romeo and Juliet," on the other hand, is a ten-piece suite that features various themes and motifs from the ballet, arranged in a way that highlights their emotional impact and dramatic arc. Each piece from both work are exactly in ABA ternary form.

Overall, while both suites are masterpieces of piano music inspired by ballets, they offer different experiences to the listener. "Mermaid Ballet Suite" is a nostalgic and dreamy work that captures the mystique of the underwater world, while "Romeo and Juliet" is a dramatic and intense work that evokes the passion and tragedy of one of the greatest love stories ever told.

Wu Zuqing and Du Mingxin had similar ideas on music style and other aspects, having received the same educational and compositional training in the Soviet Union. They were influenced by the wider trend of Western classical music, of which Prokofiev was a major figure. However, it is important to note that Wu Zuqiang and Du Mingxin were also deeply rooted in their own musical traditions, and their works reflect a unique

blend of Chinese and Western influences that is distinct from Prokofiev's music.

The dance drama "The Mermaid" is a milestone and masterpiece in Chinese music history. The arranged piano work is a highly expressive solo piece that retains and highlights the original dance drama music's basic characteristics. The composers have exploited the music's charm and value in the original dance drama scenes to the fullest extent. They have extracted the most important musical elements to reproduce the essence of the original dance drama through the piano adaptation.

The Mermaid Ballet Suite presents an artistic crystallization of learning from the Soviet Union in the 50s. It is one of the major dance drama achievements after the People's Republic of China's founding, fully embodying the artistic spirit of fusing Chinese and Western traditions.

Annotated Bibliography

***Schumann A Symposium.* Gerald Abraham, ed. London: Oxford University Press, 1952.**

The book brings to its readers a knowledge of both Robert Schumann's intimate life and music. All of his compositions are discussed in different categories: The piano music, the songs, the chamber music, the orchestral music, the works for solo instrument and orchestra, the dramatic music and the choral works.

Bhogal, Gurminder Kaur. *Claude Debussy's Clair de lune.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018.

Oxford University Press has a collection of music books with each of its volumes dedicated to a single composition or album. It provides an informed companion to music as artwork and experience. The collection explores how compositions of music have engaged listeners, performers, artists, and others through historical and current events. This book commemorates the centenary of the death of Claude Debussy with the discussion of his most well-known work: *Clair de lune*.

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The book is an historical survey of classical music in China. It traces the history from 17th century when the Jesuit Matteo Ricci presented a clavichord to the emperor in the Forbidden City, then progresses through the tumult and triumphs of the 20th century – the May 4th Movement, World War II, The Communist victory, the establishment of the People's Republic, the Culture Revolution, and the re-opening of the country to the outside world that followed the previous event.

Grove Music Online

This is the gateway to Grove Music Online which is a comprehensive resource for musicians to look for published articles by renowned scholars.

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This is the music score used in this dissertation's recording project. The introductory pages discuss symbolist poetry, French Impressionist painters and Debussy's musical style. A variety of photographs taken throughout the composer's life are also included.

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This book is about Prokofiev's music and emphasizes analyses of particular pieces, but within a theoretical framework. The framework is developed in the first part of the book, chapters 1-3; the second part of the book, chapters 4-8, contains the analyses.

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The book is a thought-provoking profile of the great Russian composer-pianist Sergei Prokofiev. It also includes the reminiscences of many of his Russian-Soviet colleague composers and a catalogue of Prokofiev's works. It is a valuable book to understand Prokofiev's life and compositions from his own viewpoint.

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This a comprehensive and authoritative music dictionary. It is an outstanding reference for all aspects of music from descriptions of instruments and genres to music of different regions, etc. There are over 250 musical examples to help understand the text.

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Volume I is a study that reviews some of the techniques developed by Russian composers in the early part of the twentieth century. The study centers principally on music for the piano, with an emphasis on harmony and both tonal and atonal structures. The study involves a group of composers of varied styles whose compositions are termed "Modernist" because they involve some measure of experimentation. Volume II is all music examples discussed in Volume I.

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This book is a good source in order to understand Prokofiev's character through his rich and creative life, coinciding with the artistic, cultural and political turmoil in the Soviet Union. It gives a detailed account of Prokofiev's development as a composer, including his progressive search for new musical forms and his collaborations with Serge Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.

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The book contains an intellectual commentary on Debussy's piano works. It provides multiple imaginative resources to create interpretations of the colorful and genial piano literature of Debussy. Debussy's thoughts here are correctly analyzed with harmony,

modality, tonality and counterpoint. Each keyboard work is explored in full detail. This book is a great contribution to piano pedagogy and to the understanding of Debussy's great music.

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Alan Walker provides a historically accurate and authentic account of Robert Schumann's life but also detailed descriptions of all of Schumann's works. Many scores and pictures are reproduced to help understand Schumann's special interest in symbols, codes, crosswords, chess and even acrostics. The book is an essential musicological and historical source about Robert Schumann.

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This is the music score used in this dissertation's recording project. The introductory pages at the end provide information about these 30 pieces and each composer's brief biography.