

A PEDAGOGICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE PIANO WORKS OF TYZEN HSIAO

By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to introduce the piano works, and their pedagogy, of Tyzen Hsiao, one of the most important composers in Taiwan. Hsiao received his early musical training in Taiwan and Japan and continued his studies in the United States. Mr. Hsiao's musical style is strongly influenced by Romanticism and early twentieth-century music, such as music by Chopin, Debussy, Rachmaninoff and Bartok. It also includes Taiwanese folk tunes. His music has been recognized nationally and internationally.

Mr. Hsiao writes for many different instruments, including piano, strings, woodwinds and full orchestra. Most of his compositions, however, are for chorus. His compositional style and musical character has been discussed in several major musical magazines in Taiwan and in the United States. In this paper, two of his piano pieces will be analyzed from a pedagogical viewpoint.

This discussion is based on the piano works, *Memories of Home*, op.49 and *The Angel from Formosa*. The title *Memories of Home* suggests Mr. Hsiao's memories of Taiwan. It is a collection of six short pieces; each piece carries a title, suggesting the character of the piece. *The Angel from Formosa* begins with a four-measure slow introduction which is followed by a nine-measure theme. This theme appears throughout the entire piece and is re-harmonized each time it reappears. In this paper, I will discuss the background of the both pieces, stylistic influences, form and structure, Taiwanese folk-song elements and pedagogical points.

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Chapter 1

A BIOGRAPHY OF TYZEN HSIAO

Tyzen Hsiao was born in Kaohsiung, the second largest city in Taiwan, on January 1, 1938. He was raised in a Christian family. Hsiao's father, Jui-On Hsiao, was a dentist and also an elder of the Presbyterian Church and his mother, Shue-Yun Lin, served as a pianist in the Church. Both of Hsiao's parents were music lovers and they shared their enjoyment of music with their children, so Hsiao grew up in an environment filled with hymns, choral music and classical music. He started to receive piano lessons from his mother when he was five, and his first piano recital was given two years later. Hsiao was the oldest child in the family and he was expected to become a doctor or dentist to continue the family business; however, Hsiao had no interest in becoming a dentist like his father and spent most of his time on music since he was in senior high school. This difference of opinion between Hsiao and his father was resolved at the seventy-year anniversary of Hsiao's senior high school. The principal of the high school told Hsiao's father that Hsiao was musically gifted and that he could be an exceptional musician if he could have formal training in music in college. Hsiao's father finally agreed on letting Hsiao study music. Hsiao auditioned and entered the National Taipei Normal University (NTNU) as a major in piano performance. He studied there from 1959 to 1963.¹

During the time in NTNU, Hsiao studied piano with Tsu-Mei Kao (1914-2004) and Fu-Mei Lee. He also expressed an interest in composition, which he studied with Tsang-Houei Hsu². Hsu was the first person to introduce western twentieth-century music to Taiwan and he had a

¹ Hua-Rong Yen. *Hsiao Tyzen: The Romantic Taiwanese*. (Taipei: Times Cultures, 2002), 14-23.

² Tsang-Houei Hsu (1929-2001) was one of the musical pioneers in Taiwan. He studied composition with Olivier Messiaen in Paris from 1954 to 1959. Then he returned to Taiwan and introduced avant-garde techniques and contemporary music. He included the Taiwanese folk music extensively in his compositions.

huge influence on Hsiao and his music. During his time with Hsu, Hsiao did not write avant-garde music but mainly focused on writing choral music for children's choir and religious music, in a more traditional style. After graduating from university, Hsiao taught in a public high school in Kaoshiung for a year and a half. In 1965, he decided to pursue his graduate degree at the Musashino Music Academy in Tokyo, Japan. Hsiao originally intended to be a piano major; however, with the encouragement of Fujumoto Hideo, his compositional teacher at Musashino, he decided to be a composer. He received the Diploma in Education in 1967.³

After returning to Taiwan in 1967, Hsiao started his career as a composer, pianist and teacher. He was an associate professor in piano at NTNU and music instructor at Tainan Junior College of Home Economics (now Tainan University of Technology) and Tainan Theological College and Seminary. At the same time, he still studied piano with Isabel Taylor, a Canadian missionary, and Dr. Robert Scholz⁴, an Austrian pianist and composer. Dr. Scholz helped Hsiao to understand the musical styles of Beethoven and Chopin, and broadened Hsiao's own compositional style. In the same year, Hsiao performed the *Piano Concerto in A Minor*, op.16 by Grieg with the Tainan BBB Orchestra under the baton of Shu-Te Lee. He performed the *Piano Concerto No.3 in C minor*, op. 37 by Beethoven with the Kaoshiung Municipal Orchestra in 1972. During the years between 1967-1976, Hsiao wrote choral music, light opera, instrumental music, chamber music and orchestral music. 13 collections of his compositions were published during these years.⁵

Hsiao moved to the United States in 1977 because of the bankruptcy of his wife's business in Taiwan and the political situation. He continued to compose. This change of locale led Hsiao's

³ Hua-Rong Yen. 24-34.

⁴ Dr. Scholz was born in Steyr, Austria in 1902 and died in 1986. He immigrated to the United States in 1938. He moved to Taiwan in 1963 and married a Taiwanese pianist, Yi-Man Wu in 1969. He was recognized as a pedagogue, pianist and composer. He had a great influence on many musicians in Taiwan.

⁵ Hua-Rong Yen. 38-39.

compositional style in a different direction. When he first moved to the United States, he lived with his sister at Atlanta, Georgia. Being away from family and concerned about the situation in Taiwan, Hsiao was very depressed. He sometimes joined the local Bible study group with a group of Taiwanese students in Atlanta. During the gatherings, they sang many Taiwanese folk songs along with hymns. Hsiao was truly inspired by the folk idiom and composed several songs with Taiwanese texts. The *Vagabond* was the first song he wrote in Atlanta in 1978. The text expressed his feelings of missing Taiwan and the fear that he could not return. Hsiao liked the melody so much that he rearranged the first and last sections to become the “Prelude” and the middle section into “Memory” in his suite for piano, *Memories of Home*, op.49. Hsiao moved to Los Angeles in 1978 where he lived for seventeen years before he returned to Taiwan. These years were possibly the most productive period in Hsiao’s career. Hsiao participated in many activities to raise the profile of Taiwanese music and musicians. In 1985 he led a concert tour around the North America with a group of young Taiwanese American musicians.⁶

In 1986, at the age of forty-eight, Hsiao went back to school and continued his graduate study in composition at California State University of Los Angeles and received the Masters degree in the next year. He studied composition with Dr. Byong Kon Kim and piano with Dr. Milton Stern. During the time studying with Dr. Kim, Hsiao tried to compose several pieces in a more avant-garde style; however, Hsiao was not convinced that he should continue to write music in this way. He believed that a good piece of music is based upon the responses between composer, performer and audience. He explained “My musical philosophy is based on a kind of trinity: the composer, the performer and the audience. They must be tied together. The music must go

⁶ Ru-Ping Chen. “The Cello Works of Hsiao Tyzen” The Ohio State University, 1999. 33-35. <<http://search.proquest.com/docview/304516202?accountid=14556>> (accessed 01 Feb. 2013).

through the performer to the listeners, touching not only their minds but their hearts.”⁷ Dr. Kim advised him that a good composer should find his own voice to express himself, and discover his own way to reach out to the audience; the “modern style” is not the only way to write music. With Dr. Kim’s help, Hsiao successfully found his own musical language based on the spirit of Taiwanese folk tunes and infused with the styles and techniques of Classicism, Romanticism, Impressionism and modern music. In his time living in Los Angeles, Hsiao met Dr. Heng-Che Lin. Lin was the president of the Taiwanese United Fund and an amateur music lover. Dr. Lin encouraged Hsiao to write concerti for Taiwanese people. During the years 1988-1992, Hsiao composed three concerti, for violin, piano and cello, which were commissioned by the Taiwanese United Fund. These three concerti are often considered as Hsiao’s most successful works. In the 1993, Hsiao had major surgery to correct an aortic aneurism; he just started a new symphonic work a little before the surgery. He continued to write while was still in the hospital. This symphonic work was especially meaningful to himself and to the Taiwanese people so he prayed to God to let him finish this work. This piece was completed in 1994 and was called *1947 Overture*. It was to commemorate a national tragedy that happened on February 28, 1947. The tragedy is usually referred to as the “228 Incident”. It began with policemen confiscating illegal cigarettes which finally led to a civilian massacre. The world premiere of the overture was to be performed at a memorial concert in Taipei on February 28, 1995; but it was instead premiered in Los Angeles on June 3. The concert was a great success and was considered as a milestone in Taiwan’s musical history because Hsiao was the first composer who had the courage to express his emotions about the event through music.⁸

⁷ Ru-Ping Chen.36.

⁸ Hua-Rong Yen. 45-56.

After seventeen years away from home, Hsiao finally returned to Taiwan in 1995. Because of the successes he had in America, Hsiao was highly recognized by the Taiwanese people and many concerts were dedicated to his music. The Hsiao Tyzen Music Foundation was founded in 1997. The foundation publishes Hsiao's music and organizes associated music activities. Hsiao has become one of the well-known composers in Taiwan.

Chapter 2

THE INFLUENCES OF WESTERN MUSIC AND THE SPIRIT OF TAIWANESE FOLK TUNES

Chen-Huei Hsu, an important Taiwanese composer, once gave advice to Hsiao. “Chopin is your God, but now you should leave Chopin and to learn the style of Debussy and then find your own path.”⁹ This quote describes the stylistic progress of Hsiao’s music. Hsiao himself explained that his musical styles can be divided into three periods, 1) the early stage before 1977, 2) the second stage between 1977-1985 and 3) the late stage after 1985.¹⁰ In the early stage, the works were mainly religious music and children’s choral music along with some instrumental music, such as the oratorio *Jesus Christ, The Song of Taiwan for violin and piano* and *Fantasy Waltz for Two Pianos*. The works in the second stage were written during the time when Hsiao was staying in the United States. This was the time period during which Hsiao found and established his own musical language and started to experiment with the styles of Romanticism combined with elements of Taiwanese folk song. The works in this stage are songs, church music, instrumental and chamber music compositions, and arrangements of Taiwanese folk songs. These include *March in Democracy* for orchestra and choir, *Vagabond*, *Food Stand* for voices, *Nocturnes*, op.43 for violin, and religious music. In his later, mature stage, Hsiao successfully blends the spirit of Taiwanese folk tunes with the western compositional techniques. The works in this stage include three concerti, the symphonic works *Formosa* and *Overture 1947*, *The Most Beautiful Flower*, *Formosa Lily* and *Love and Hope* for voices.

⁹ Min-Yuen Tsai. *World-Class Taiwanese Musician: Tyzen Hsiao*. (Taipei: Yu-Shan She, 2006), 54.

¹⁰ Gong-Hsun Lu. “An Interview with Tyzen Hsiao”, *Romanticism With Deep Affection: Selected Articles About the Music of Hsiao Tyzen*, edited by Hen-Zhe Lin. (Wan Chuen Feng Ser. 1. Taipei: Wan Chuen Feng Co., Inc., 1999), 34-35.

Hsiao's *Violin Concerto in D major*, op.50 was written in 1988. It is the first violin concerto written by a Taiwanese composer. Dr. Lin encouraged Hsiao to write a concerto for the world-class Taiwanese violinist Cho-Liang Lin, bringing Hsiao's music to the world's attention. Dr. Francis Baxter said, in the foreword of *Tyzen Hsiao: Violin Pieces*, vol. 1, "Hsiao's violin concerto represents a significant step in the history of Taiwanese music and another step in his ongoing quest to bring Taiwan to America and America to Taiwan."¹¹ This concerto is considered to be a significant work in his career because it shows Hsiao's ability to write large-scale works. The theme of the second movement is based on the folk song *Oxen Plowing in the Field*. The folk song is originally in three beats per measure but Hsiao transformed it into a four-beat pattern. The premiere was given by Cho-Liang Lin with San Diego Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Heiichiro Ohyama on November 13, 1992.

The *Cello Concerto in C major*, op. 52 was written in 1990. The premiere of the concerto was in Taipei, Taiwan in 1995, and in the same year was performed by cellist Felix Fan with the San Diego Symphony Orchestra, Yoav Talmi conducting in San Diego. In this concerto, Hsiao borrowed the traditional Taiwanese singing style of Kao-tiau (Lament) from the Taiwanese opera and used it in the opening tutti section to express the emotions of grief and anger.

The *Piano Concerto in C minor*, op. 53 was written in 1990-1993. The theme of the second movement is borrowed from the folk song *The Sorrowful Heart*.¹² This concerto has been called the fifth piano concerto by Rachmaninoff. Maestro Jon Robertson, the conductor of the Redlands, CA Symphony and the dean of the Lynn University Conservatory of Music in Boca Raton, Florida, called Hsiao personally and said "...the character of Rachmaninoff is in the [Hsiao's]

¹¹ Ru-Ping Chen. 44

¹² Hua-Rong Yen. "Hsiao, Tyzen's Piano Music", *Hsiao Tyzen Musicological Forum and A Collection of Articles*. 78-87.

concerto; however, you still keep your own character, which separates your music from his...”¹³, after hearing the rehearsal at the home of Milton Stern, Hsiao’s piano teacher. The premiere of the piano concerto was performed by Taiwanese Canadian pianist Jonathan Tang with the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra conducted by Clyde Mitchell in 1994 and two years later it was performed under Dr. Robertson’s baton with the Redlands Symphony. In 2000, it was performed under the baton of Vakhtang Jordania (1942-2005) with the soloist Anatoly Sheludiakov, the winner of the Russian National Piano Competition in 1977 and artist-in-residence at the University of Georgia, United States, in the Great Hall, Moscow State Conservatory. The performance in Russia was considered to be one of Hsiao’s great successes.

Since the premiere of Hsiao’s *Piano Concerto in C minor*, op.53, he has been called “The Eastern Rachmaninoff” or “Taiwan’s Rachmaninoff.” Hsiao, in an interview, mentioned that Rachmaninoff is one of the composers that he admires.

He [Hsiao] said “I admire Rachmaninoff. In his time, every composer abandoned the tonal system and followed the trend of atonality but only he maintained the character and styles of Romanticism... He was conservative but not out of date. His music is unique and his achievements are extraordinary. His harmonic language is outstanding.... I [Hsiao] like his personal character and appreciate his consistency. I learned from his consistency; and now I write my own national music with my favorite style of Romanticism.”¹⁴

Western Influences and the Styles of Hsiao’s Music

The nature of Hsiao’s music combines Romantic style with Taiwanese Nationalism. His music is conservative, well-organized and carefully structured. Ternary and rounded binary forms are most often used in Hsiao’s music, as seen in *Memory* and *Elegy* from the *Memories of Home*, and only a small number of his works are in variation, rondo or fantasy forms. Most of his

¹³ Gong-Hsun Lu. trans. Chia-Te Liu. 37.

¹⁴ Gong-Hsun Lu. trans. Chia-Te Liu. 36.

music is tonal; only a handful of compositions in his late stage are atonal. His music mixes the Western major or minor systems with the Eastern pentatonic scale. Harmonically, he likes to use thirds along with intervals of the fourth and sometimes mixes these with pentatonic or whole-tone scales. The melody often starts with one simple statement and repeats throughout piece, each time re-harmonized. Counterpoint is another compositional technique that can be found in almost every one of Hsiao's piano pieces. He mainly writes for voice, strings and piano. The instrumentation of his symphonic works is standard, except in the *Formosa Symphony*, which has more percussion instruments.¹⁵

Hsiao often mixes the Western diatonic, chromatic and whole-tone scales with the Eastern pentatonic scale in his music and uses them alternately (Ex. 1).

Example 1 *Prelude*, mm.23-24.



Hsiao once mentioned in a letter “I was a piano major. So, when I compose for piano I try not to steal ideas from Chopin, Liszt, Rachmaninoff and Debussy...etc. Their compositions, however, include so many different techniques, it is difficult to exclude them in my works...”¹⁶ Some of the Hsiao's music demonstrates modeling on works of specific composers. For example, the *Elegy* is in the style of Liszt's *Un Sospiro* and the musical patterns are similar to Bartok's *Mikrokosmos*. Hsiao modeled the “three-hand” technique, which Liszt used in *Un Sospiro*, for

¹⁵ Lu-Fang Yen. “Hsiao's Compositional Style and Uniqueness”, *Hsiao Tyzen Musicological Forum and A Collection of Articles*, edited by Chu-Ming Dan, (Kaoshiung: Kaoshiung Government Cultural Center, 2004), 17-30.

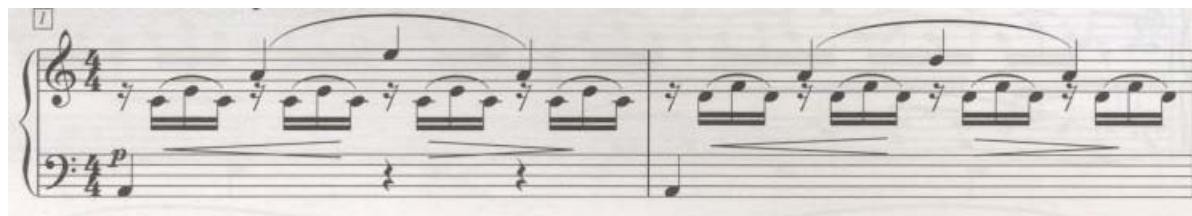
¹⁶ Fang-Yu Chen. “Tyzen Hsiao's Piano Works”, *Romanticism With Deep Affection: Selected Articles About the Music of Hsiao Tyzen*. 326-327.

the entire piece. Both Bartok and Hsiao use similar ideas of parallel motion, pentatonic scale and syncopations in their music. One of the key differences is that Hsiao uses Eastern pentatonic scale (Ex. 2 and 3). In the example 3.2, the tune, in measures one to four, is based on C Oriental pentatonic scale starting on G.

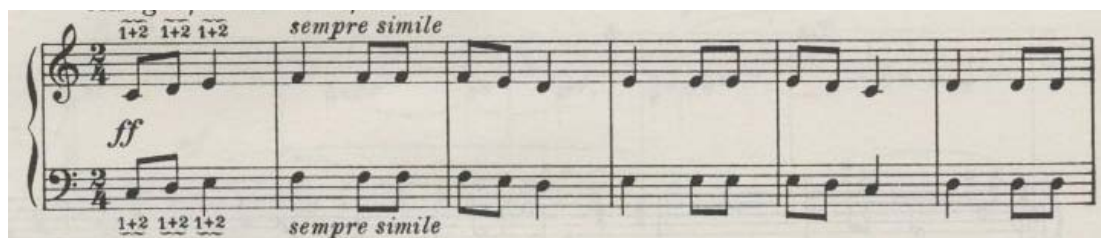
Example 2.1 Liszt's *Un Sospiro*, mm. 3-4.



Example 2.2 *Elegy*, mm. 1-2.



Example 3.1 Bartok's Variations on a Folk Tune from *Mikrokosmos* volume 4, mm. 1-6.



Example 3.2 *Playground*, mm. 1-6.



Tonalities are often ambiguous in Hsiao's music; this could be an influence from Debussy. Keys are often not revealed until the end of the piece. Key signatures often indicate C major, but many works do not start on a C major chord or end on it. It is common in Hsiao's music to see that the last chord of the piece ending on the tonic chord with the added sixth scale degree. Sometimes, the last chord of the piece is the combination of the tonic chord, relative-minor chord or notes from the Eastern pentatonic scale (Ex. 4 and 5). Example 5 is a typical example of this. The left hand is playing a d minor-seventh chord, but the last note, which is also the lowest note in the last measure, is F. If we separate out every note in measure forty, it becomes an F Eastern pentatonic scale.

Example 4 *Prelude* mm. 31-32.



Example 5 *An Ancient Taiwanese Melody*, mm. 37-40.



Hsiao's melody often has a song-like quality. This could be the influence of the religious music he heard since he was young, or from his interest in Taiwanese folk music. Much of his

music could be described as “songs without words”. Hsiao transcribed several of his songs for piano. In these, the melodic line retains its singing quality. For example, he transcribed and rearranged his song *Vagabond* to the piano solos *Prelude* and *Memory* in the collection *Memories of Home*.¹⁷ Hsiao’s melodic line is often based on the interval of a second and it is very rare for it to leap more than a perfect fourth. This again shows the influence of religious music; it also fits the character of Taiwanese folk music.

Hsiao provides a wealth of performance directions in his music. He often marks *ritardando* at the end of each phrase. Due to the frequently changing tempo in his works, the idea of bar line and the grouping of the beats in strong beat-weak beat patterns is not strong. The love of syncopation is evident in Hsiao’s music. It is used in every single piece (Ex. 6, 7, and 8).

Example 6 *Memory*, mm. 26-27



Example 7 *Elegy*, mm. 23-24.



¹⁷ Hua-Rong Yen. “Hsiao, Tyzen’s Piano Music”, *Hsiao Tyzen Musicological Forum and A Collection of Articles*. 81.

Example 8 *Frolic*, mm. 19-21.



Hsiao makes great use of the compositional technique of overlapping fifths. It is a signature sound of his music, often creating a hollow sound. Hsiao often uses this quality of sound to express melancholy (Ex. 9).

Example 9 *Prelude*, mm. 11.



One of Hsiao's favorite figurations is two slurred eighth-notes leaping in playful and active sections (Ex. 10).

Example 10 *Prelude*, mm.17-19



Hsiao also likes to use a series of unresolved seventh chord to create the sense of being lost.

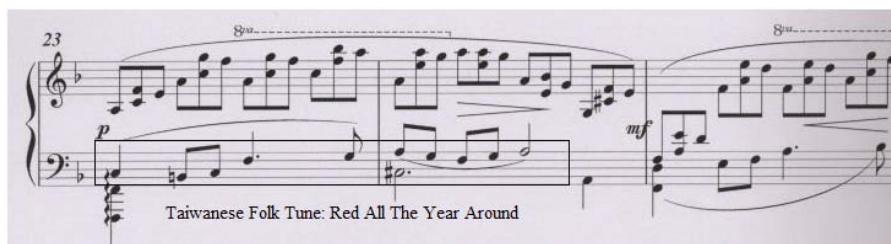
Traditional Taiwanese folk music includes songs from two different sources. One is the music of aboriginal tribes and the other one is the music of the Han people or Chinese immigrants. Music plays a very important role in all aspects of tribal life; therefore, the contents of songs are

related to all kinds of activities, such as hunting, agriculture, and religious ceremonies. The styles include monophonic, chordal, and harmonic and polyphonic singing. Strophic forms are very common in tribal music. The music of the Han people can be divided into music of two ethnic groups, the Hokkien and the Hakka. Hokkien folk elements are widely used in Hsiao's music but only a few pieces contain the elements of Hakka folk song. In this paper, only the Hokkien music will be discussed. The Hokkien folk songs are passed on orally. The songs express a wide variety of emotions, such as anger, joy, sorrow, or loneliness. Pentatonic scales are used most frequently.¹⁸ Folk elements are used in Hsiao's music extensively.

The music examples chosen from his piano music include Hokkien folk tunes, religious music and a tune that Hsiao heard from his childhood.

The Hokkien folk tune that Hsiao quoted in his *Farewell Etude* is called *Red all the year around*. The words refer to the flowers in spring, the breeze in summer, the moon in autumn and the wind in winter to express the love of young couples without mentioning the word "love" itself. Most of the topics of Hokkien songs are about suffering or pain but *Red all the year around* is one of the few songs that express happiness (Ex.11). The *Farewell Etude*, op.55 was written in 1993. Hsiao intended to use this song as his last work in the romantic style; however, he became keen to write romantic-style music even more after completing this work.

Example 11 *Farewell Etude*, mm. 23-25.



¹⁸ Wan-Shu Huang. "A study of the Taiwanese Composer Tyzen Hsiao and the Performance Aspects of His Piano Concerto in C Minor, Op.53" University of Miami, 2007. 9-12.
<http://search.proquest.com/docview/304840059?accountid=14556> (accessed 13 Jan. 2013).

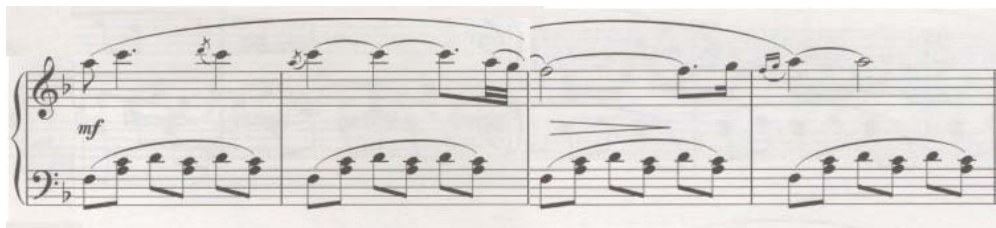
Religious music is a major influence on Hsiao's music. There are seven pieces in the collection *Poetic Echo*, op. 37 and every motive or melody is borrowed or rearranged from hymns (Ex. 12). This collection was written in 1974 during the time when Hsiao was in America.

Example 12 *Poetic Echo*, op. 37 No. 4, mm. 1-4.



Tomb Sweeping Day is an important holiday in Asian culture. It is the day to remember the ancestors. On that day, every family goes to the graveyard of the dead family members and performs a ritual offering and also cleans the grave. Hsiao performed this ritual with his family as a child. He remembered that once he met an old man when he was cleaning the tomb. He heard the old man humming a song that Hsiao had never heard before. Many years later, Hsiao used this tune from his childhood in the *Ancient Taiwanese Melody* from the *Memories of Home*¹⁹ (Ex. 13).

Example 13 *An Ancient Taiwanese Melody*, mm. 3-6.



¹⁹ Yi-Chiao Chen. *An Analysis and Performance Interpretation of Piano Works by Tyzen Hsiao- Taking Memories of Home, op. 49 and Poetic Echo op.37 as Examples*. M.M. dissertation, The National University of Tainan. 2012. 28-32.

Chapter 3

A PEDAGOGICAL INTRODUCTION OF SELECTED PIANO WORKS- *MEMORIES OF HOME, OP. 49 AND THE ANGEL FROM FORMOSA*

This chapter will provide a pedagogical introduction to Hsiao's piano works. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, his musical style combines Romanticism with Eastern color. Most of his works are tuneful, lyrical and easily accepted by audiences. Before Hsiao became a composer, he himself was a skillful pianist so most of his compositions are very pianistic. Hsiao's piano works are for intermediate to advanced level students. They demonstrate the clear influences of several major composers, including Chopin, Liszt, Bartok and Rachmaninoff, so they could be used as preparatory repertoire to masterworks by these composers.

I will start by discussing four technical issues and solutions. The pianistic techniques listed below are used in the *Memories of Home* and *The Angel from Formosa*. There will be some preparatory exercises or concepts for students to work on and understand. The main concepts discussed in this chapter can also be used in the similar passages in other pieces.

Balancing

Memories of Home and *The Angel from Formosa* are both very lyrical and treble-dominated. Balance, in the pianistic sense, is very important. In piano playing, melody and accompaniment are often one dynamic level apart. This principle suits Hsiao's music. The performer needs to use different finger speed and touch to differentiate the different layers. Suggested practice methods for the melodic line are 1) to identify the melody, 2) look for other hidden melodies, motivic segments or moments of imitation hiding in the accompaniment, 3) use more energy in the finger tips and 4) quicker attack on the melodic notes so the sound is more pointed and

projected. Suggested practice methods for the accompaniment are 1) ghosting practice, 2) semi-invisible practice 3) playing with finger pads 4) utilizing slower attack.

Ghosting, also known as shadowing practice, means to press down the key very slowly without making any sound. It helps students to experience the slower attack; however, the teacher needs to make sure that the student plays through the sound point of the key, about two-third of the way down, not just play on the surface of the key. The next step, semi-invisible practice produces a sound as soft as possible but still audible, with a little quicker attack. This practice can help student to learn how to control the strength and the speed of the key attack.

Voicing

The melody in Hsiao's music is usually in the right hand but richly harmonized. It requires the performer to bring out the melodic notes, usually the top notes, and keep the inner voices softer but still audible. The performer needs to adjust the speed of attack, the position of the hand and the shifting of the weight. Suggested practice methods include 1) two-hand practice on one staff, 2) delayed practicing.

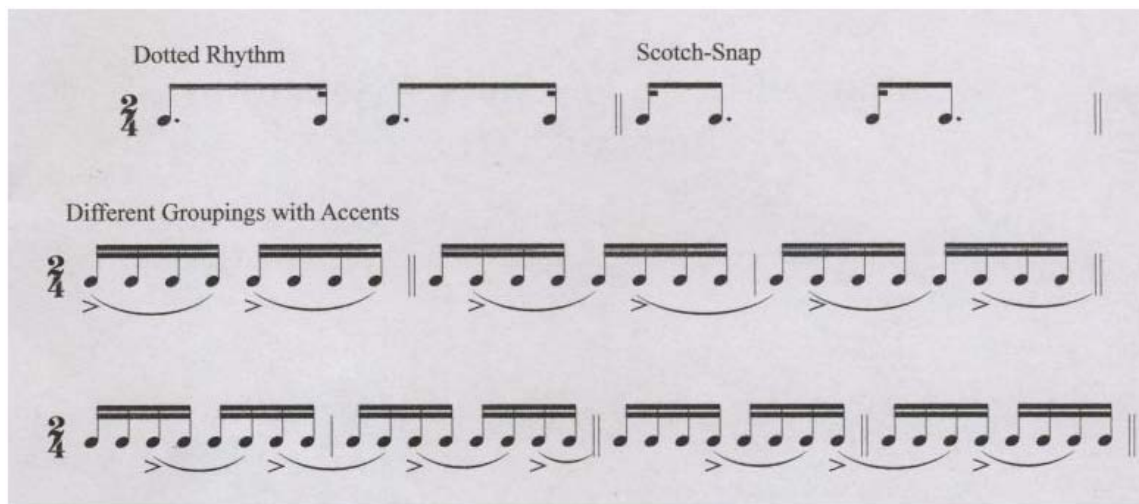
The two-hand practice on one staff means to play the melodic line and the inner voices with two hands. The right hand plays the melodic notes loudly and the left hand plays the inner voices softly so the student can have an idea of the overall sound before playing everything with one hand. Delayed practicing is the next step. It means to play the notes that students intend to bring out first, loudly, and to play the inner voices a fraction of a beat later in the dynamic of *piano*. By doing delayed practice, students can experience the different speeds of attack and different areas of finger to press down the keys. At the beginning, the less experienced students might need to try it several times and take much time between the top note

and inner voices in order to accomplish the goal; once they understand how to adjust the muscles, they can shorten the time between top and inner voices.

Running-note (the sixteenth-note or shorter note-value) passages

Running-note passages in student performances are often uneven and lack clarity. Suggested practice techniques are 1) to practice with different rhythmic patterns, such as the dotted eighth note rhythmic pattern and the reversed dotted eighth note pattern, sometimes known as a Scotch-snap, 2) different groupings, 3) placing an accent on the first note of each group (Figure 1), 4) doubled pairs and 5) tripled pairs.

Figure 1.1 Rhythmic patterns and different groupings with accents



The doubled pair means to repeat each two-note group of a four-sixteenth-notes group twice (Figure 2). The tripled pair means to repeat each pair three times, changing the rhythm to triplets. When practicing the tripled pair, students can add accents on the first note of each group.

Figure 2.1 Original groups of sixteenth notes



Figure 2.2 Doubled pair



Figure 2.3 Tripled pair



Repeated notes

Repeated notes can be quite difficult, especially in music of the twentieth-century. The difficulties in repeated notes are 1) tension in the arms, 2) lack of clarity, 3) fingering. Three different techniques are required to make repeated notes easier to play. The first is rotation technique. In piano playing, many figurations involve the movement of turning the wrists, such as the passages of tremolo or fast-moving note passages. Students, however, often tense their hands, wrists and arms too much and they can not move easily. Holding too much tension in the body will make the passages harder to play and may cause injuries. By using rotation technique, students are able to keep their hands, wrists and arms relaxed and make the passagework easier to play. Rotation technique was first detailed by Tobias Matthay (1858-1945). Matthay was one of the pioneers in piano pedagogy. Rotation involves two turning movements. The hand and arm move medially (in, toward the center of the body) and laterally (out, away from the body). Students understand new techniques more easily when movements are compared to daily activities. In this case, the analogy is with turning a door knob. When one turns a door knob, the hand is naturally doing the rotation movement.

The second technique was discussed by Dorothy Taubman (1917-2013). She called it, broadly, the choreography of the hand. She discussed positioning the hand without twisting by

moving the arms in or out on the keyboard. This helps the fingers to hit on different areas of the same key, helping the fingers to release clearly and re-strike cleanly. Sometimes, in order to keep the natural hand position, re-fingering is a solution. Figure 3.1 is from measures 30-31 in *Prelude*; 3.2 and 3.3 demonstrate some possible ways of re-fingering this passage. In the original, the right hand moves down to play the lower-register keys, making the hand position slightly less comfortable. Also, if one plays the sixteenth notes with the right hand, one would be using the fourth and the fifth fingers to play on the accented notes. The fourth and the fifth fingers are weaker fingers and they are harder to control. By playing the second sixteenth note with the left hand, it allows the right hand to return to a natural and comfortable position (Figure 3).

Figure 3.1 *Prelude*, mm. 30-31.



Figure 3.2 Suggested re-fingering 1



Figure 3.3 Suggested re-fingering 2



Because hand sizes are varied, it is hard to give a set of fingerings that would work for everyone. But there are some general principles that we can follow. C.P.E Bach, in his *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*, mentioned that long fingers should go on short notes and short fingers should play long notes. This means that longer fingers should be used for the black keys (short notes) and the shorter fingers should be used for the white keys (long notes). The second principle is that the fingerings should help project the note groupings. Thinking about the grouping of the notes often helps find an effective fingering (Figure 4).

Figure 4.1 Original pattern



Figure 4.2 Suggested grouping

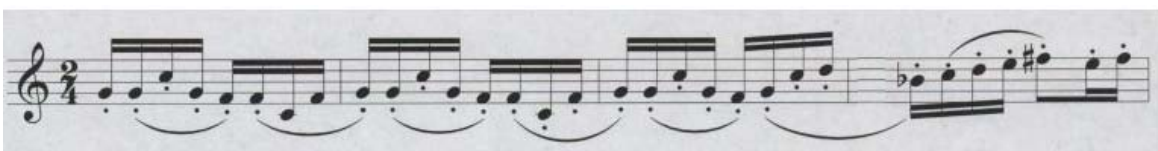
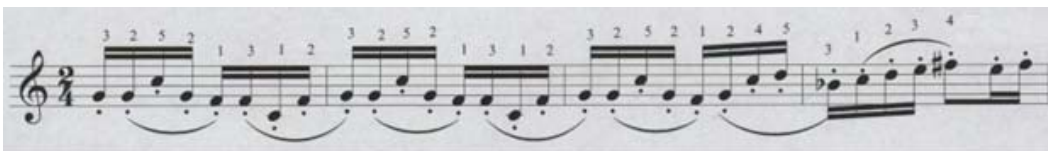


Figure 4.3 Suggested fingerings



Memories of Home, op.49

1. *Prelude*

This prelude is in the key of C major. The introduction begins with the left hand playing on the down beat and the right hand playing on the offbeat from measures one to eight. The pattern is changed in measures nine and ten. It switches from eighth-note figures to sixteenth-note figures before the motivic idea begins in measure eleven. In this passage, Hsiao builds excitement by using sudden dynamic changes. The first time, in measure four, dynamics change from *mezzo-forte* to *subito piano*; in measure nine, they change from *fortissimo* to *piano*.

Measures one to four is a repetition of a two-measure motive. In performance, it's important to be aware of the *sforzando* on the fourth beat of measures two and four. The sound of the first four measures can be thought of as percussion providing a nice contrast to the *subito piano* in measure five. From measures five to eight, a one-measure ascending phrase repeats. An *accelerando* is marked in measure seven. This smoothes the transition from the eighth-note figurations to the sixteenth notes and builds intensity into the climax in measure nine. The energy in the introduction comes from the change of figurations, from eighth notes to sixteenth notes, and from the wide dynamic range, from *piano* to *fortissimo*. The percussive introduction prepares the coming of the joyful motivic idea in the next section (Ex. 14).

Example 14 *Prelude*, mm. 1-4.

The image shows a musical score for the first four measures of the Prelude. The music is written for piano in 4/4 time and C major. The right hand (treble clef) plays a melody starting on G4, moving up stepwise to C5. The left hand (bass clef) plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes on the downbeat of each measure, with a dynamic marking of *mf* at the start. The score shows four measures, with a fermata over the final note of the fourth measure. Dynamic markings include *mf* at the beginning and *sf* at the end of the fourth measure.

In measure eleven, a new motivic idea is borrowed from the accompaniment of Hsiao's own composition, the *Vagabond*. From measures eleven to the end of the piece, both hands are moving in contrary motion and are playing opposing articulations (Ex. 9). The sixteenth-note passages in the right hand need to be *legato* while the left hand is playing *staccato* and syncopated rhythms. In measures eleven and fourteen, the music is marked "articulated" and comma at the end of both measures. Hsiao marked *a tempo* in m.12 to remind the performer to return to the original tempo. Figuration changes also support the idea of tempo change at the end of, m.11. Beats one to three have sixteenth notes, and on beat four there are two eighth-notes. This change makes the length of the notes longer, which might support the idea of slowing down at the end of the phrase. The right hand needs to use the techniques of rotation and in-and-out motions to keep the wrist and arm relaxed and to create an even sound for each note. The syncopations in the left hand in measures twelve and thirteen require care so that long notes are not overly accented.

Two eighth-notes under a slur are found in measures seventeen to twenty-two, one of Hsiao's favorite figurations. They ascend to a climax in measure twenty-three (Ex. 10). It is appropriate to apply the performance practice of the classical period in this situation, which is to stress the beginning of the slur and weaken the last note of the slur. In these measures, the left hand is playing sixteen notes. An in-and-out motion is needed in this case to help the left hand adjust to the hand position between the black notes and the white notes. In measure twenty-three to twenty-nine, the right hand is playing a C major scale and the left hand is playing the whole-tone scale. Beats one and three are accented for the entire passage and in measure thirty, every eighth note is accented. The accents start in groupings of two beats and then increase their frequency to every half beat; this increases the feeling of intensity and the

energy of moving forward to the last dynamic marking, *fortissimo*. A loud ending is very unusual in Hsiao's piano music. For this passage, the rotation technique could help to bring out the accented notes and the clarity of the sound.

2. *Memory*

This piece is written in ternary form with a two-measure introduction and a two-measure *codetta*. The A section is from measure one to measure nineteen; the B section is from measure twenty to measure twenty-seven; and the return of A is from measure twenty-eight to measure forty-four. As in the *Prelude*, the melody of *Memory* is borrowed from the vocal part of Hsiao's *Vagabond*. The phrase is four measures in length throughout the entire piece. The first phrase reappears four times, each time slightly changed (Example 15).

Example 15 *Memory*, mm. 3-6.



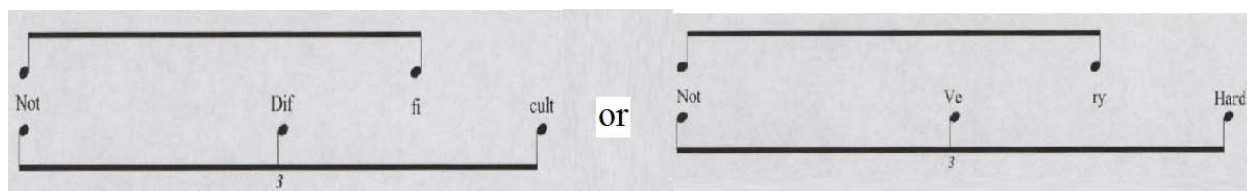
The B section is based on a motive from the A section; it is harmonized with a series of diminished-seventh chord inversions before the return of A section.

There are four main pedagogical issues in this piece: 1) balance, 2) voicing, 3) poly-rhythms, 4) legato playing. The left hand is playing an accompaniment in triplets for the whole piece and the right hand has the melody, often harmonized. To deal with the balance issue, the add-a-voice practice is necessary. The first step is to do the ghosting and semi-invisible exercises in the left hand. Second, students can do skeleton practice. It means to practice the melodic line with only the bass note, which plays on the same beat as the melody, to listen to the balance, and then practice the melodic line only with the complete left hand accompaniment. The third

step would be adding the inner voice in the right hand. When adding a new voice every time, students need to make sure that each voice is one dynamic level apart. The second issue would be the voicing; this is mainly an issue in the right hand in this piece. To work on the voicing, students need to practice the two-hand and delayed exercises in order to gain the control of the muscles and adjust the speeds of pressing down the keys. The two-hand exercise would help students to understand that the melody, which is the top voice in this case, needs to be louder than the inner voice. It is strongly recommended to practice the top voice with the fingering that students will be using when they are ready to play the chords with one hand. The reason for doing this is to make sure that students are exercising the same finger that they will be using when they are actually playing the piece.

Poly-rhythms are often hard for students. Many students are taught in a mnemonic²⁰ way by saying “not difficult” or “not very hard” while playing the three-against-two rhythm but the concept is often not explained (Figure 5).

Figure 5.1 Verbalized poly-rhythms



Speaking out loud while playing is a useful tool to reinforce understanding; but explaining the concept is equally important. The way to play three-against-two is to place the second eighth-note in one hand between the second and the third eighth-note triplet in the other hand. If we subdivide the eighth-note triple into sixteen-note sextuplet, it can be equally divided into two

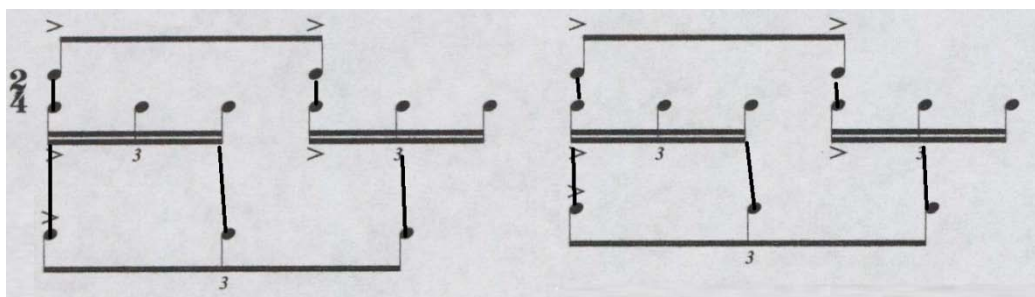
²⁰ Mnemonic is a type of memory technique. The purpose is to transform the information into a form that the brain can easily absorb and process so the information can be remembered longer.

groups and each group is equal to the length of an eight note in simple meter. Students tap one hand in the eighth-note pattern and the other hand tap sixteenth-note triplets (Figure 6).

Figure 6.1 Poly-rhythms: Two-against-Three rhythm 1



Figure 6.2 Poly-rhythms: Two-against-Three rhythm 2



Hsiao marked slurs for every phrase. This shows the phrase grouping and also indicates that the notes within phrase are connected. *Legato* means to play the notes with a connected, smooth and matched sound. There are several ways to achieve this goal. Some teachers believe in doing finger-legato to connect every note while others use more pedal to keep the line. There are advantages and disadvantages to either way. Finger legato is a useful technique that students should learn but it can lead to an awkward and uncomfortable hand position, especially for a student with a smaller hand. To use more pedal can easily lead to a muddy sound. The third way of creating a legato sound is to match the tone between each note. By matching and smoothing the sound, the melodic line will sound connected without putting the hand into an uncomfortable position.

3. *Playground*

This piece is in a rounded binary form with a five-measure codetta. Hsiao uses a *glissando* at the end of the measure fifty-six to lead into the codetta, a rarity in his piano works. In this case, perhaps Hsiao would like to increase the feeling of fun, to better suit the title. Balance and voicing were discussed in the previous piece; leaps, however, are an issue in this work.

In the A section, Hsiao marks *legato* and playful. Phrases are eight measures long. Measures one to eight presents the main idea in both hands; it reappears four times in this piece. In measures nine to twelve, Hsiao presents the main idea contrapuntally. In the B section, measures seventeen to thirty-two are marked *poco scherzando*. The right hand is marked *staccato* and the left hand has *staccato* under the slur. The touch for the right hand needs to be shorter and the left hand, because of the markings, needs to be played with a detached sound; however, the touch for both hands needs to be shorter and lighter to suit the character of this section. In measure thirty-three, the main idea appears again but it is two-octaves higher than the first time and is marked *dolce*. The left hand accompaniment has octave leaps in this passage. Accurate leaping is a problem for some students. To resolve the problem, students need to work on the positioning first. In order to land on the correct notes, they need to know how far the hand needs to leap. Students can practice by speaking the note names first and then moving the hand down to the notes without physically playing the notes. Lots of times students lift up the hand too high and spend too much time in the air. This increases the possibility of hitting the wrong notes; it also takes longer to get to the right notes. Practicing positioning before actually playing the notes helps placement and prevents students from hearing the wrong notes too many times. When practicing the leap, students need to remember that they must

complete the movement of playing the notes of each passage before leaping down or up to the next passage, to avoid unwanted accents.

4. *An Ancient Taiwanese Melody*

This piece is the only one written in the key of F major in this suite. To Hsiao, F major could be a key that carries feelings of sadness. Another example is his *Farewell Etude*. It is originally his way of saying farewell to romantic music but after finishing this piece, it caused him to love romantic music even more.

Compared to the other works in this suite, *An Ancient Taiwanese Melody* is easier technically but it is harder, perhaps, to capture the character. The tune of the piece is based on Hsiao's memory of hearing the tune hummed by an old man when Hsiao was a child on Tomb Sweeping Day. The character of this piece creates a feeling of remembrance of the lost loved ones but there are also elements of happiness, because they are resting in a better place. There is an overall quality of melancholy. The ending of this piece is very interesting. The last chord could be understood as the second inversion of a d minor seventh chord in the left hand; however, the right hand has to cross to play the f. This suggests an F major chord with an added sixth. If we include every note in the last measure, the chord becomes F-G-A-C-D, an example of the Eastern pentatonic scale.

As in the other pieces, balance is an issue. The left-hand accompaniment is a broken chord figuration. Students need to be careful with the double thirds in the left hand. The thirds must be played simultaneously. Because of the differences in finger length, students need to make sure that they adjust the two fingers to the same level and key-speed.

5. *Elegy*

This piece makes an excellent contrast with the previous piece, *An Ancient Taiwanese Melody*. The previous work is calm and quiet but *Elegy* is very dramatic and exciting. The challenge in this piece is the hand-crossing technique.

Most of the time the left hand crosses the right hand in this piece. It is helpful to have students practice the gesture first, away from the keyboard. Ask them to place both hands on the fallboard and practice the movement several times without actually playing any note. The next step is to open the lid and play the note in the lower register, then name the note in the higher register before crossing the left hand to the higher register. By saying the note-name out loud, it reinforces the sense of what notes to play and what degree of arc is required. This reduces the chance of hitting the wrong notes. The third step is to play both hands together but still naming the note while playing. The last step is to play without saying the notes.

This piece has a wide dynamic range. It builds from *piano* to *fortissimo* in measure nineteen. The climax of the piece in measure thirty-two, *fortissimo* but it drops down to *pianissimo* in one beat in measure thirty-three (Ex. 16).

Example 16 *Elegy*, mm. 32-33.

The image shows a musical score for two staves, likely piano and violin or flute. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. Measure 32 is marked with a box containing the number 32 and a fortissimo (ff) dynamic marking. The right hand in measure 32 has a trill (tr) over a series of notes. The left hand has a series of notes, including a sharp sign. Measure 33 is marked with a pianissimo (pp) dynamic marking. The right hand has a series of notes with sharp signs, and the left hand has a series of notes. The score is written in a standard musical notation style.

Hsiao did not write in the *ritardando* in this measure, but for the instrument to change the sound quickly with such extreme dynamics, slowing down and adding a gap before the next down beat is needed; these can also increase the intensity of the passage. The color of the inner voice in

the right hand needs to be darker in order to make the melodic line stand out more. This can be accomplished by playing with the finger pads and with slower attack. For some measures, like measure eleven and thirteen, the melodic line appears in the right hand (Ex. 17). Students need to be able to do two different touches in one hand in order to distinguish the melody and inner voice.

Example 17 *Elegy*, mm. 11-13.



6. *Frolic*

This piece is the most difficult piece in the suite. There are several technical problems that need to be dealt with, 1) repeated notes, 2) the quick switch from contrary motion to parallel motion, 3) the big leaps in the accompaniment.

Rotation technique and choreography of hand position has been mentioned explaining how to practice the repeated notes sections in the beginning of the chapter. Students need to think about the choreography of the hand position so that the hand returns to a normal and comfortable position. The rotation technique helps students keep an even sound without holding too much tension in the body. Here are some further suggestions on practicing the movement of playing repeated notes. First, students need to learn how to keep the fingers flexed without holding unnecessary tension in the palms, wrists and arms. A similar movement in the daily life would be holding the saltcellar and shaking the salt or pepper to the food. Once the students are used to doing this movement in the air, they can practice the movement on the fallboard. The benefits on practicing on the fallboard are: 1) it puts hands and fingers in the same positions as

the actual playing position, 2) it is easier to hear the evenness of the sound coming from a hard object. The next step would be doing the same motion on the same note repeatedly but remember to practice with the fingerings that students will use when they are ready to play the piece. While doing the above exercises, students need to be aware to keep the palms, wrists and arms relatively relaxed.

Quick switching of motions and articulations are another problem in this piece. Add-a-beat practice is a very helpful way to work on the quick switching from one motion to another (Ex. 18).

Example 18 *Frolic*, mm. 40-42.



Students can isolate the transition between the motions and work on it first. Once they can make the transition smoothly, they can add a beat before the transition and a beat after the transition. If adding-a-beat practice is too easy, students can change to add-a-measure.

The tempo of this piece is quite fast and sixteenth-notes are used throughout the entire piece, creating a restless feeling. In this type of piece, keeping a steady beat is very hard. Practicing with the metronome is helpful but not enough by itself. Counting out loud is important to help students internalize the tempo. The smallest note value in this piece is the sixteenth note. Some students would count in “1234”; the better way to count would be “1e+a”. This maintains a consistent beat structure throughout the various rhythmic levels, so that, for instance, 8th notes always come on “1” and “+”, no matter what level is being counted. Numbers, in the music

world, are used in many different ways. They could be referring to the fingerings, beats, harmonies, and notes. So, if the numbers that used in counting are separated and systematized, it could help students on understanding and remembering the counting better.

The Angel from Formosa

This piece was written in 1999. It was originally for orchestra; later, Hsiao transcribed it for piano. This piece is in the key of G major. This piece can be divided into two big sections with a transition. The first section, from measures five to thirty-one, contains three parts and the first two parts are very similar. The harmonies in the third part are less stable. Each part contains two phrases. The same structure repeats again in the second section without the first part. Figure 6 shows the structure of the piece.

Table 1 Structure

| Section | Intro. | First | | | | | | Transition | | Second | | | | Coda |
|---------|--------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|------------|----|--------|----|----|----|------|
| Parts | | A1 | | A2 | | B | | | | A2 | | B | | |
| Phrase | | a1 | a2 | a1 | a2 | b1 | b2 | T1 | T2 | a1 | a2 | b1 | b2 | |

The technical issues in the piece are similar to those in *Memories of Home* so I will not duplicate my discussion. Here, I will focus on the interpretation.

The whole piece is constructed on a four-measure theme that is used throughout, without much change (Ex. 19).

Example 19 *The Angel from Formosa*, mm. 5-8.



This technique works well in the orchestral version since Hsiao gives the theme to different instruments every time the theme recurs. The different timbres, sounds and tone colors of each instrument help maintain interest. It does not work so well on the piano. In order to keep the music interesting, the performer must do more with timing and the phrasing.

At the end of almost every phrase, Hsiao marks *ritardando*; this must be varied from phrase to phrase so that the effect does not become predictable. Although each phrase begins with the same motivic idea, connecting each phrase could be different every time. The harmonies, cadences and the direction of notes may suggest different ways to play each phrase ending. There are several alternatives; the suggestion following is just one way to approach to the music. In measures four and eight, both of the phrases end on the dominant seventh chord; however, the top voices are different. In measure four, it closes on the D, the scale degree five ($\hat{5}$) of G major. In measure eight, the dominant-seventh chord closes on the A, the scale degree two ($\hat{2}$) of G. It gives a stronger sense of resolving down to G, the scale degree one ($\hat{1}$), than the $\hat{5}$. So, the first time, the phrase, in measure four, can end at the end of the measure and a new phrase begins in the next measure. In measure eight, the phrase can move across the barline and close on the downbeat of measure nine (Ex. 20).

Example 20.1 *The Angel from Formosa*, mm. 1-4.

D, scale degree 5

D dominant-seventh

Example 20.2 *The Angel from Formosa*, mm. 8-9.

The image shows a musical score for measures 8 and 9. Measure 8 is marked with a piano dynamic and includes the annotation 'A, scale degree 2'. Measure 9 is marked 'a tempo' and 'mp'. A 'poco rit...' marking is placed over the first half of measure 9. Below the score, the text 'D dominant-seventh' is written.

The transition, measures thirty to forty-two, can be divided into two parts. Each part contains a six-measure phrase. The first part continues the fragments from the B part of the first section. The harmonies start to move away from G major. The rhythmic pattern, in the second part of the transition, changes from eighth notes to sixteenth notes but the harmonies return to the dominant of G. It arrives on the perfect authentic cadence at the end of the transition.

Taiwanese folk music is often in strophic form. In the final statement, the texture often gets thicker and the tempo often slows down in order to create a broad and strong ending. In the last section of *The Angel from Formosa*, measures forty-three to fifty-eight, sixteenth notes are added to the chordal accompaniment in the right hand, thickening the texture as in folk music. It will be appropriate to apply the character of Taiwanese folk song to this section, slowing down and broadening to the ending (Ex. 21).

Example 21 *The Angel from Formosa*, mm. 43-45.

The image shows a musical score for measures 43, 44, and 45. The score is in G major and features a complex texture with sixteenth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more rhythmic bass line in the left hand. The dynamic is marked 'mp'.

The last section, measures forty-three to fifty-eight, is a repeat of the first section but a sixteenth-note accompaniment is added in the inner voice in the right hand. This later changes to the left hand. The piece closes with a five measure codetta. In the last measure, Hsiao uses a G major seventh chord resolving to a G major chord. This adds the different tone color to the ending (Ex. 22).

Example 22 *The Angel from Formosa*, mm. 61-62.

The image shows a musical score for two staves, treble and bass clef, in G major. The treble staff begins with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and the instruction *perdendosi.....*. The bass staff has a piano (*ppp*) dynamic. The score shows a G major seventh chord in the bass staff resolving to a G major chord. The treble staff features a melodic line with sixteenth-note accompaniment in the inner voice.

pp *perdendosi.....* *ppp*

G major-seventh G major

Chapter 4

CONCLUSION

Tsang-Houei Hsu commented on Hsiao's music in the letter to a young Taiwanese pianist.

Hsu said:

I once encouraged Hsiao to leave Chopin's style and to learn from Debussy's music. He finally moved on from Chopin but he did not enter into the realm of contemporary music via Debussy but he still found his own style. His works are post-romanticism. He loves Taiwan so much. He searches the inspirations from his roots, enriches his music from his belief and writes the music by mastering the Western compositional techniques.....As a composer, he is faithful to himself and he creates his own musical language....²¹

In these two selected piano works of Tyzen Hsiao, we can see many aspects of musical style and influence, form, harmonic language, and melodic and rhythmic structure. Influences include Romanticism, Impressionism and Taiwanese culture and music. Many of the pieces have a similar structure, with an introduction and codetta; many of them are written in ternary form. The *Elegy* from *Memories of Home* is the only piece written in the key of A minor; the rest are in the major keys. The melodic structure is treble dominant and the accompaniment is in the style of broken chords or *arpeggios*. The rhythmic patterns often contain syncopations.

Hsiao wants to express the spirit of Taiwan and to touch his audience via his music. Because of this belief, he has never followed the trend of the contemporary music. Besides his love of romantic music, Hsiao also feels that not many Taiwanese composers who wrote romantic music. In his opinion, there is already much Taiwanese aboriginal music, classical music and

²¹ Tsang-Houei Hsu. "A Letter Before Concert of Three Hsiao", *Romanticism With Deep Addection: Slected Articles About the Music of Hsiao Tyzen*. trans. Chia-Te Liu. 190-191.

contemporary music heard in Taiwan, but romantic music is missing. This is one of the reasons why Hsiao writes music in the romantic style.²²

The levels of difficulty of these two pieces are about intermediate to early advanced. They share some technical similarities but each one of them also introduces a new concept of piano playing. From the pedagogical point of view, spiral teaching is an efficient way to teach these pieces. Spiral teaching means to introduce a new concept and then develop the concept from many different angles, increasing in complexity. It reinforces one concept from many different aspects. Spiral teaching could help students to absorb the concepts well and also help students to understand one concept in different contexts.

Hsiao's music provides a variety of musical challenges to the performer. The style of each piece is different from the others and only one or two new concepts are introduced in any one piece. Each one of them has its own uniqueness and charm. The nature of Hsiao's music is romantic and it provides a foretaste of the masterpieces of romantic music. These make Hsiao's pieces useful teaching repertoire. Hsiao's music has been performed quite often in Taiwan and in the United States; however, it has not been used as teaching material. By presenting Hsiao's music in a pedagogical way it will hopefully encourage more pianists and teachers to study and to use as teaching material. Hsiao's music and Taiwanese music in general deserve to be heard by a larger audience.

²² Lu-Fang Yen. "Hsiao's Compositional Style and Uniqueness", *Hsiao Tyzen Musicological Forum and A Collection of Articles*, edited by Chu-Ming Dan. 23.

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