

The Interaction of Cello and Chinese Traditional Music

BY

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## The Interaction of Cello and Chinese Traditional Music

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## Abstract

This document concerns the interaction of the cello and Chinese traditional music with an emphasis on three major areas. An historical introduction to western music in China includes descriptions of its early appearances and development, musical education influences, and how the cello became an important instrument in China. The second section is a discussion of techniques of western music and Chinese traditional music as used by Chinese composers, who write works in both styles separately and in admixtures of the two. The third section is a description of four Chinese works that include cello: “《二泉印月》” (*Reflection of Moon in Er-Quan Spring*), “《川腔》” (*The Voice of Chuan*), “《渔舟唱晚》” (*The Melodies of the Fishing Night*), and “《对话集 I》” (*Dialogue I*). Analysis of these four works helps show how the cello has been assimilated into Chinese traditional music in both solo and ensemble fields, with specific looks at incorporating traditional performing techniques on the cello, the imitation of programmatic themes and aspects of Chinese culture in such works, and complex issues concerning aspects of performance. The purpose of this document is to help introduce Chinese traditional music to western ears and further my interest in combining western music and traditional Chinese music, perhaps helping an interesting musical synthesis to emerge.

## Acknowledgments

I cannot express how fortunate that I have been to be able to work with my graduate committee members: Paul Laird, my committee chair; Edward Laut, my cello teacher; Bryan Kip Haahiem; David Neely; and Martin J Bergee. I thank each of these professors from deep in my heart for their great efforts and support in helping me to complete this project.

I also want to give my deep gratitude to my dearest brother, Jiang Dan-Xi, who flew specially from China to participate in my lecture recital. Without his support, I would not have been able to complete this project. Thanks also to my parents, Jiang Jia-You and Lv Chang-Si and all my other family members who have offered me their good wishes and supported me in this project.

## Chapter I

### The Historical Background of Western Music in China

Western classical music has quickly developed in Asian countries. Many world-class musicians have come from Asia, with China producing a number of quality performers. Even though western classical music appeared in China hundreds of years ago, it has only been widely recognized and become popular to the Chinese in the last forty years. Even in such a short amount of time, Chinese musicians have become a major presence on the world stage.

The violoncello was developed in Europe hundreds of years before it was introduced to China. The earliest records show that the cello's first appearance in China was around 1742, which was the early-middle period of Qing dynasty (1616-1912). During the period, many missionaries went to China to propagate their religions. They brought with them western culture, science, educational methods, and arts. Until the late nineteenth century, the western arts and culture were only limited to the royal family and religious organizations. However, the development of cello study was much slower and occurred in spurts. Real interest in the cello began in the late twentieth century.

Except for use in church services, cello mostly existed for curiosity and entertainment in the Chinese royal family. None of the Chinese people really took it seriously or wanted to study it formally. All the performers at that time were from Europe. A similar situation was also happening with western painting. These

conditions started to change around end of nineteenth century. Because China lost two Opium Wars (1839-1842, 1856-60), the government had to pay huge indemnities and give up land as the terms of surrender. The country was less in the control of Qing's government, and more western people came to China. These included government officials, businessmen, religious missionaries, visitors, and adventurers. They all came to China for diverse reasons, but at the same time, they made huge contributions by pushing forward western civilization onto Chinese society, including western music.

In the twentieth century, the whole nation was influenced by a new humane ideology and spirit, which is the respect of democracy and science. This new philosophy inspired Chinese society to fight against the old feudal and despotic thinking. Eventually, it caused the outbreak of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement.<sup>1</sup> During this period, the new concept of western music was brought into China and spread around by foreign missionaries, nationals, musicians, and returning Chinese exchange students. Under the influence of this new cultural concept, a variety of musical associations spontaneously organized through the unremitting efforts of Chinese scholars and musicians, and residential foreign musicians. Even though these were amateur groups, they were the start of Chinese music educational institutions, which promoted the spread of western classical music in China. Also, this process embodied

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<sup>1</sup> The movement happened on May 4th, 1919. It was the Chinese intellectual revolution and sociopolitical reform movement. The ideal of the movement was to agitate for Chinese society reform and strength through acceptance of western science, democracy, and educational methods, to make the nation strong enough to resist western imperialism. The movement helped the successful reorganization of the Nationalist Party and established the Chinese Communist Party. Cezon Zhou, *The History of May 4th Movement* (Changsha: Yuelu print, 1999), 25.

the influence of western music on Chinese music education. On the basis of these associations, there were many musical institutions established nationally, but only a few were independent and professional. Some of the institutions decided to import western music theory and its technology to help develop music education. Both instrumental and theory studies were established in the academic associations as their main programs. There were also some church schools that provided piano study. Around the 1920s, professional educational institutes grew quickly.

Many public schools were established, and in 1927 the first real Chinese professional-level musical institute, the Shanghai National Conservatory of Music, was founded.<sup>2</sup> Besides these schools, many other universities established music departments. The beginning of twentieth century was one of the most significant time periods for western music in China. The nation built a solid music education system and established influences for its future development.

During the following almost half century, Chinese society experienced complex and intense periods of instability in political, military, and diplomatic fields, including the Second World War, the Civil War, the Korean War, and the Cultural Revolution. Due to the uncertainty of the political environment, the Chinese people turned their thoughts and actions to confront the relationship between Chinese music and western music. Some people believed that western music was better than Chinese music, and any attempt of changing of Chinese music should be abandoned. Some other people

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<sup>2</sup> It was later renamed Shanghai National Music College in 1929, and became Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 1961.

"上海音乐学院." 上海音乐学院. Accessed May 30, 2016.  
[http://www.shcmusic.edu.cn/view\\_0.aspx?cid=12](http://www.shcmusic.edu.cn/view_0.aspx?cid=12).

believed that the arts of each period reflected the culture of the period, and also there was an idea that music education should support and develop both Chinese and western music. Under political influence, composers mainly aimed to stimulate national pride to fight invaders. How to create the best way for the nation to solidify behind Chinese ideals was far more important than the continued cultivation of western instruments at this point.

Around the same time, Chinese traditional music was stimulated by national sentiment and this idea carried forward after the founding of the new Chinese government. However, some musicians were trying to mix Chinese traditional music with western musical knowledge. Two influential composers, Jiang Wen-Ye (1910-1983) and Ma Si-Cong (1912-1987) were good examples; especially Ma Si-Cong, a famous violinist who had already started to compose. He advocated that by “using the new approach to the creation of folk music.... New Chinese music is not only for a few people, it is also important for the whole nation.... A Chinese musician should not only learn the technologies from western music. They also should learn from our people.”<sup>3</sup> He created many works using traditional folk songs as raw materials.

During the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, the nation’s doors were closed again. China had no communication with foreign countries and naturally there were no exchanges with western music. Many newly-established musicology projects were

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<sup>3</sup> Yonglie Ye, *Ma Si-Cong Zhuan* (A Biography of Ma Si-Cong) (Nan Ning: Guangxi People’s Publishing House, 2006).



stopped because of a shortage of materials or the founders were persecuted. Unfortunately, these projects stagnated indefinitely.

After the Cultural Revolution movement ended in 1976, China embraced its new age by employing a major new policy, “Reform and the Open Door.” The government redefined the direction of national development, which included the fields of politics, economy, culture, and ideology. Starting from the end of 1970s, western culture came in like a flood to China. The most influential musical event was the visit of the world-famous violinist Isaac Stern and the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1979. It was also the first exposure Chinese musicians had of how western classical music was played by a major western professional ensemble.

From the end of the 1980s, learning western instruments started to become popular in many Chinese families. The choices of musical instruments were no longer just limited to piano, violin, and cello. Other orchestral instruments, opera singing, and majors in composition became recognized by the Chinese people. Ordinary citizens had more chances to hear other instruments and music, and many parents decided their child could learn a musical instrument that the parents were interested in, but never had a chance to learn.

In the mid-1990s, the idea of studying instruments began to change. People learning instruments were not limited in their professional study. More and more people started instruments as a hobby, and the ages of students varied from children to adults. After the beginning of the 2000s, learning instruments was officially popularized. The instruments were not only favored in western music, as Chinese

traditional musical instruments also received attention, such as *er-hu*, *guzheng*, *dizi*, and *pipa*, etc. Learning music was no longer limited as a possible future career. It also became a good way to build the student's abilities and artistic accomplishments. From elementary school through high school, marching band, symphonic band, and traditional music ensembles were gradually established. Music schools in colleges increased from nine independent conservatories to many universities. Because of this large change in China, many talented children were discovered and the success of their studies appeared on the international stage.

Starting from the end of the twentieth century, the cello became a bridge connecting western and eastern cultures. The would-famous cellist Yo-Yo Ma with his Silk-Road Project was one of the best examples. This project was presented by a group of musicians from eastern and western countries that formed the ancient Chinese Silk-Road from China to Europe. The musical styles were varied based on the folk style from the each country along the Silk-Road. As the project expanded, the musical styles also multiplied, including classical music, folk, pop. and jazz. The ensemble was also a mixture of both very distinctive eastern and western instruments, also including a variety of singing styles.

From the late nineteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century, western classical music has grown from nothing to a well-developed art in China. It started from a few people playing instruments, and has become an important part of people's lives. Through several generations of musicians with their nonstop research, creation, and efforts, the development was huge. Chinese people experienced a

change of thought from disdain to curiosity, from exclusion to worship, from imitating others to the choice of learning. This process shows the maturity of Chinese musicians through professional music educational efforts, as well as Chinese traditional music education, which also developed effectively.

## **Chapter II**

### **Chinese Compositions for Cello**

In China, the development of music composition can be divided into several stages. The early stage was before the twentieth century, when western music was not progressively developed in China. For centuries, musical works were written under the influence of the purely traditional civilization, where composers wrote music mostly from their own perspectives, including their personal philosophies and ideals. Different than western history, religious beliefs were not involved much with the political domination from the Chinese governing class. However, Confucianism pervaded the whole society for almost half of the history of Chinese civilization and appeared in all fields of art, such as music, literature, architecture, and painting. Under these circumstances, musical compositions were mostly programmatic. The contents were either based on the reflection of people's humanity or worship of nature. For this reason, musical arts were either for personal interest or the entertainment needs of the

upper classes. In the whole society there was no academic organization that provided systematic musical education. The only mode for music learning was verbally transmitted from person to person. Because of this, many ancient works were lost.

The second stage of development was during the twentieth century. Music composition came under the strong influence of western music educational methods during this time, reaching many students. The composition field was also blooming like never before. The cello as a foreign musical instrument also appeared in China, and was slowly accepted by society. During its earlier period in China, there was no cello work written by a native composer. Playable works were limited to western compositions, such as those by Haydn, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and Schubert. With the increase in the number of instruments and players, cello works by Chinese composers started to appear.

The earliest important works were composed during the 1930s. The first Chinese cello work, *Autumn Meditation* (“《秋思》”) was composed by You-Mei Xiao (“萧友梅”).<sup>4</sup> It has been stated the first performance of a Chinese cello work was around 1940 in Chongqin.<sup>5</sup> Other well-known early Chinese cello works included: Wen-Ye Jiang’s Cello Sonata, Op. 15 and his Cello Suites, Op. 38; Tong Shang’s Fantasy

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<sup>4</sup> Xiao, You-Mei (1884 - 1940) was born in Xiang-shan, Cantong province. He was one of the most important Chinese composers and music educators. He was a music major at Tokyo Conservatory of Music and education major at Tokyo Imperial University in Japan, and later he earned his PhD in composition from Königliches Konservatorium der Musik in Leipzig. He was the founder of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. His compositions included works for cello, piano, and voice, and string quartets. He wrote books including *Harmony*, *General Music Study*, *The Research and Comparison of Chinese and Western Music*, and *The Ancient and Modern Scales of Chinese and Western Music*.

"中文百科-网络百科新概念." 中文百科-网络百科新概念. Accessed April 29, 2016. <http://www.zwbk.org/MyLemmaShow.aspx?zh=zh-tw>.

<sup>5</sup> I saw this in a document years ago, but unfortunately, I did not have access to the source while writing this document.

(“《幻想曲》”); Lu-Ding Huo’s Lullaby (“《摇篮曲》”); Zhen-Bang Liu’s *Night of Autumn* (“《秋之夜》”); and an arrangement of the folk song *Embroider the Silk Banner With Gold* (“《绣金匾》”), among other examples.

When the new Chinese government was established in 1949, the country experienced a long period of weakness through almost half a century of nonstop wars. The basis for nation-building was very low and the need for recovery was urgent. Due to the international conflict between Communism and capitalist nations, China did not have much affiliation with the western world. The only sources of support and close relationship were Eastern European countries in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Many experts and material supplies were provided from Russia, including resources for western music studies. Around the 1950s, a large number of talented Chinese music students were sent to Russia, Hungary, and France to study. After these musicians finished their education and returned to China, those musicians who majored in cello became the core teachers at music schools and advanced the development of cello playing in China. At the same time, more cello works were composed. The most well-known were Si-Cong Ma’s Cello Concerto in A Major, Qiang Wang’s Cello Concerto – *Gada Meilin* (“《嘎达梅林》”), Zhuang Liu’s *Romance* (“《浪漫曲》”), Rong-fa Liu’s *Pastoral Song* (“《牧歌》”), and Lian-Shan Wang’s *Picking Tea Ballad* (“《采茶谣》”).

During this period, all cello works were composed in the conventional style, which was a mixture of western romantic tonal music and Chinese traditional music. In these works, the Chinese composers used many western musical elements, such as

the form, genre, harmony, and structures, to mix with the Chinese folk tunes. In some larger pieces, especially symphonic works, major influences of French and Russian styles can be found, such as in Ma's Concerto in A Major and Wang's Cello Concerto – *Gada Meilin*. These works are in similar forms of western concertos, such as sonata form. For the solo parts, composition techniques were well balanced in the melodic line between lyrical and virtuoso. They sounded like works by European composers that used Chinese folk tunes.

Each of China's 56 ethnic groups has its own culture and repertory of folk tunes. When these different folk tunes became included in compositions, musical styles and expressions diversified. For example, the subject of two cello pieces, Wen-tao Jiang and Ling Cao's *The Festival of Tian Mountain* (“《节日的天山》”) and Liu's *Romance* both represent the same location, Sinkiang Province, but *The Festival of Tian Mountain* was in the style of the Uyghur ethnic group and *Romance* was in the style of the Kazakhs. Another good example is Liu's *Pastoral Song*, which focused on the subject of a Mongolian ethnic group, who lived in Inner Mongolia Province, which neighbors Sinkiang Province. The style of the music was a similar but not exactly like *Romance*. And all of these three cello pieces were just representing a small portion of styles from the whole nation, not to mention that the content of these works were used for different purposes, such as nationalism, politics, and emotional revelation.

The late 1960s to end of 1970s was the period of the Cultural Revolution. It was not only the darkest time for western culture in China, but also a destructive time for all other arts. Extremism consumed people's minds during that period. Western music

and arts were forbidden, and the cello and composition were not exempt. Almost all western-trained musicians had to switch to traditional music or vocal music and only perform political works. The cello was integrated into the Chinese theatrical orchestra to perform historical theatrical shows like *Yang-Ban-Xi* (“样板戏”).<sup>6</sup> The fortunate result for cello was it was allowed to remain.

The third stage began after the end of Culture Revolution. Starting from 1978, the “Reformation and Open Door” policy by Deng Xiaoping became the new direction of national development due to his recognizing of what is the most urgent mission for Chinese government to do for the county. The government opened the door to the western world in all fields, including economics, culture, science, and technology. Western music was a pioneering field and received substantial support from the government. When Isaac Stern went to China, he gave public master classes for Chinese musicians to explain how to perform an acceptable style of western classical music. He even went to visit young music students and listen to them play not only western music, but also Chinese traditional music. He also communicated with Chinese composers about their works. This big event was historical for all Chinese musicians. It was motivating and advanced the development of Chinese music. A

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<sup>6</sup> Yang-Ban-Xi: A type of model drama, which was a revolutionary opera in China during the Culture Revolution period. It was planned and supported by Jiang Qing, who was the last wife of Mao Zhe-Dong. The subject and form of the show was adapted from Peking opera and topic in politics.

"艺术与娱乐." "样板戏"的前世今生. Accessed April 29, 2016.  
<http://www.ftchinese.com/story/001059902?full=y>.

documentary movie, *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China*, was also made during the trip.<sup>7</sup> After Stern's visit, many world-class musicians came to China.

A similar and significant event for cello was the special visit of Paul Tortelier in 1980. He was the first world-class cellist to come to China after the Reformation and Open Door policy started. He stayed in Beijing for over a month, giving public master classes and lectures. Cello students and teachers came from twenty-four schools all over the country. During his month-long visit, cello teachers, students, and other musicians were amazed at the amount of information about cello playing that he imparted. After this event, more world-class cellists came to China to give performance and master classes, such as Mstislav Rostropoich, Janos Starker, Yo-Yo Ma, and Mischa Maisky. In time, more and more Chinese cellists started to go to Europe and the USA to study. Names of Chinese cellists began to appear in many places of the world. They became winners of international competitions, were hired by schools and orchestras, and became internationally-recognized soloists and chamber musicians.

Because the development of cello performance was growing quickly in China, Chinese composers were writing more cello music. The compositional style of the works became diverse and not limited in a conventional way. Some of the composers began to mix the traditional elements not only by using folk tunes, but also by using the features of some traditional instrumental performance techniques. Composers borrowed new ideas from Chinese theatrical music to imitate vocal or orchestral parts.

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<sup>7</sup> *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China*. Directed by Murray Lerner. Performed by Issac Stern, David Golub. Docurama, NewVideo, 1979. DVD.



Also, atonal music frequently appeared. The genres of compositions were varied, such as solo and chamber music (both with purely western instruments and a mixing of cello with other Chinese traditional instruments), film music, and pop music.

There are hundreds of newly-composed works by Chinese musicians since the beginning of the twentieth century. These works used a mixture of western musical techniques and Chinese folk tunes. As noted above, the cello was a popular western instrument in China, so a number of these works were written for it.

### **Chapter III**

#### Four Chinese Works for Cello

This document is a consideration of four Chinese pieces, which include two solo works and two chamber pieces. Two compositions are traditional in style and two contemporary. The two traditional pieces are transcriptions. My performance on this recital is from the original scores, written in a different notation system based on numbers representing notes, which is called the numbered musical notation system. In Chinese, it is called *Jian-Pu* (“简谱”), and it means “simplified notation score.”

## Musical Example No. 1: Numbered Musical Notation:<sup>8</sup>

In C:

Note: C D E F G A B  
Solfège: do ré mi fa sol la si  
Notation: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

In G:

Note: G A B C D E F#  
Solfège: do ré mi fa sol la si  
Notation: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

### The length of the notes:

Whole (semibreve):	1 - - -	Dotted whole:	1 - - - -	Double dotted:	1 - - -
Half (minim):	1 -	Dotted half:	1 - -	Double dotted:	1 - - •
Quarter (crotchet):	1	Dotted quarter:	1 •	Double dotted:	1 • •
Eighth (quaver):	<u>1</u>	Dotted eighth:	<u>1</u> •	Double dotted:	<u>1</u> • •
16th (semiquaver):	<u>1</u> =				

### The upper and lower octave:

Major scale:	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 <u>1</u>
Natural minor scale:	<u>6</u> <u>7</u> 1 2 3 4 5 6

### Uses 0 as the rest:

The bar rest of 3/4 time is "| 0 0 0 |" and the bar rest of 4/4 time is "| 0 0 0 0 |"

This notation system started in China around the beginning of the twentieth century. It was possibly introduced from Japan. Because the convenience for transposition matches that of Chinese traditional music, it soon became popular and widely used in Chinese traditional music. For example, one of the solo pieces that I

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<sup>8</sup> "Stanford Chinese Music Ensemble." Stanford Chinese Music Ensemble. Accessed May 02, 2016. <https://www.stanford.edu/group/scme/cgi-bin/wordpress1/chinese-music-中国音乐/chinese-musical-notation-numbered-system>.

will present in this document uses this notation system. For easier understanding, I provide a short excerpt from the numbered notation in staff notation.

#### Musical Example No. 2: Chinese Numbered Notation Rendered in Staff Notation

The Numbered Notation:

2. 3 | 1 1 2 | 3. 5

The Staff Notation:



The modes for Chinese folk music were different than western music, especially the works that were composed in the traditional style. There is no idea of major or minor. The mode is called the Chinese pentatonic mode, which contains two types of scales. The five-note scale is called *Wu-Sheng Yin-Jie* (“五声音阶”). The seven-note scale is called *Qi-Sheng Yin-Jie* (“七声音阶”). The two scales can be used in the same piece. The Chinese pentatonic scale is based on a five-note scale: *Gong* (“宫”), *Shang* (“商”), *Jue* (“角”), *Zhi* (“徵”), *Yu* (“羽”). It is same as the western *solfège* system: *Do - Re - Mi - Sol - La*. *Do* can be any one of these five pitches, and, like in western music, Chinese music does use different tuning systems, often at the discretion of the performer. The name of each mode is based on the starting note. The order and relationship in between each note stays the same. After the numbered musical notation started to be used in Chinese music, the Chinese letters were substituted for numbers.



To A-Bing, this music was a reflection of his life experience. The music tells a sad story about him. Therefore, to be able to understand this music, knowing his life background is important. He grew up in a Tao temple and learned multiple Chinese instruments along with listening to the music of Tao's religious rites. When he was a teenager, he was already known as an excellent musician. After his father passed away, he became the director of the Lei-Zun Temple. In his late thirties, he lost his sight. Because China was going through an unpredictable period, he sold everything he had for living expenses. Eventually he started to make a living by playing the *er-hu* on the street when he became homeless. This situation lasted the rest of his life. During his homeless period, he often used music to express the emotions. This piece was collected from A-Bing's live recording by Yan, Yin-Liu (“杨荫浏”)<sup>11</sup> and An-He Cao (“曹安和”) in 1950. Originally, the music did not have a title. It was just some melodies with improvisations played by A-Bing. Because he often played his music near a place called Er-Quan spring located at the foot of the Hui Mountain, Liu Yin Yang suggested that A-Bing name the music for the reflection of the moon on the Er-Quan spring. Liu Yin Yang transcribed the music into the simplified notation system from the recording. When Yang and Cao found A-Bing to make the recording, they barely made it. A-Bing was not satisfied with the recording at all. He told Yang and Cao he had not played for a long time, and his hand was not in control. In order to

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attached bow in between two strings. The instrument has no fingerboard. The strings are tuned a fifth apart. The higher string is A and lower string is D.

Hua, Yan-Jun (1892-1950), also known a more popular name A-Bing “阿炳”, was an early twentieth-century Chinese folk artist and composer.

<sup>11</sup> Yin-Liu Yang (1899-1984) was a very important twentieth-century Chinese music educator and scholar. When Yang was young, he studied with A-Bing.

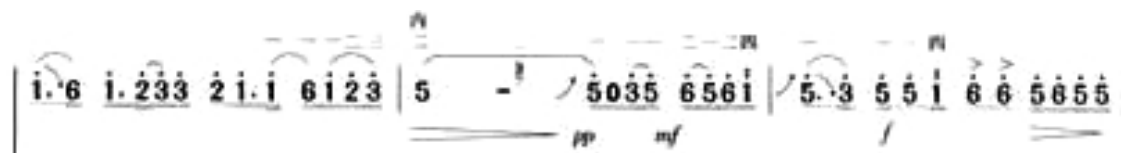
give a better recording, he needed some time to practice. But, unfortunately, when they went back to find A-Bing to make the second recording the following year, A-Bing already had passed away. The only recording left was historical. Even though the performance was not good quality, people can still hear the emotional details in the piece. Because the range for *er-hu* is different than that of the cello, I prefer to play this piece in 1 = C instead of 1= G to project a darker sound. Also, in my analysis, I will use the same transposition for the piece.

The form of the piece is different than that of most western music. The composer was never trained in the western music education system. All his works were adapted from a traditional musical style. After studying the music, I think this piece has a very simple structure: three large sections plus a coda-type ending. The whole piece is based on two main melodies with multiple variations.

Each of the sections has its own meaningful characteristics. For example, the introductory phrase is a very simple descending phrase that sounds just like a heavy sigh to prepare for the story-telling, especially the last three notes: F - E- D. One can almost hear the sobbing sound.  $\underline{0} \cdot \underline{\underline{6}} \quad \underline{\underline{5643}} \mid 2 -$ . The beginning of Theme I is in an ascending motion, but it has a similar expressive effect to the introduction  $\underline{2} \cdot \underline{3} \quad \underline{\underline{112}} \mid 3 \cdot \underline{5}$ . When playing Chinese traditional works, it is important to know that one need not follow all of the performing indications in the music. In Chinese traditional music, the performer is a second composer of the piece. The performer may add ornamentations or improvisations to the music according to the performer's knowledge, especially high-level musicians, who should have the ability

to create their own way of playing, but in the right style. For example, in Theme I  $\underline{2 \cdot 3} \underline{112} \mid 3 \cdot \underline{5}$ , traditionally there will be a grace note 1 “C” added to the first note 2 “D.” Also, the dotted notes 3 will not be performed as written. Normally in this piece, it will be played with an extra-articulated bowing, which is very similar to *staccato*. This particular bowing style also applies to the entire piece, which is not notated in the score. Often one needs to learn this style from a traditional Chinese musician. Another important performance style element is the mastery of *Zuo-Zhu-Yin* (“卓注音”). *Zuo Zhu Yin* is a type of *glissando* ornamentation (see Example No. 4). It often is associated with Chinese fiddle and some other plucked instruments. As we see in the score, there are many places marked with up or down arrows in between notes.

Musical Example No. 4: Yan Hua- Jun, *Er-Quan Yin-Yue*, measures 7-9

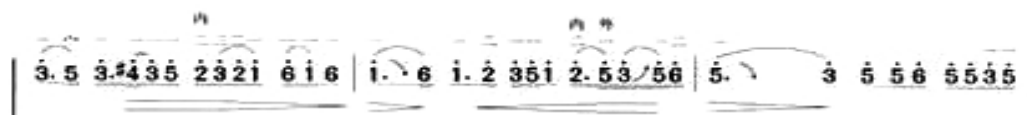


These arrows suggest the possibility of adding *Zuo-Zhu-Yin* in the Chinese traditional playing style. It also indicates the directions of each of the *Zuo-Zhu-Yin*. But each *Zuo-Zhu-Yin* can be played in various ways depending on the performer’s wont. It can be slow or fast, strong or soft, and using microtones within a range of a major third from the following note. In Chinese traditional music, there are many differences between these various types of ornamentation. The performing technique requires not

only the knowledge of where to put the added note, but also how to use the slower speed or faster speed for playing the notes at the correct time to make the music sound in the right style, especially since some of these ornaments are performed using microtones. Fortunately, I am from a Chinese traditional music family. My mother is an *er-hu* and *pipa* artist, my father a famed executant on *er-hu* and *gu-qin*, and my brother is a noted player of *zheng*. I have had more chances to hear this music and understand the Chinese traditional music intimately.

Additional important considerations for the performer is understanding the various notation marks. For example, in Musical Example No. 5, we can see there are notation markings by Chinese characterized numbers: *Yi* (“一”), *Er* (“二”), *San* (“三”), *Si* (“四”), and *Kong* (“空”). These are fingering marks for the left hand (see Example No. 5). The numbers are in order for left hand fingers: 一 = 1, index finger; 二 = 2, middle finger; 三 = 3, ring finger; 四 = 4, little finger; and 空 = is a simplified Chinese character *Kong* (“空”), which means no finger (the open string). It is similar to the western string instrument left-hand fingerings.

Musical Example No. 5: Yan Hua- Jun, *Er-Quan Yin-Yue*, measures 19-21



There are also other marks, such as 内 and 外. These Chinese characters indicate that the right hand plays *Nei* (“内”) = inner string, which is the lower sounding string, and *Wai* (“外”) = outer string, the higher sounding string. It was called *Gong-Chi-Pu* (“工





notation was introduced to China, it soon became popular and the problem of intonation was greatly improved.

In my opinion, besides understanding the form of this piece, presenting the musical effects correctly and knowing the historical background is also very important. As stated, this piece is a reflection of the composer's life experiences. He used varied, expressive ideas in the music to present his emotions with two simple melodies. The sad quality sounds throughout from the introduction, the middle part's climax, and the ending with a *ritardando*. In 1978, the world-famous conductor Seiji Ozawa went to Beijing to perform “二泉映月” with the China Central Philharmonic Orchestra. The day after his concert, he listened an *er-hu* performance of this piece and was moved to tears by the rendition in its traditional style. He stated: “If I had listened this performance before yesterday's concert, I would not dared to have conducted this piece yesterday. Because I did not understand the music at all, I was not qualified to conduct this piece yet.... To listen this music, we shall kneel down on the ground.... Heartbreaking is the only word to define this music.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> "二泉映月（二泉映月） - 搜狗 ... - Baike.sogou.com." Accessed April 28, 2016. <http://baike.sogou.com/v119339.htm>.

## 《川腔》 *The Voice of Chuan*

*Chuan-Qiang* (“《川腔》”) is a solo cello work. It was composed by Zhou, Xiang-Pin (“邹向平”) in 1999.<sup>15</sup> Its world premiere was performed by Hugh Livingston at the Seattle Art Museum in 2001. This work won third place at the fifth Chinese Golden Bell Award for Music in 2005. The composer used contemporary compositional techniques and based it on the features of the famous Chinese theatrical music, Sichuan Opera. It is a piece that blends the western instrument’s tone color with Chinese folk music.

Unlike the western traditional compositional style, the structure of this piece was not set up in a conventional form, like sonata form. It is structured in a continuous developmental process by using a combination of multiple, jumbled fragments to create a sentimental scene. There are both tonal and atonal elements in the piece. Some fragments are logically arranged but others are not. This is a work of artistic realism. There are several key elements that need to be pointed out in its construction in order to understand the music: the title’s meaning, the dramatic outline, the tonality and style, and the picture of staged sentiment.

The title *Chuan-Qian* (“川腔”) literally means the “voice of Chuan.” *Chuan* (“川”) indicates a Chinese province called Sichuan, located in southwestern China. *Qiang* (“腔”) normally means the “voice.”<sup>16</sup> After careful study of the piece and an

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<sup>15</sup> Zou, Xiang-Ping (1951 - ) was a late twentieth-century Chinese composer, professor of Sichuan Conservatory of Music and assistant dean of MianYang Arts College of Sichuan Conservatory of Music.

<sup>16</sup> Zhou, Xiang-Ping. Interview by Lan Jiang. Personal interview. Chengdu, January 14, 2016.

interview with the composer, I have briefly summarized a few layers of its meaning. The composer was trying to use a variety of articulations and extended performance techniques on cello to imitate the sound effects from the Sichuan language dialogue, folk song, Sichuan opera's singing, and orchestral percussion instruments. These imitative sound effects are the most important features that composer used in this piece, which can be understood as the broad meaning of *Qiang*.

The subject of the piece came from an outline of a story based on a selected scene of the Chinese theatrical tale *Da-Shen* (“打神”) in its Sichuan opera version. The tragic play concerns Jiao Gui Yin (“焦桂英”) who received a *Xiu-Shu* (“休书”)<sup>17</sup> from her husband, Wang Kui (“王魁”). Her heart was filled with extreme grief and indignation. She went to Hai-Shen Temple (“海神庙”) to seek for justice by pouring her heart out with grievances, and to condemn her husband's lack of gratitude to the god of sea. But unfortunately, she did not receive a response from the immortal. She smashed the statue in her anger and hanged herself inside the temple, her soul flying out.

The composer set up particular sections for the musical segments in this piece. The first segment is the introduction from measures 1-12. He used the idea of the introduction setting from the tradition of Sichuan opera, which includes a set of percussion instruments as the opening. The imitation of percussion sound effects created a unique way to capture the audience's attention (See Example No. 7).

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<sup>17</sup> *Xiu-Shu* is a divorcing letter from ancient time in China. Only the husband has the privilege to send the letter to his wife. Normally it was an extreme insult for a woman to receive the divorcing letter from their husband, and it was usually associated with the woman's suicide after receiving the letter.

Musical Example No. 7: Zhou Xiang-Ping, *Chuan Qiang*, measures 1-4

The second segment is from measures 13-15. It is the entrance of Jiao-Gui-Yin (“焦桂英”), calling her husband’s name and expressing her grief and indignation in two phrases of singing. The original text from the play in these two phrases says “Wang.....Kui.....” (“王.....魁.....”), “Hen.....A.....” (“恨.....啊.....”), which means “Wang Kui...I hate you.” The composer used two atonal phrases to imitate the pitch of the singing sound (see Example No. 8).

Musical Example No. 8: Zhou Xiang-Ping, *Chuan Qiang*, measures 13-16

The third segment is from measures 143-144. It is a shortened dialog of original text from Jiao Gui Yin’s speaking “只说将心托明月，谁知明月照沟渠，王魁一旦负恩义，天哪.....此情只有老天知啊”. The translation of the text means “I was giving my heart to you, but you are giving yours to someone else, when you are

betrayed our love, my God (with screaming voice)..... Only God knows about it.” The composer did not try to use a long phrase to present this dialog, but used two measures of dramatic *glissando* to express the emotion of Jiao Gui Yin’s screaming to the god (See Example No. 9).

Musical Example No. 9: Zhou Xiang-Ping, *Chuan Qiang*, measures 143-144

The last segment is the ending from measure 157 to the end. It is a stage action, which shows Jiao Gui Yin smashing the statue and hanging herself inside the temple, before her soul flies away. The composer asked for a bow-stroke where the cellist vigorously bounces the bow on the string to imitate the sound of smashing statue, and used slow, vibrated long notes with a slow *glissando* going in an upward direction to portray her soul flying away (See Example No. 10).

Musical Example No.10: Zhou Xiang-Ping, *Chuan Qiang*, measures 157-162

Even though the composer was writing the piece based on a Sichuan opera, *Da-Shen* (“打神”), he obviously did not want to use the exact plot of the play to write an operatic piece for cello. Therefore, he only borrowed fragments from the story to insert into this piece and used them freely.

The harmony in this work is basically atonal with isolated tonal elements in both melody and harmony. The content fragments and its tonal styles are reflected in two major ways. One aspect is on vocal singing of Sichuan opera style. In Sichuan opera, there are five singing styles that are most important: *Kun-Qiang* (“昆腔”), *Gao-Qiang* (“高腔”), *Hu-Qin-Qiang* (“胡腔”), *Tan-Qiang* (“弹腔”), and *Deng-Xi-Qian* (“灯戏腔”). Each of these singing styles has its own characteristics. In this piece, the composer used *Kun-Qiang* (“昆腔”), *Gao-Qiang* (“高腔”), and *Tan-Qiang* (“弹腔”) for the imitation of singing.

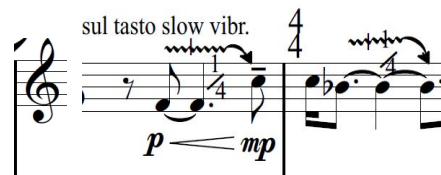
*Kun-Qiang* is also called *Kun-Qu* (“昆曲”). It is one of the oldest Chinese opera styles, which was also known as the “Mother of Chinese Opera.” The style of *Kun* is normally associated with more melodic singing and lyrical phrases (See Example No. 11). This style was blended into Sichuan opera with local dialog and the Sichuan opera percussion set become a Sichuan style *Kun-Qiang*, which also called *Chuan-Kun* (“川昆”).

Musical Example No. 11: Zhou Xiang-Ping, *Chuan Qiang*, measures 20-21



*Gao-Qiang* is one of the singing styles with the most representative characters of Sichuan opera. It is also the most widely-performed singing style in Sichuan opera. It is a type of singing that can be unaccompanied or singing together with choir. It is basically related to the Sichuan language, which is close to speaking Sichuan dialog in a singing way. It can be very intense dramatic singing like laughing, screaming, and crying when the character is expressing their feelings, such as the entrance of Jiao Gui Yin. The composer indicates to use slow vibrato on quarter-tones with a *glissando* to create a very sorrowful sound effect (See Example No. 12). It actually matches the Jiao Gui Yin’s entrance Singing in *Gao-Qiang* Style.

Musical Example No. 12: Zhou Xiang-Ping, *Chuan Qiang*, measure 13



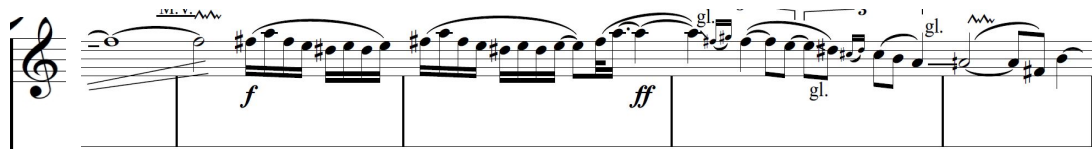
*Tan-Qiang*, also called *Tan-Xi*, originally came from *Qin-Qiang* (“秦腔”). It is a type of Chinese folk theatrical music from Shan-Xi (“陕西”) province. Its musical styles are normally faster passages with exciting emotion accompanied with a “Bang- Bang - Bang- Bang” sound, produced by a *bang-zi* (“梆子”).<sup>18</sup> This style of music can be performed by orchestra alone, or instead accompany the singing. Sometime the orchestra can perform the passages without the *bang-zi* (See Example No. 13). In this

<sup>18</sup> 梆子: *Bang-zi* is a type of small folk percussion instrument widely used in the local music of Shan-Xi province and its close area. The sound of *bang-zi* is very similar to the percussion instrument Wooden-Fish.



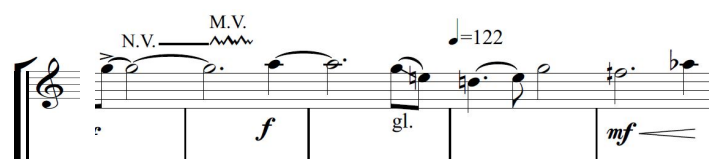
piece, because of the imitation of the instruments, the composer only used the phrase to present the style.

Musical Example No.13: Zhou Xiang-Ping, *Chuan Qiang*, measures 58-62



Besides all of the singing styles above, there is another singing feature from Sichuan opera that the composer used in this music. It called *Bang-Qiang* (“帮腔”), which is like a choir singing off-stage (See Example No. 14). Normally *Bang-Qiang* expresses a certain stage action. It could be the background activities of a scene or the description of role’s inner activities. In Zhou’s piece, it is more like a mixture of both.

Musical Example No. 14: Zhou Xiang-Ping, *Chuan Qiang*, measures 87-91



Another aspect of fragments and its style is presented in the sound effects of the percussion instruments. The typical set of percussion instruments used in Sichuan opera include the *Xiao-Gu* (“小鼓”),<sup>19</sup> *Tang-Gu* (“堂鼓”),<sup>20</sup> *Jiao-Zi* (“饺子”),<sup>21</sup>

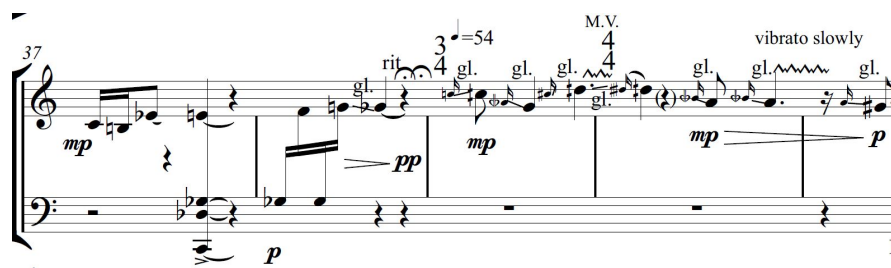
<sup>19</sup> *Xiao-Gu* also called *Ban-Gu* (“板鼓”). It is a type of Chinese traditional small drum, which functions as a leader of the orchestra.

<sup>20</sup> *Tang-Gu* is a type of Chinese traditional large drum.

<sup>21</sup> *Jiao-Zi* is a type of small cymbal made of metal, which plays a high-pitched sound.

*Xiao-luo* (“小锣”),<sup>22</sup> *Da-Luo* (“大锣”),<sup>23</sup> and *Da-Bo* (“大钹”).<sup>24</sup> None of these instruments play exact, stable pitches. Each instrument has its own unique sound. They can be played individually to present a specific, small expression or action from the stage. For example, in measures 39-40, the composer uses imitation of a single instrument, the *xiao-luo* to describe the stumbling walking motion, and uses the imitation of *gao-qiang* singing to express the crying. The blending of these elements creates the effects of sadness (See Example No. 15).

Musical Example No. 15: Zhou Xiang-Ping, *Chuan Qiang*, measures 39-41



When the percussion instruments are played together, the sound becomes a mixture of irregular pitches, which create a very exciting and dramatic emotion on the full stage. The composer also imitated this effect in the piece by using fast chord *glissando* notes to express it (See Example No. 16).

Musical Example No. 16: Zhou Xiang-Ping, *Chuan Qiang*, measures 136



<sup>22</sup> *Xiao-luo* is a type of Chinese traditional small gong.

<sup>23</sup> *Da-Luo* is a type of Chinese traditional gong.

<sup>24</sup> *Da-Bo* is type of Chinese traditional cymbals.

In Sichuan Opera, sometimes there is no singing but only stage action that may be presented by sound effects, which the composer also approaches in this piece. For example, starting from measure 127, the composer used three sets of dissonant and fast sequential notes in an ascending motion to represent angry cursing and screaming (See Example No. 17).

Musical Example No. 17: Zhou Xiang-Ping, *Chuan Qiang*, measures 127-128

The musical score for measures 127-128 is presented in a two-staff format. Measure 127 begins with a treble clef staff containing a series of notes with accents and dynamic markings of *mf* and *f*. The bass clef staff below it contains Roman numerals IV, III, and gl. Measure 128 is marked 'pizz.' and 'arco' and features a complex rhythmic pattern with many notes, including some with Roman numerals I and II.

This piece is full of the original flavors of Chinese music. But there are fragments that are under the influence of western traditional composition. These snippets are very obviously notated in sets of motivic progressions and cadenza-like passages. But, at the same time, these fragments perfectly fit into the piece, which helps the music support a good interaction between western and Chinese cultures.

Chamber works:

《渔舟唱晚》 *The Melodies of the Fishing Night*

*Yu-Zhou Chang-Wan* (“《渔舟唱晚》”) was one of most well-known traditional works for *gu-zheng* (“古筝”).<sup>25</sup> It is often regarded as a piece by two composers. One author possibly was Lou, Shu-Hua (“娄树华”).<sup>26</sup> He developed the piece from the ancient work *Returning* (“《归去来》”). Another possible composer was Jin, Zhuo-nan (“金灼南”),<sup>27</sup> who arranged it from an ancient work *Double Board* (“《双板》”) and the addition of the developmental works *Three Rings of Sun* (“《三环套日》”) and *The Impacting of Wave and Rock* (“《流水激石》”). The piece was originally a traditional solo work for *gu-zheng* (“古筝”), probably composed around 1930. Later, it was arranged as a duet for *gu-zheng* and *gao-hu* (“高胡”)<sup>28</sup> by Cao, Zheng (“曹正”) and Zhu, Yu-Zhi (“朱郁之”). The duet version has been very popular. Also, this piece was broadly transposed and arranged for many other instruments and ensembles. The version performed in this program is for *gu-zheng* and cello.

Like other Chinese traditional music, this piece is program music. The topic came from a phrase of the ancient poem *Ten-Wang-Ge Xu* (“滕王阁序”), *Yu-Zhou Chang-Wan, Xiang-Qiong Peng-Li Zhi-Bin* (“渔舟唱晚，响穷彭蠡之滨”) by Wang, Bo (“王勃”), who was a famous poet during the Tang Dynasty. The subject portrays a

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<sup>25</sup> 古筝: *Guzheng*, also called a Chinese zither. It is a Chinese traditional plucked string instrument. The early record of the instrument was around 400 B.C. The older type instrument has thirteen strings. The modern instrument has 21 strings.

<sup>26</sup> Lou, Shu-Hua (1907-1952) was one of most important *gu-zheng* artists from early twentieth century.

<sup>27</sup> Jin, Zhuo-Nan (1882-1976) was a *gu-zheng* artist, educator, and composer.

<sup>28</sup> 高胡: Gao Hu was a type of Chinese fiddle, similar to *er-hu* but with a higher range.

beautiful scene during a late afternoon, with fishermen on their way back home. They are singing happily. The waves reflect the sunset.

The center pitch of the music in this piece mostly stays on *Zhi* (“徵”), Sol, which indicates the mode for the piece is *Zhi* (“徵”). The whole piece basically can be divided in five parts: Introduction - A - B - C - Ending. Each part can be described as a single picture.

The first picture is the introduction, which lasts from measures 1-20. This part perhaps defines the title by describing the scenic beauty of the peaceful evening on the river. The tempo is very slow and cadenzas extend each phrase. The whole segment contains three small sections and each of sections musically functions in its own way. The first section is a simple phrase that starts on the upper voice line played by the *gu-zheng*. This pattern of the notes creates a wave motion, which describes the picture of small wave moves on river (See Example No. 18).

Musical Example No.18: *Yu-Zhou Chang-Wan*, measures 1-6

The musical notation for Example No. 18, measures 1-6, is presented in two staves. The upper staff is for the Guzheng and the lower staff is for the Erhu. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and articulation marks.

Upper staff (Guzheng):

- Measure 1:  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\frac{3}{3}$  |  $\overset{**}{5} \overset{**}{6}$  |  $\overset{\textcircled{1}}{2}$   $\overset{**}{2}$  |  $\overset{**}{3} \overset{**}{5}$  |  $\overset{**}{3}$   $\overset{**}{32}$  |  $\overset{**}{1} \overset{**}{1}$  |  $\overset{**}{216}$  |  $\overset{**}{6}$  |  $\overset{**}{6}$   $\overset{**}{2}$  |  $\overset{**}{6}$   $\overset{**}{6}$  |  $\overset{**}{1}$   $\overset{**}{1}$  |  $\overset{**}{5}$  |  $\overset{**}{5}$  -

Lower staff (Erhu):

- Measure 1:  $\frac{2}{4}$  0 | 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 |  $\overset{**}{5}$   $\overset{**}{6}$  |  $\overset{**}{123561}$

After the first phrase ends, the second section starts. This section contains two elements. One is presented in the cello’s line. This entrance has an interrupted character, which helps the audience quickly adjust its focus to another object, maybe like a fisherman’s boat. Another element is the representation of the water played by

*gu-zheng*. Two elements in this section cooperatively respond with each other. The grace notes in the cello line and scraping played on *gu-zheng* perfectly sketch the contours of the picture of the boat moving on the river as water flows around it with sparkling sprays (See Example No. 19). The third section is a repeated phrase of the first, which functions as an actual introduction for the piece. Also, this establishes the tempo for the following section.

Musical Example No. 19: *Yu-Zhou Chang-Wan*, measures 7- 13

The musical notation for measures 7-13 of *Yu-Zhou Chang-Wan* is as follows:

Top staff: | 5̇ - | 5̇. 6̇ 1̇/ | 5̇ 5̇ | 0 0 | 0 0 | 5̇. 6̇ 1̇/ | 3̇ 3̇

Bottom staff: | 5̇. 6̇ 123561 | 5̇ - | 5̇. 0 | 5̇. 3̇ | 2 1 0 5̇ | 3̇ - | 3̇. 0

The second picture is part A and there are two themes in this part. It runs from measures 30-44. Depending on the performer's understanding, the meter for this part can be in two or one. If in two, the musical emotion is more active, which creates a lighter and playful mood. If in one, the music phrases a longer line, which is helpful for moving the direction of the music. Both fit the musical affect. I prefer to move between the possibilities. The composers divided Theme I between the cello and *gu-zheng*. Theme II starts with the *gu-zheng*. The melody's development is a conversation as the cello responds to the *gu-zheng*, like the echo in the first four bars. Then they join together for the following seven bars. Starting from measure 37, the *gu-zheng* line goes in a descending direction accompanied by a descending trill line played by the cello, which sounds like water flowing more quickly. The picture for

part A tells the story of more and more fishermen finishing their fishing work and starting to go home. The river begins to have more boat traffic (See Example No. 20).

Musical Example No. 20: *Yu-Zhou Chang-Wan*, measures 37-41

6	6	1	i6	5	5	6	65	3	3	5	53	2	2	3	32
tr-----															
3	-	2	-	1	-	6	-								

The third picture is part B. It runs from measures 45-82 with an introductory phrase, the same one heard in part A. The tempo for this part is slower than in the previous section. The melodies are lyrical and continue to imitate water in motion. The mood is happy and sweet. Two melodies are contrasting to each other like a theme with its variation (See Example No. 21).

Musical Example No. 21.1: *Yu-Zhou Chang-Wan*, measures 51-58

Melody 1

3.	5	6i65	3	-	1.	3	232	1	2	-	3.	5	2	1	6i65	6		5.	6	1321	5	-
----	---	------	---	---	----	---	-----	---	---	---	----	---	---	---	------	---	--	----	---	------	---	---

Musical Example No. 21.2: *Yu-Zhou Chang-Wan*, measures 59-66

Melody 2

3.	5	6i65	6.	-	56	i.6	5653	2	-	3.	5	2	1	6i65	6		1.	2	3523	1
----	---	------	----	---	----	-----	------	---	---	----	---	---	---	------	---	--	----	---	------	---

The musical progression is in an ascending direction. When the melody is repeated an octave higher, the musical effect provides the closing narrative for part B.

The fourth picture is part C. It runs from measures 83-149, the longest section in the piece. All of part C is very light and in a fast tempo. Perhaps the section describes the fisherman at a party, or a similar festive event. Part C contains two major sections, which are connected by a transition. C<sup>1</sup> runs from measures 83-100. The transition is an eleven-measure phrase connecting C<sup>1</sup> and C<sup>2</sup> and it includes sequential development of a motive from C<sup>1</sup>. The music pushes forward and becomes more exciting. It is like more and more fishermen are joining the race. When the C<sup>2</sup> section (measures 112- 149) starts, the melody changes to a different kind of sequence from the mixture of active eighth notes and sixteenth notes to mixture of eighth notes in and dotted quarter notes in both voices. The tempo also starts to accelerate, finally arriving at extremely fast motion at the climax, which creates an image of boats running on the river and many waves flowing around. In part C, the mode switched to *Gong* (“宫”) from *Zhi* (“徵”).

The last picture is the ending. It runs from measure 150 to the end. The whole part is just a very simple descending phrase. The motive is borrowed from part C<sup>2</sup> (See Example No. 22).

Musical Example No. 22.1: *Yu-Zhou Chang-Wan*, measures 114-119

The part C<sup>2</sup> motive:

The image shows two lines of musical notation for the part C<sup>2</sup> motive. The first line contains six measures of music with notes and rests: | 6 6 6<sup>1</sup>/<sub>5</sub> | 3 3 3 | 5 5 5<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> | 2 2 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>5</sub> | 3 3 3<sup>1</sup>/<sub>1</sub> | 1 1 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub>. The second line shows the same notes with red circles around the first note of each measure and red arrows indicating a descending sequence from 6 to 5, 3 to 6, 5 to 3, 2 to 5, 3 to 2, and 1 to 3.



Musical Example No. 22.2: *Yu-Zhou Chang-Wan*, measures 150-154

The ending:

$$\begin{array}{l} \underline{0} \mid \underline{\underline{6}} \underline{\underline{6}} \underline{\underline{3}} \underline{\underline{3}} \mid \underline{\underline{5}} \underline{\underline{5}} \underline{\underline{2}} \underline{\underline{2}} \mid \overset{\text{最慢}}{\underline{\underline{3}} \underline{\underline{3}} \underline{\underline{6}} \underline{\underline{2}} \mid \overset{\text{1}}{\underline{\underline{2}}} \mid \overset{\text{2}}{\underline{\underline{1}}} - \mid \overset{\text{3}}{\underline{\underline{1}}} \underline{\underline{0}} \parallel \\ \underline{0} \mid \underline{\underline{6}} \overset{\text{2}}{\underline{\underline{3}}} \mid \underline{\underline{5}} \underline{\underline{2}} \mid \underline{\underline{3}} \overset{\text{1}}{\underline{\underline{6}} \underline{\underline{2}}} \mid \overset{\text{2}}{\underline{\underline{1}}} - \mid \overset{\text{3}}{\underline{\underline{1}}} \underline{\underline{0}} \parallel \end{array}$$

However, the tempo is free and very slow. The piece ends in the *Gong* (“宫”) mode.

The picture represents a peaceful night for the end of the day.

### 《对话集 I》 *Dialogue I*

*Dui Hua Ji I* 《对话集 I》 was composed by Qi Yao (“祁瑶”).<sup>29</sup> The piece was the composer’s first official work. It was inspired by a unique performance that she attended. During the event, she was asked to use numbered musical notation to write a melody for *gu-zheng* and improvise this melody into a complete piece. She was successful. A well-known Chinese contemporary composer, Jia Da Qun (“贾达群”), suggested that she keep working on the piece and also produce a chamber work for *gu-zheng* and cello based on it, resulting in *Dialogue I*. The piece was awarded second

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<sup>29</sup> Qi, Yao (1973 - ) is a late twentieth century Chinese composer, *gu-zheng* artist, and professor at Shanghai Conservatory.

place in the 2003 “TMSK” Liu Tian Hua Awards, the Chinese Traditional Music Chamber Works Competition.

The work’s motives and its development comes from four notes of *Guang-Lin-San* (“广陵散”), a famous ancient work for *gu-qin* (“古琴”). Before she heard *Guang-Lin-San*, Qi already had ideas for sound effects in writing *Dialogue I*. But after she heard *Guang-Lin-San*, she realized the content was far different from what she had imagined. For the inspiration of the piece, she borrowed four notes, G - D - C - A from the piece and transposed these four notes to C - G - F - D as the piece’s opening motive (See Example No. 23).

Musical Example No. 23: Qi Yao, *Dui Hua Ji I*, measures 1-2

The title of the piece was added after the piece was composed. When I asked Qi what made her decide to write a piece with this title, she said:

I did not think about the title while I was composing it. All I thought about was the motives, structure and sound effect for the piece. The name was later suggested by a composer, Yin Ming Wu (“尹明五”) after the piece was composed. He said it is a communication in between eastern and western culture. But to me, it is the *Guang Lin San* (“广陵散”) in my heart.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Telephone interview with Qi Yao, December 13, 2015.

Even though the subject of the work has no relation to the *gu-qin* piece, it is full of Chinese traditional music features. One of the features is *Yin* (“吟”), which is often used in Chinese instrumental music and Chinese vocal music. The style of *Yin* can be varied and divided into several types of singing: theatrical music, religious, folk, and poetic. Basically it is a type of singing arts closely related to the Chinese language by following the rhythmic or melodic pattern. Also, different locations have their own unique qualities. This feature is especially embodied in theatrical music, one of the major Chinese art forms. This form of expression is normally associated with improvisation and a performer’s self-expression. The composer specifically used this style in her music and indicated this by emphasizing it at the beginning, middle, and ending section of the piece (See Example No. 24).

Musical Example No. 24: Qi Yao, *Dui Hua Ji I*, measures 1, 259, 355

Part I:	Part II:	Part III:

After careful study of the music and a conversation with the composer, I decided to divide this piece into three major parts based on the most emphasized section of *Yin* and similarity of the structure arrangement.

Part I is the largest and also a model for the overall structure of the piece. It contains three individual sections. The first section is the *Yin* section, which also can be marked as the introduction (measures 1-11), where the most important key is to express the style of *Yin*. In order to imitate this feature, the composer used several materials in this section. The first material is the motive C - G - F - D, which could be designated as Theme I. This motive was emphasized twice in different ways (see Example No. 25).

Musical Example No. 25: Qi Yao, *Dui Hua Ji I*, measures 1-4

Theme I:

Variation:

The musical score for Cello and Zheng, measures 1-4, is presented in three systems. The top system is for the Cello, the middle for the Zheng, and the bottom for a variation of Theme I. The score includes various dynamics such as *pp*, *mf*, *mp*, *f*, and *pppp*, as well as articulations like *arco*, *nut*, and *s.p.*. The tempo markings include *Lento*, *poco - a - poco - accel - tempo*, and *ord.*. The score is written in 4/4 time and features complex rhythmic patterns and phrasing.

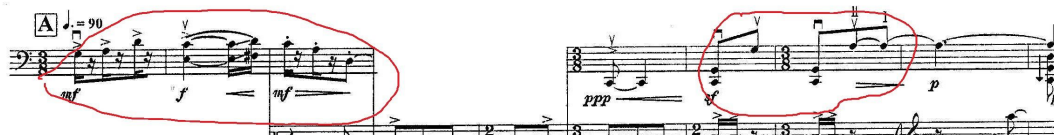
The second material is the *rubato*. The whole section lasts only ten measures, but the meter changes seven times. With three *poco a poco accelerando* phrases and free beats in the last measure, the free *rubato* feature is obvious. Another important aspect of the piece is the sound effects. The composer used multiple types of articulations to

create contrasting colors on both instruments, such as the left hand *pizzicato*, microtones, *ponticello*, *con legno*, *trills* with *glissando*, *glissando* and *tremolo* on the cello; *tremolo* with a muted *glissando* sound, microtones with turns, and *glissando* and *ponticello* on *gu-zheng*. All of these elements are compacted into a small section to present the diversity of the elements, which are presented in the rest of piece.

The second section lasts from measures 11-166. The tempo is slightly faster than the introduction. A new theme appears, Theme II. The first half of the section is developed from Theme II and its variations (See Example No. 26).

Musical Example No. 26: Qi Yao, *Dui Hua Ji I*, measures 11-13, 17-18

Theme II:



The second half of the section starts in measure 74. From here, the musical emotions start to change, which gradually become more dramatic. This segment sounds more like a mix of atonal music with the western pentatonic music. When the section reaches its first climax (measure 105), a large passage of double stops and fast notes help to create the music effects. The musical effects almost switch from classical music to electronic band rock music. After the climax, the musical mood became calmer. Variations four and five help turn the rest of section back to a playful

and relaxing mood like beginning of the section. Eventually, the piece smoothly moves into section three.

The third section runs from measures 167-258. A new melody also sounds in this section. The style of the tune, designated as Theme III, is very similar to the Chinese theatrical music (See Example No. 27). The structure of this section continues in a similar setting as the previous section, but in a smaller arrangement. Part I ends with its second climax.

Musical Example No. 27: Qi Yao, *Dui Hua Ji I*, measure 167

Theme III:



The following section, Part II, runs from measures 259-354. It uses a similar structural arrangement as Part I. It is more like a mirror reflecting its previous part's structure in a sort of retrograde. Similar to Part I, Part II contains *Yin*, new themes and its variations, and two climaxes as the major materials.

Part III is from measure 355 to the end. This section is a simplified introduction. It functions more as a recall or echo of the beginning statement.

Like composer said to me at end our conversation, "There are two aspects I wished to show in this piece. One is the structure and another is the contrast of sound color between the two instruments.... The sound color and sound effects were meant

to be the way I showed in this piece.”<sup>31</sup> And, even though the cello and *gu-zheng* come from two non-related cultures, they blend into each other in this duet. The work contains both western and eastern musical elements that paint a beautiful image.

## Chapter IV

### Conclusion

Each of these four pieces is a varied statement of a composer’s intentions. Both similarities and differences can be found between them. Regardless of the fact of their compositional styles and historical background, the most important element is that Chinese traditional elements and contemporary ideas can be balanced in uniquely expressive ways. Also cello, as a western instrument, can demonstrate very well how the west and east can play together in harmony. As a Chinese musician, who majored in a western music, I feel it will be my great honor and responsibility to introduce to the world the traditional music from my own nation. The world offers a huge variety of cultures from all nations, and as it continues to get smaller through improvement in communications, the mixture of these varied cultures will continue. My interest in combining western music and traditional Chinese music contributes to this process and perhaps will assist with the emergence of an interesting musical synthesis. For the

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<sup>31</sup> Telephone Interview with Qi Yao, December 13, 2015.

musical art, its new age is coming. Information circulation is more intense and widespread. Music, as an international language, can be communicated between all people in its own way. It does not matter the location of its original tradition or which style of music was influenced by western or eastern culture, the music itself will always interact like the cello and Chinese traditional music, fitting well together.



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