

Creative Combination of Chinese and Western Elements in Chen Yi's Music for Cello and Orchestra

By
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Abstract

The purpose of this examination is to present a study of Chen Yi's two cello and orchestral works: *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy* and *Eleanor's Gift*. To date, these are Chen Yi's only works for this instrumentation. While Tao Li analyzed the first movement of *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy* in the journal *Huangzhong*, there are no complete analyses of either work.¹ My scholarship attempts to fill this void, starting with an examination of Chen Yi's personal journey and exploring the musical influences of her personal life. Her early life in China deeply influenced her musical aesthetic and compositional style, especially with the Chinese folk elements quoted in the *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy*. Chen Yi's experience is representative of her entire generation and fighting for freedom and human rights, which is an underlying concept in *Eleanor's Gift*. Analyzing the formal structure of both works, identifying the Chinese folk elements employed, and examining the properties stemming from Western classical music, reveals Chen Yi's compositional approach that marries traditional Chinese heritage with contemporary abstract composition. The analyses also outline the differences and similarities of Chen Yi's musical style presented in *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy* and *Eleanor's Gift*. Since these two pieces have received limited attention, both on the concert stage and in the scholarly literature, this document produces original musical analyses that provide a window into the combined influences of Chinese and Western classical music in Chen Yi's cello and orchestral writing.

¹ Tao Li. "Analyze First Movement of Chen Yi 2nd Cello Concerto." *Huangzhong (Journal of Wuhan Music Conservatory)*, 1 (2008), 67-78.

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Chapter I

Introduction

With the rapid development of the internet speeding up communication exchange across the globe, the boundary between cultures is becoming blurry. Contemporary music in the twenty-first century boasts a remarkable group of significant musicians but numerous genres, styles, and aesthetic orientations remain under-examined, especially at the intersection between traditional Chinese and Western classical music. Some contemporary Chinese classical composers follow popular trends, while others maintain their individuality, but the composers who bridge the gap, combining both, require more scholarship and attention.

Chen Qigang, Tan Dun, Guo Wenjing, Ye Xiaogang, Chen Yi, and Zhou Long were among the first class to enter Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing after the Cultural Revolution. Each one of them now serves an important role in today's Chinese musical society. Chen Qigang was Olivier Messiaen's last student and the music director of the 2008 Beijing Summer Olympics opening ceremony. Tan Dun is one of the most recognized Chinese composers, widely known for his Academy Award-winning film scores for the movies *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) and *Hero* (2002). Guo Wenjing and Ye Xiaogang's compositions are regularly performed on major concert stages in China and they are frequently commissioned by major orchestras in China including the China Philharmonic, Beijing Music Festival, Shanghai Opera House, and Guangzhou Symphony Orchestras. Chen Yi was the first woman to earn a master's degree from the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and also the first woman in Chinese history to earn a master's degree in music composition. Currently living in the United States, Chen Yi is a major musical figure.

Chen Yi's music is unique in the way that it contains influences from her personal experiences in both China and the United States. Her music crosses cultures, merging elements from Eastern music and the Chinese tradition with conventional Western compositional techniques. The process of combining these techniques varies from composition to composition. The various elements employed in Chen Yi's cello and orchestral works *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy* and *Eleanor's Gift* have made an important impact on the expansion of cello repertoire during the twenty-first century.

Background and Biography

Chen Yi is the daughter of a physician and was born in Guangzhou, China in 1953. Her music education started with instruction in violin and piano, and she began taking lessons at the age of three. Her parents were both music lovers. Her father played the violin and her mother played the piano. Chen Yi's older sister was a child prodigy in piano and was accepted by the prestigious Attached Elementary School of the Central Conservatory of Music. Chen Yi's younger brother also plays violin and is now Concertmaster and Assistant Artistic Director in the China Philharmonic.² Even though Chen is her family name and Yi is what Westerners would identify as her given or first name, her preferred name is Chen Yi. She continues to use the Chinese form of her name, with the family name first, even after coming to the United States. Chen Yi was influenced by Cantonese music, *Yueju* opera, and the traditional dialect from her

² "Biography and Introduction," HKIVS: Shlomo Mintz International Violin Competition, accessed May 10, 2018, http://www.hkivs.com/pinwei_en_view22.html.

local area, Guangdong. The sounds of Chinese instruments and opera singing she was exposed to early in life permeated Chen Yi's compositional style.

The Chinese Cultural Revolution took place from 1966 to 1978, during Chen Yi's teenage years and early twenties.³ The Marxist-Maoist ideology and musical aesthetic of the Chinese government during this time promoted revolutionary and patriotic music. The arts were cultivated as a delivery system for state propaganda. The promotion of Chinese national music, including revolutionary songs, was carried out in a constrained political environment that also promoted the destructive criticism of traditional music. This restricted avenue for the arts disrupted the normal development of intellectuals and students. During this period, many intellectuals suffered from mistreatment and a variety of artistic endeavors were stifled, including Western music and traditional Chinese art forms. Young students, like Chen Yi and her siblings, were called upon to join the Red Guard. They were encouraged to quit school and destroy the "Four Olds:" Old Customs, Old Culture, Old Habits, and Old Ideas.⁴

The Cultural Revolution blocked an entire generation's path to education. Chen Yi's fate at that time was no exception. Her home was searched by the Communist Party's Red Guard when she was 15 and the family's music collection was seized. Chen Yi was sent to a rural village to be a manual laborer, but she brought her violin and played revolutionary music for the other farmers. During rests between grueling work shifts, Chen Yi's violin became her solace. She listened the peasant songs and began to understand more about the working class and their

³ Ralph Croizier, Shentian Zheng and Scott Watson, "Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966-76," in *The Art of the Cultural Revolution*, ed. Julia F. Andrews (Vancouver, Canada: UBC Press, 2010), 27.

⁴ Croizier, "Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966-76," 34.

folk music. “I didn't know it, but I was composing,” she told the *New York Times*, “It was my way of keeping my fingers moving. I made variations on themes.”⁵

During the Cultural Revolution, Chinese musicians and young students like Chen Yi found a way to benefited from contact with folk music. They expanded their compositional style by incorporating folk songs and opera performances into Western music compositional techniques learned in formal music instruction. They experienced and gained firsthand knowledge of the Chinese musical elements of their motherland including simplicity, linguistic accent, honesty, and the local differences of style.

There is a traditional Chinese proverb of Laozi contemplating the contradictory nature of bad luck and good luck. Laozi stated that “good fortune depends on bad fortune; bad fortune lurks behind good fortune.” Many Chinese-born composers had similar experiences to Chen Yi. They turned their misfortune and tragedy during Cultural Revolution into a powerful catalyst for reflecting on the meaning of life and also a resource for their future musical creativity.

Between 1967 and 1977, Western instruments were incorporated into the Chinese traditional opera *Jingju*.⁶ It transformed the ancient Beijing Opera tradition into *Yanban Xi*, an opera using a full-size symphony orchestra with a Western instrumentation. Before this period, the opera's orchestra was comprised solely of traditional Chinese instruments. In 1970, Chen Yi became the concertmaster of Guangzhou's opera company. She participated in various activities related to the preparation and performance of operas. While a concertmaster, she learned about the uses of traditional Chinese string, wind, and percussion instruments in opera. These elements

⁵ James M. Manheim, “Chen Yi Biography,” Musicianguide, accessed May 20, 2018, <http://www.musicianguide.com/biographies/1608004338/Chen-Yi.html>.

⁶ Croizier, “Art in Turmoil: The Chinese Cultural Revolution, 1966-76,” 35.

later became a major influence in her own composition. In *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy* for cello and orchestra, Chen Yi wrote syllables for the orchestral players, asking them to incorporate their voice as an instrument. This creative approach stemmed from her Chinese opera experience.

After the Cultural Revolution, Chen Yi continued her studies at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing where she earned a master's degree in composition in 1986. In the conservatory, Chen Yi established a strong reputation, winning multiple competitions.⁷ Immediately after graduation, Chen Yi moved to the United States, furthering her education at Columbia University where she earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree. Chen Yi's music has become widely recognized in the classical music scene. In 2005, she was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Chen Yi has served as a visiting professor at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, Tianjin Conservatory in China, Peabody Conservatory, Johns Hopkins University, and is currently on the faculty at University of Missouri-Kansas City. Chen Yi is guided by the belief that, "Music is a universal language, improving understanding between peoples of different cultural backgrounds and helping to bring peace in the world."⁸

⁷ Ken Smith, "Chen Yi," BBC Music, accessed May 20, 2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/music/artists/d66a8c28-9d67-4b81-a068-af4beb185570>.

⁸ "Chen Yi," Theodore Presser Company, accessed May 20, 2018, <https://www.presser.com/composer/chen-yi/>

Chapter II

Ballad, Dance and Fantasy

Ballad, Dance and Fantasy is a large three-movement work for cello and orchestra. It is Chen Yi's largest-scale composition involving solo cello. The music combines motives from Chinese folk music with post-tonal compositional techniques creating an innovative cello piece. The work deserves greater appreciation from the audiences, conductors, and performers, especially contemporary cellists who are looking to add twenty-first century pieces or works by women composers to their repertoire. The first movement, "Ballad of the Earth," contains music inspired from a folk-tune style that originates in the Shaanxi province. In the second movement, "The Dance on the Silk Road," the central musical idea is reminiscent of the ancient Chinese *Qiu Zi* music from today's Northwestern Chinese province of Xinjiang, as well as the *Hu Xuan* Dance from Mongolia.⁹ Mongolia is another important area on the Silk Road. In the final movement, "Fantasy for the Global Village," the musical language is void of most ancient Chinese elements, encouraging listeners to face to the future with peace and compassion.

Ballad, Dance and Fantasy was commissioned by the Pacific Symphony Orchestra for a performance with Yo-Yo Ma. Joined by the Tradewinds from China, Ma gave the premiere on 10 and 11 March 2004 at Segerstrom Hall in Costa Mesa, California as part of the American Composers Festival.¹⁰ The work calls for solo cello, two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, English horn, two B-flat clarinets, bass clarinet, two bassoons, contrabassoon, four French horns, three

⁹ Yi, Chen. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, ed. Yo-Yo Ma (King of Pressia, PA: Theodore Presser, 2003).

¹⁰ Chen. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*.

trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, three percussionists (I. wood block, snare drum, conga, tom-tom; II. suspended cymbal, tambourine, glockenspiel; III. Bass drum), harp, and strings.

Chen Yi describes the music as follows: “Tracing back to the ancient culture on the Silk Road, I treasure the spirit of the eastern earth while walking into the rest of the world, and look forward to the peace in the future.”¹¹

First Movement, “Ballad of the Earth” Analysis

Chen Yi explains in the score introduction the basic idea of “Ballad of the Earth.”

In the first movement *Ballad of the Earth*, the solo cello plays a deep monologue, an ode to the earth. The music style is drawn from the folk music in Shaanxi province, the birthplace of the Silk Road.¹²

Based on the differences between main themes, texture, structure, and orchestration, I identified the basic form of this movement as A B A'. The opening A section extends from measure 1 to 45 and begins with a cello solo. The timpani sustains a long drone of a single chord while woodwind and brass players, using their voices, sing the rhythm. The exact same structure and orchestration occur later from measure 118 to the end. It does not repeat the theme of the opening section exactly, but the materials and gestures are all rooted in the common Theme 1, therefore, I considered this music to be section A'. Section B is from measure 46 to 117, because it starts with a new theme and the orchestration is completely different from the opening and closing sections. Table 1 shows the overall formal structure of the movement.

¹¹ Chen. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*.

¹² Chen. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*.

Table 1. Formal Structure of *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1.

Section	A		B	A'
	Theme 1	Transition	Theme 2	Theme 1
Measure Number	1–37	38–45	46–117	118 to end

The complete Theme 1 is presented in the first eight measures (Example 1). As the composer wrote, the solo cello presents a “deep monologue” at the very beginning. The theme refers to the raw earth that is typical of the geography of the ancient Chinese state *Qin*. The original region is now called Shaanxi, and *Qinqiang* is the folk opera of Shaanxi. The word itself means “the tune of the sound of *Qin*.” The region is completely covered with dirt and sand. Thus, the title “Ballad of Earth” perfectly describes the cultural spirit of this Northwestern region in China.

Example 1. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 1–7

In the opening gesture, the composer uses D-flat instead of D to G, which expands the interval from a consonant perfect fourth to a dissonant tritone. The harsh dissonance of the augmented fourth creates immediate tension and evokes the raw feeling from the earth. When the music starts in the cello's low register, the rough, thick tone and the tritone interval effectively creates strong tension. The pitch G is set up as the tonal center from very beginning with the cello's entrance. Both main themes used in the first movement center around G. Although the piece is post-tonal, the folk tune used at the beginning gives it a strong sense of the tonal center.

The glissando introduced in the opening is an important feature that recurs throughout all three movements of the piece. It not only serves as a connection between the movements but also references the *Qinqiang* opera. In that tradition, actors, and singers use glissandi to exaggerate drama and emotion. Often, this technique creates a surrealist fantasy, symbolizing the actor's image on the stage with a wide range and sudden pitch changes. Chen Yi also occasionally adds a crescendo to the glissando, creating a phrase-ending shape that is very impactful. This leaves a strong impression and an example of this combination is on the last beat of the first measure, the last beat of the third measure, and the first beat of measure 7 (Example 1).

The composer uses this special technique to emulate the traditional Chinese violin *banhu*. The two-stringed instrument is usually tuned in fifths, often D and G. The *banhu* is the main accompanying instrument for *Qinqiang* opera. *Ban* means piece of wood and *Hu* is short for *Huqin*, the name for the Chinese string family. Since *Huqin* have no fingerboard, the glissando is an easily identifiable element of traditional Chinese music.

The first eight measures of Theme 1 can be separated into two parts. Part a takes place from measure 1 to 3 and part b comprises measure 4 to 7 (Example 1). In contrast to part a, the

added ornaments increase the difficulty for the performer in the b section, and this increase in ornamentation also holds true for the second repetition of the theme, which is from measure 11 to 17 (Example 2). Most of the ornamentation continues to imitate the *banhu*.

Example 2. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 11–17

The image displays musical notation for a cello solo. At the top, a small snippet shows the beginning of the piece in bass clef. Below it, two staves are labeled 'Vc. solo'. The first staff starts at measure 12 and continues to measure 17. It features a complex melodic line with many ornaments, including grace notes, slurs, and trills. The second staff starts at measure 15 and continues to measure 17, showing a continuation of the melodic line with similar ornamentation. The notation includes various fingerings and bowing indications.

The orchestral part is also very atypical. Chen Yi uses the voices of wind players as instruments to create rhythm while the timpani sustains tremolo chords. The words are meaningless but imitate the echo of “Haozi,” one of work songs sung by boat trackers along the Yellow River (Example 3 and Example 4).

Example 3. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 8–10

Example 4. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 8–9

In the A section, the contrabassoon and bass clarinet are the only two instruments with a solo line. This demonstrates Chen Yi’s thoughtful choice of timbre. The thickness of the contrabassoon provides strong sense of the ground and earth, referencing the far away sounds of the ancient traditions (Example 5 and Example 6).

Example 5. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 21–22, contrabassoon part

Example 6. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 23–26, bass clarinet part

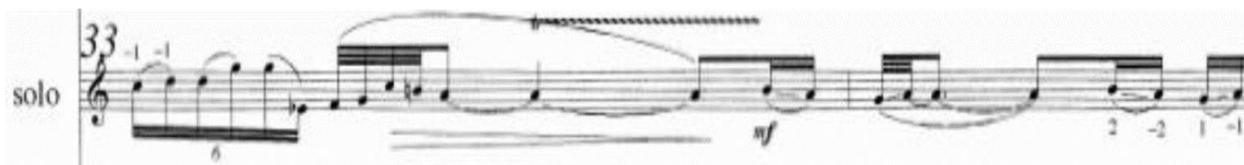


From measure 26 to 37, the cello solo soars to its highest range. The melody still draws from Theme 1 but with a new brightness and a more open sound quality. Looking closely at the details, the composer has a logical reason for this choice of high register. For example, in *Qinqiang* opera, the use of perfect fourths and major sevenths signify dramatic moments. The composer mimics this gesturally in a high register (Example 7). Chen Yi brilliantly highlights this gesture with the cello's G^5 , A^5 to $B\text{-flat}^4$ —a bright register for the cello (Example 8).

Example 7. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 28–29



Example 8. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 33–34



The composer also combined traditional Chinese folk elements with Western compositional techniques and her creative approach to orchestration effectively and seamlessly fuses the two different styles. With G as the tonal center, Chen Yi highlights the B-flat before increasing the tension with a long line moving to the A, gradually resolving to the G (Example 9).

Example 9. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 35–36



The first transition occurs from measure 38 to measure 45. The cello transitions from a slow cadenza-like free style to a highly rhythmic section with triplets and sixteenth notes. While it sounds completely new, the ornament, the glissando and the crescendo at the end of the phrase are still related to Theme 1. The full orchestra plays together at this moment. In the last two measures of section A, the harmony is built on all twelve pitches. While the harp plays two measures of glissando ascending to the climax at the end of section A, the cello plays an extremely high C-sharp, creating dramatic tension. At the same time, the full orchestra makes a huge dynamic change from *fortissimo* to *pianissimo*. This tension and release successfully transitions to the second theme, from Section A to Section B.

The second theme is presented for the first time in the solo part during measure 46. Theme 2 is based on a short motive that is transferred to different transpositional levels. After an extension, the cello lands again on the G (Example 10).

Example 10. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 46–48 and mm. 55–57

The image displays a musical score for Example 10, consisting of four systems of staves. The first system shows a cello solo (Vc. solo) starting at measure 46 with a half note G2, marked *mf*. The second system, starting at measure 47, features the cello solo with a melodic line and a complex accompaniment of sextuplets and quintuplets in the strings (Vn. I, Vn. II, and Vla.), marked *f*. The third system, starting at measure 55, continues this texture with the cello solo and string accompaniment, marked *f*. The fourth system, starting at measure 57, shows the cello solo and string accompaniment, marked *mp*. The string parts are marked *choc.* and *mp*.

From measure 46 to 57, the string section repeatedly plays sextuplet and quintuplet divisions (Example 10). The polyrhythmic note grouping builds tension gradually, and at same time accompanies the solo. Chen Yi uses the same texture in her first cello concerto, *Eleanor's Gift* (Example 11).

Example 11. *Eleanor's Gift*, mm. 21–23

Musical score for Example 11, measures 21–23. The score is for a string ensemble, including Violins I and II, Violas, Cellos, and Double Basses. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The tempo is marked *ppp* (pianissimo). The score shows a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and triplets. The Violins I and II parts are the most active, with the Violins II part marked *Con sord.* (con sordina). The Viola, Cello, and Double Bass parts provide harmonic support with sustained notes and some rhythmic activity.

The flutes repeat the second theme at measure 58 and the trumpet section adds a new rhythmic motive that moves through the pentatonic scale, initiating a change from a heavy and slow character to one that is faster and more agitated (Example 12).

Example 12. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 57–59

Musical score for Example 12, measures 57–59. The score is for a cello and orchestra. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor). The tempo is marked *mf* (mezzo-forte). The score shows a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and triplets. The Flute I and II parts are the most active, with the Flute I part marked *mf* and the Flute II part marked *p*. The Trumpet I, II, and III parts are also active, with the Trumpet I part marked *1-3' con sord.* (con sordina). The Cello solo part is marked *mp* (mezzo-piano). The Violin I and II parts are marked *mp* and *pp* (pianissimo). The Viola part is marked *mp* and *pp*. The score includes dynamic markings such as *mf*, *p*, *mp*, and *pp*.

Another important motive woven into this movement is from a folk tune “Huaer.” In English, the word means flower. In the Northwest region of China, this song is usually sung by young lovers chasing each other, or a couple expressing their emotions when they miss each other. The difficult geographic conditions often require working men to be employed far away from their home. Women will sing “Huaer” to express their sadness and how much they are missing their husbands.

“Huaer” typically contains a fourth followed by a descending scale where the last note of the scale steps down, landing a minor third or major sixth from the initial pitch. In Example 13, the tonal center is F minor and the solo line includes the motive from “Huaer.” The orchestra crescendos to a climax just before the beginning of section B, and the cello solo is based on the motive in measure 91.

Example 13. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 93–94



To prepare big dynamic changes or transfers at impact points, Chen Yi lets one instrument play the motive before the full orchestra or section comes in with the same motive. The trumpet introduces the triplet motive and a few measures later, the brass section repeats the same triplet motive, building in dynamic level until the solo cello part reaches the climax

(Example 14 and Example 15). Chen employs this same technique in other pieces as well as in other places of this movement.

Example 14. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 63–67

Musical score for Example 14, measures 63-67. The score is for three trumpets (1st, 2nd, 3rd) and a cello. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The music begins with a rest for all instruments. At measure 63, the trumpets and cello enter with a rhythmic pattern of sixteenth-note sextuplets. The trumpets play a descending line, while the cello plays a more complex pattern. The dynamic markings are *mf* (mezzo-forte).

Example 15. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 78–79

Musical score for Example 15, measures 78-79. The score is for four horns (1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th), three trumpets (1st, 2nd, 3rd), and a cello. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The music begins with a rest for all instruments. At measure 78, the horns and trumpets enter with a rhythmic pattern of sixteenth-note sextuplets. The horns play a descending line, while the trumpets play a more complex pattern. The dynamic markings are *fp* (fortissimo) and *f* (forte).

Between measures 79 and 90, tension builds with sixteenth-note sextuplets in three-note groups changing to two-note groups, resulting in the same pattern of sixteenth notes shifting beats. This creates a tempo acceleration as well. In measure 102, the strings expand the theme with eighth notes instead of sixteenth notes. The composer uses this orchestration to repeat a large statement of Theme 2. The full orchestra plays the theme with increased rhythmic tension, pushing the music to the climax in measure 91. From there, the cello continues to develop the motive until measure 110. The cello repeats Theme 2 without any ornamentation. In a

straightforward manner, the cello presents the “Huaer” motive with a fourth, a descending scale, and lands down to the major six. Double-stopped triplets lead to an *accelerando* sequence, finally merging the solo into the orchestra.

The final section, A', begins in measure 118 on the same D-flat from the opening solo cello gesture. The bass clarinet serves the same role as in Section A and the timpani presents the exact same chords until the very end (Example 16 and Example 17). The full orchestra again vocalized rhythms accompanying the solo cello with simple rhythmic syllables. After a chromatic descent in the low strings, the first movement fades to silence.

Example 16. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 114–119, cello solo part



Example 17. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 1, mm. 120–123, bass clarinet and timpani part

Musical score for Example 17, bass clarinet and timpani parts, measures 120-123. The score is written in treble clef for the Bass Clarinet (B.cl.) and bass clef for the Timpani (Timp.). The B.cl. part features a melodic line with dynamics *mf*, *f*, and *p*. The Timp. part features a rhythmic pattern of chords, with a marking for "(4 soft mallets)".

Second Movement, “Dance on the Silk Road” Analysis

Chen Yi describes the second movement:

In the second movement “Dance on the Silk Road,” I got my inspiration from the ancient Chinese Qiu Zi Music (in today’s Xin Jiang province) and the Hu Xuan Dance (brought

from Mongolia), originated in the area on the Silk Road, which was introduced to China from the West in Tang Dynasty.¹³

The form of the second movement is delineated by the presentation of main themes. There are two main themes and an additional cello cadenza. This movement features a happy, vividly rhythmic, celebratory melody befitting of the title “Dance on the Silk Road.”

Table 2. Formal Structure of *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 2.

Theme	First	Second	Transition	Cadenza	First	Second	Coda
Measure	1-25	26-42	43-69		73-97	98-114	115-end

The orchestra starts with the first theme immediately, contrasting the first movement’s slow tempo and thick texture with a fast tempo and a cheerful, exciting, and rhythmic melody in the high registers of the woodwind and violin sections. The percussion instrumentation fits within the folk *Xinjiang* style. Tom-tom and high conga are used to emulate a *tabour* hand drum, commonly used with the tambourine to accompany dancing. Chen Yi’s use of tom-tom and conga for the orchestration is fitting and creates a loud sound that soaring above the entire orchestra. While the woodwinds and violins play the same melody, the drums play a characteristic dance rhythm and the image of *Xinjiang*-style dance vividly appears.

The meter is 7/8, with a pickup beat and the three-measure phrases are rather long for this dance. The first theme is divided into two parts, a measure 1-3 and b measure 4-7 (Example 18, 19). In the first measure, the accent is on the downbeat of the first and second set of eighth notes.

¹³ Chen. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*.

In the second measure, the agogic accents changes to the second half of the second beat and second half of the last beat. In the third measure, the weight moves back to the beat, but it is on the third beat not down beat. This rhythm is not a straightforward dance with a regular pulse on each beat, but when the entire phrase is played at once, it conjures a strong dance feeling (Example 18).

Example 18. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 2, mm. 1–3

The image shows a musical score for measures 1-3 of a piece. The score is for five woodwind parts: Flute 1st and 2nd, Piccolo, Oboe 1st and 2nd, English horn, and Clarinet 1st and 2nd in Bb. The time signature is 4/8. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The dynamic marking is *mf*. The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes and accents, creating a dance-like feel. The notation includes various articulations like accents and slurs.

The second phrase is comprised of the next three measures. It does not have any clear beat, but each measure has a clear textural change. The sixteenth notes suggest a gesture of a dancer's spin (Example 19). The brass section repeats a short motive of three ascending sixteenth notes, energizing the pulse of the dance. Chen Yi uses a dissonant Western harmonic progression within the Chinese style. The harmony from western classical music brings the audience from ancient time to the present period.

Example 19. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 2, mm. 4–6

The image shows a musical score for measures 4 through 6 of the second movement of 'Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra'. The score is written for five woodwind instruments: Flute 1 (Fl. 1), Piccolo (Picc.), Oboe 1 (Ob. 1), English Horn (E.hn.), and Clarinet 1 (Cl. 1). All instruments are in the treble clef and play a complex, rhythmic melody characterized by frequent triplets and sixteenth-note patterns. The notation includes various articulations such as slurs and accents, and the key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor).

After the orchestra finishes the theme, the solo cello repeats it, accompanied solely by percussion that imitates the *tabour*. It is as if a solo dancer dances with a single *tabour* in the typical *Xinjiang* dance tradition. The solo part first finishes Theme 1 in measure 16. Chen Yi joins the string section with the cello solo on another repetition of the theme. Blending the timbre of the solo with the group has a fluid and natural effect.

The orchestra continues to play the exact same melody as the solo cello responds with a triplet sequence, hinting at the melody from measures 19 to 25. This section transitions from the first theme to the second theme. While it is very effective in increasing the expectation and anticipation, the triplet figures are also very satisfying for the soloist to play. The solo line does not take over entirely but forecasts the next section (Example 20).

Example 20. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 2, mm. 22–24

The second theme is a recognizable quote of the famous song “Why Are the Flowers So Red?” from the 1960s film *A Guest from Ice Mountain*. This song left a permanent mark on Chinese pop music. Since the film was made during the Cultural Revolution when people had limited entertainment, going to a movie was very big and memorable event for ordinary people. The movie was a milestone in Chinese film history, and the song became even more popular than the movie. The lyrics about love, friendship, and good wishes of the future are appealing and easy to remember. The melody is lively and joyful, deeply touching audiences at the time. It resonated especially with young people. For those in the same generation as Chen Yi, the melody of “Why Are the Flowers So Red?” triggers an emotional memory of the Cultural Revolution.

The second theme extends from measure 26 to 42. Chen Yi based this on “Why Are the Flowers So Red?” expanding the melody with elements and materials abstracted from first theme. For example, the triplet played by cello in the transition reappears in the second theme. The original tune is present, but it is merged into a larger structure. Chen Yi successfully builds the connection between two themes through a very natural progression, but the attention to details in the orchestration signal the new theme (Example 21).

Example 21. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 2, mm. 26–30, solo cello part

The image displays two staves of musical notation. The top staff is a single line of music in bass clef, starting with a dynamic marking of *f* and a fingering instruction 'III'. A circled letter 'C' is placed above the first measure. The music consists of a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together, with a few slurs. The bottom staff is labeled 'Vc. solo' and begins at measure 28. It features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes, some beamed in groups, and includes fingering numbers (1, 2, 3) and a 'III' instruction. The notation is dense and includes various articulations like accents and slurs.

This ascending scale is a new melodic idea for the brass and string section. These changes overlap with the cello's entrance of the new theme (Example 22). This short ascending gesture is new, but also borrows elements from the beginning theme. In addition, this ascending gesture is the only accompanying figure in the orchestra for the cello solo. After the cello concludes the second theme, a descending gesture occurs in measure 42 as a clear cadence and the orchestra plays the first theme again.

Example 22. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 2, mm. 25–26

The image displays a musical score for measures 25 and 26 of the second movement of 'Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra'. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 25-26) features woodwinds: Flute 1st and 2nd, Piccolo, Clarinet 1st and 2nd, and Bassoon. The second system (measures 25-26) features strings: Violin 1st and 2nd, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass. A solo Cello part is also shown at the beginning of the second system. A rehearsal mark 'C' is placed above measure 25 in both systems. The woodwinds play a melodic line starting in measure 25, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The strings play a rhythmic accompaniment, with the Violins and Violas marked *tutti (half) pizz.* and the Cellos and Double Basses marked *p*. The solo Cello part begins in measure 25 with a triplet of eighth notes, marked *f* and *III*.

The following section has a completely different orchestration. The woodwinds play the first theme while the solo cello responds with strong rhythmic chords (like a guitar) and triplet ascending scales from measure 43 to measure 69. The orchestra and cello dance together with full energy and excitement. Chen Yi uses dissonant double stops for cello's solo part. Although the solo plays an accompanying role, it is still easy to hear and recognize that the soloist is playing their instrument like a drum section. (Example 23).

Example 23. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 2, mm. 43–45



Without any break, the cello begins the cadenza section. This cadenza has three parts. The first part starts with a wide-open and free improvisatory style. The second part includes three different variations of the folk song “Why are the Flowers so Red?.” In the first variation, the theme is highlighted by artificial harmonics and the second uses only trills to present a very short version of the theme. The final variation, repeated on double steps with modulated pitches, stretches the original tune, finally resolving to the tonal center of G. The last part of cadenza transitions to the next section through a triplet sequence with melodic material derived from the previous gestures.

From measures 73 to 97, the orchestra and solo cello alternately repeat the first theme. The solo cello plays the second theme from measure 98 to 111. After a short coda, the second movement *attacca* into the third movement process.

Third Movement, “Fantasy of the Global Village” Analysis

Without any pause, the cello solo plays frenetic sixteenth notes. Based on musical material from previous sections and the alternation of contrasting ideas, the entire movement is similar to a “rondo” form. For analytical reasons, I delineated each section by identifying the major differences between the motives (Table 3).

Table 3. Formal Structure of *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 3.

Motive	Measure Number	Section	
1	1-67	A	
Transition	68-72	B	b
2	73-106		
1	107-121		
2	122-140		
1	141-154		
2	156-174		
1	175-189		
2	190-208		
1	209-221		
1,2,3	223-241	Coda	c
1,2,3	242-262		
1,2,3	263-282		
1,2,3	283-302		
2, transition	303-339		
1,3	340-end	Coda	

There are multiple possible ways to separate the sections. One of them is to split the movement to two parts with the separation point at measure 67 (Example 24). To analyze this movement, separating it into two parts examines it better as a breathless movement. The section from measure 67 to 72 is an introduction of B section. The rest of the music could be seen as a single part from beginning to the end. The *attacca* connection between the second movement and the third movement suggests a less-divided formal structure and better supports the composer's idea that "the music is expressive and impassioned, and the spirit is high and encouraging."¹⁴ It also makes more sense if we take an overview of all of the movement's rhythmic gestures. To

¹⁴ Chen. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*.

analyze this movement separating it into two parts will strongly support the composer's idea and help us to consider it as an intensive, breathless movement.

Example 24. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 3, mm. 67–67

The image displays a page of a musical score for measures 67-67. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes staves for Oboe (1^o, 2^o), English Horn (E.hn.), Clarinet (1^o, 2^o), Bass Clarinet (B.cl.), Bassoon (1^o, 2^o), and Contrabassoon (C.bn.). The second system includes staves for Horn (1^o, 2^o), Horn (3^o, 4^o), Trumpet (1^o, 2^o), and Trumpet (3^o). The music features a variety of dynamics, including piano (p), fortissimo (ff), and pianissimo (pp), and includes articulation marks such as accents and slurs. The notation is complex, with many notes beamed together and some notes marked with accents.

Although there are motives based on Chinese folk tunes, overall the third movement is composed in Western musical style. Some of the music is built with the whole-tone scale, which is typically employed more in contemporary Western classical music. For example, at the very beginning of the movement, if one considers each set of four notes disjunctively, each outlines part of a whole-tone scale. This scalar reference completely changes from the folk style, making the third movement quite different from the previous movements. When the orchestra first comes in, the brass section plays a quartal pattern beginning in measure 16 with an F#–B–E–A–D,

Example 26. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 3, mm. 88–90 (Motive 2)



The third motive is a rhythmic motive. It appears in measures 241 and 242 (Example 27). This important element helps to identify the start of the C section. It is the most repeated rhythm until the end and strongly suggests the cue at the start of a large coda section. In another words, the C section is the Coda.

Example 27. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 3, m. 241 (Motive 3)



After studying the score, it is clear that every note should be considered carefully. Chen Yi often picks some small element or fragment from a theme or given phrase and then develops it into a relatively large and new idea. From measure 67 to 70 (Example 17), the woodwinds and French horn successively establish a quartal chord. This effect creatively provides a gesture that indicates something is on the horizon. It causes a sense of wonder for the audience, and at the same time, prepares the next section. A similar technique begins the section immediately

preceding the coda and the transition occurs between measure 320 to 323 (Example 28) and also from measure 339 to 340.

Example 28. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 3, mm. 320–323

The image shows a musical score for measures 320 to 323 of the third movement of 'Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra'. The score is arranged in a system with six staves. The top two staves are for Horns (Hn.), with parts for 1st and 2nd horns. The next two staves are for Trumpets (Tp.), with parts for 1st and 2nd trumpets. The bottom two staves are for Trombones (Tb.), with parts for 1st and 2nd trombones. The music features a transition between measures 320 and 323. In measure 320, there are accents on the notes, and dynamic markings include *fp* (fortissimo piano) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). The notes are held across measures, creating a sustained effect. The score is written in a key signature of one flat and a common time signature.

Each primary motive plays an important role throughout the transitions. Chen Yi uses very simple elements to create a fantastic effect. In the measure 23, there is only one note with an accent on each instrument family: cello bass section, low woodwinds, and the snare drum. The accent sets up the pulse for the remainder of the movement (Example 29).

Example 29. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 3, mm. 19–28

Chen Yi creatively adds a glissando to a single note, reminiscent of the first movement. It also responds to the solo's glissando of Motive 2 (Example 26). The glissando feature—shown in Example 30—is another significant feature for the third movement.

Example 30. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 3, mm. 85–88

The image shows a musical score for measures 85 through 88. The score is arranged in two systems. The first system includes staves for Flute 1st and 2nd, Piccolo, Oboe 1st and 2nd, English Horn, Clarinet 1st and 2nd, Bass Clarinet, Bassoon 1st and 2nd, and Contrabassoon. The second system includes staves for Horn 1st and 2nd, Horn 3rd and 4th, Trumpet 1st and 2nd, and Trumpet 3rd. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The number 85 is written above the first staff. The score shows rests for most instruments, with some notes appearing in measures 86 and 87.

Compositional Techniques

Chen Yi's compositional techniques are deeply rooted in the traditional Western classical tradition. In measure 29, the cello repeats the first entrance, playing a perfect fifth higher than the original pitch (Example 31 and Example 32). It is similar to the real answer of a fugue subject.

Example 31. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 3, mm. 1–3



Example 32. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 3, mm. 26–27



Chen Yi also uses the timbre to transition in measure 51. Percussion and harp initiate a new idea with an exotic timbre, leading the piece into fantasy a world (Example 33).

Example 33. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 3, mm. 51–54

Musical notation for Example 33, measures 51-54. The notation is in treble clef. It shows two staves: Perc. 2^o Gl.sp. (Percussion 2nd Glockenspiel) and Hp. (Harp). The Glockenspiel part has a dynamic marking of *f* and the Harp part has a dynamic marking of *ff*. The notation includes notes and rests for both instruments.

Later in section B, the harp plays the same rhythm with percussion, adding more orchestral color. The second time, it responds with main Motive 2, successively building an inner connection organically (Example 34).

Example 34. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 3, mm. 73–78

The image shows a musical score for measures 73-78. It features four staves: 2nd Flute (2^o: Fl.sp.), 3rd Bassoon (3^o: B.dr.), Harp (Hp.), and Cello solo (Vc. solo). The Cello solo part begins at measure 73 with a dynamic marking of *f* and a circled letter 'D' above the first note. The Harp part has a dynamic marking of *ff*. The 3rd Bassoon part has a dynamic marking of *mp*. The score is in a common time signature and shows various rhythmic patterns and dynamics across the five measures.

Problems with the Form

Measures 68 to 72 are somewhat problematic with regards to form and could be potentially included with Section A or B. After examining the entire movement and observing its content, Section B should begin in measure 68 because of the timbre changes. In terms of rhythm, the music paused to prepare for the coming motive on measure 73 (Example 34). Considering these indicators, the five measures leading up to measure 73 serve the role of an entrance to the next section, and should be considered as part of Section B.

Another place that there may be some doubt in terms of form is between measures 241 and 242. This is first time Motive 3 appears and signals the beginning of Section C (or the coda). If this motive is assigned to the section before measure 241 as shown in Table 4a, the first entrance of section C would lack the motive 3. If it is considered as the separate section starting on measure 241, it becomes a point of self-contradiction (Table 4b). From measures 223 to 240

the music alternates motives 1 and 2. It is a feature throughout the entire section C. Connecting measures 223 to 240 with the previous section results in a more logical breakdown of sections.

Table 4. Two Options for the Formal Structure of *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy for Cello and Orchestra*, mvmt. 3, Section C.

Table 4a:				Table 4b:			
Motives	Measures			Motives	Measures		
1,2	223–240			1,2,3	223–242	Coda	C
3,1,2	241–259	Coda	C	1,2,3	243–262		
3,1,2	261–280			1,2,3	263–282		
3,1,2	281–300			1,2,3	283–302		
3, 2, and transition	301–338			2, and transition	303–339		
1,3	339–end		Coda	1,3	340–end		Coda

Overall, *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy* is an example of Chen Yi’s masterful capacity to combine Eastern and Western elements. She wrote a unique twenty-first century cello concerto that reflects her personal experience in a large musical work. It is filled with a deep love of the composer’s homeland, her personal passionate spirit, and a fusion of different cultures.

Chapter III

Eleanor's Gift

Eleanor's Gift (1998) was Chen Yi's first cello concerto and is a fifteen-minute, single-movement work. Commissioned by the New Heritage Music Foundation, the piece honors Eleanor Roosevelt for her efforts to advance the rights and freedoms of individuals at the fiftieth anniversary of the acceptance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the forty-eight nations. The Women's Philharmonic premiered the work with soloist Paul Tobias, under the baton of Apo Hsu on Dec. 10, 1998 in San Francisco—where the United Nations was chartered.¹⁵

The score calls for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets in B-flat, two bassoons, two French horns, two trumpets in B-flat, one trombone, harp, three percussionists (four timpani, temple blocks, tambourine, mark tree, Japanese high wood block, vibraphone, tam-tam, sustained cymbal, bass drum), and strings.

Analysis

Table 5. Formal Structure of *Eleanor's Gift*.

Section	a	b	a	c	a	Cadenza	Coda
	Main Theme	Emphasize Motive b	Main Theme	Development	Main Theme		
Measure Number	1–48	49–55	56–79	79–135	136–204	204–231	23 to end

¹⁵ Yi, Chen. *Eleanor's Gift Concerto for Cello and Orchestra* (Bryn Mawr, PA: Theodore Presser, 1998).

This is single movement concerto. It is a rondo form abaca as it shows on table 5. The solo cello presents the main theme at the very beginning, using chromatic pitches in the highest register of the instrument through measure 16. The elements of this theme are the foundation of the material prevalent throughout the remainder of the work. The four-note motive a first appears in measure 1 (Example 35), and its prime form is 0123. Motive b begins on the pick-up to measure 9, and its prime form is 0126 (Example 36). However, motive b's most significant feature is its contour, which has a down-up-down pattern, which can be shown as <-+>.

Example 35. *Eleanor's Gift*, mm. 1–8

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Cello Solo' and contains a melodic line with various dynamics: *mp espr*, *p*, and *mf*. It includes the instruction *ad lib.* and features a series of chromatic notes. The bottom staff is labeled 'Vc. Solo' and contains a more complex melodic line with dynamics *p*, *cresc.*, *mf*, and *f*. It includes 'microtonal' markings and trills ('tr').

Example 36. *Eleanor's Gift*, mm. 9–10

The image shows a single staff of musical notation labeled 'c. Solo'. It features a melodic line with trills ('tr') and a 'microtonal' marking. The notation includes a series of notes with trills, indicating a specific contour.

Motive b contains a half step that is displaced by an octave. Over the course of the work, the half step is displaced both higher and lower. When the trumpets and horns play this gesture in measure 51, Chen Yi accompanied it with varied orchestration. Different instruments to

successively play each note. The orchestration effectively creates a tension by sustaining the pitches with *ffp* and a crescendo (Example 37).

Example 37. *Eleanor's Gift*, mm. 49–52

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Horns (F) and Trumpets (Bb). The Horns part consists of two staves (1 and 2) and the Trumpets part also consists of two staves (1 and 2). The music is written in treble clef. The Horns part starts with a dynamic marking of *f* and has a crescendo leading to *ffp* in measure 50. The Trumpets part starts with a dynamic marking of *ff* and has a crescendo leading to *ffp* in measure 50. The score shows a crescendo in both parts, with the dynamic markings *ffp* and *f* indicating the intensity of the sound.

The first climax is reached in measure 48 and a few measures later, the brass section initiates a version of Motive b. Measure 48 could be considered the delineation point of that motive (Example 38).

Example 38. *Eleanor's Gift*, mm. 45–48

Musical score for Example 38, mm. 45–48 of *Eleanor's Gift*. The score includes parts for Horns (F), Trumpets (Bb), Trombone, Harp, Percussion 1 (TB), Percussion 2 (S Cym), Percussion 3, and Timpani. The music features a dynamic range from *mp* to *ff*. The Harp part shows a melodic line with a crescendo. The Percussion parts include a snare drum pattern and a bass drum pattern. The Timpani part features a Japanese high WB and a bass drum pattern. The score is marked with *f p*, *pp*, *ff*, and *mp*. The tempo is marked *poco a poco* and *senza sord.*

The oboe and flute then repeat Motive a, and the cello expands the motive with a longer phrase (Example 39).

Example 39. *Eleanor's Gift*, mm. 63–67

Musical score for Example 39, mm. 63–67 of *Eleanor's Gift*. The score shows a single melodic line in 3/4 time, marked *f espr.* The music features a dynamic range from *f* to *pp*. The score is marked with *f espr.*, *pp*, and *f*. The tempo is marked *poco a poco* and *senza sord.*

This abstract melody shows the composer's capability and creative approach to motive manipulation. In comparison to the theme from measures 1 to 4, the melody at measure 63, does not exactly match. But two-group ascending intervals with a descending gesture, relating the solo entrance to Motive b. Starting from the second note of measure 65, the four notes B Bb C Db match motive a's prime form of 0123.

These two motives are also present in the orchestral part. From measures 75 to 76, the oboe 1 plays Motive a, while oboe 2 and the clarinets play an inverted version of Motive b (Example 40).

Example 40. *Eleanor's Gift*, mm. 73–76

The image shows a musical score for measures 73-76 of 'Eleanor's Gift'. It features four staves: Oboe 1, Oboe 2, Clarinet 1 (Bb), and Clarinet 2 (Bb). The Oboe 1 part (top staff) plays Motive a, starting with a piano (pp) dynamic. The Oboe 2 and Clarinets parts (bottom three staves) play an inverted version of Motive b. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like 'pp' and 'tr'.

The distinction among different sections is based on the presentation of the main theme in the solo cello part. Tracing the direction of the musical structure, the development begins at measure 79 with the cello's *pizzicato* solo, based on the development of Theme a. Chen Yi used these fragmented elements to create dialogue between the cello and the orchestra (Example 41).

Example 41. *Eleanor's Gift*, mm. 85–88

The image displays a musical score for Example 41, measures 85–88. The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Horns (F), Trumpets (Bb), and Trombones. The second system includes parts for Violin Solo, Violins (I and II), Viola, and Cello. The music is in a key with one flat (Bb) and a 3/4 time signature. The first system shows the Horns and Trumpets/Trombones playing a melody starting in measure 85, marked *pp*. The second system shows the Violin Solo playing a triplet melody in measure 85, marked *f*. The Violins and Viola/Cello parts provide harmonic support, with the Viola and Cello parts marked *p* and *pizz*.

When the cello solo plays the theme again, it has been transposed one octave lower, to the most resonant range of the instrument (Example 42). The orchestra responds to the theme with an expanded melody, led by the oboe.

Example 42. *Eleanor's Gift*, mm. 133–136



In measure 125, the orchestra takes over with a quasi-inversion of Theme a (Example 43). The musical character shifts from a lonely solo to a blooming full orchestra. The music, with more certainty and confidence, climaxes in measure 135.

Example 43. *Eleanor's Gift*, mm. 125–127



Example 44 isolates two small successive fragments of three notes stepping down (A-G#-F#) followed by a large leap up (G-E) in the cello part in mm. 149–150 (Example 44). Chen Yi first utilizes oboe, and then horn followed by first violin, to present variations on the contour of these two fragments, as shown in Example 45 and 46.

Example 44. *Eleanor's Gift*, mm. 149-150, cello solo



Example 45. *Eleanor's Gift*, mm. 153-155, oboe solo



Example 46. *Eleanor's Gift*, mm. 161-164, horn and violin part

Musical score for horn and violin parts, measures 161-164. The top staff is for the Horn (F) and the bottom staff is for the Violins. Both staves begin with a first ending bracket. The horn part starts with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. A slur covers the next two measures, which contain a half note D5 and a half note E5. The piece concludes with a quarter rest followed by a quarter note G4. Dynamic markings of *p* and *pp* are present. The violin part starts with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. A slur covers the next two measures, which contain a half note D5 and a half note E5. The piece concludes with a quarter rest followed by a quarter note G4. Dynamic markings of *pp* and *mp* are present. A *Solo* marking is placed above the violin staff in the third measure.

The cello plays a very short cadenza beginning in measure 204 and repeats the theme one last time (one octave lower than the initial pitch). The coda could have started immediately after cadenza, but Chen Yi adds few measures of material for the brass section and cello solo to build tension and give audience a greater sense of anticipation. The coda should begin in 236 instead of 241 where the full orchestra comes later (Example 47).

Example 47. *Eleanor's Gift*, mm. 233–236

The musical score for Example 47, mm. 233–236, is arranged in a multi-staff format. The instruments and parts are as follows:

- Horns (F):** Two staves (1 and 2). Both parts are silent until the final measure, where they play a chord with dynamics *fp* and *f*.
- Trumpets (Bb):** Two staves (1 and 2). Both parts are silent until the final measure, where they play a chord with dynamics *fp* and *f*.
- Trombone:** One staff, silent throughout.
- Harp:** Two staves, silent throughout.
- Percussion:** Three staves (Perc. 1, Perc. 2, Perc. 3). Perc. 1 and Perc. 2 are silent. Perc. 3 has a *S. Cym.* (Small Cymbal) entry in the final measure with dynamics *p* and *f*.
- Violin Solo:** Two staves. The solo begins in measure 233 with a *mf* dynamic. It features a melodic line in the upper staff and a rhythmic accompaniment in the lower staff. The solo concludes in measure 236 with a *f* dynamic.

Chapter IV

Discussion and Conclusions

Ballad, Dance and Fantasy and *Eleanor's Gift* are both post-tonal works, developed from simple themes and motives. *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy* features Chinese folk elements and is built around a tonal center. *Eleanor's Gift* is in contemporary Western classical music style.

A few general principles can be used as a guide for Chen Yi's cello concertos. Both works begin with melodic ideas containing the primary components of the thematic language. Melodically, *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy* contains repeated basic ideas, some drawn from Chinese traditional folk tunes; *Eleanor's Gift* is a totally original idea without any overt Eastern elements. Harmonically, *Ballad, Dance and Fantasy* prolongs the tonal center. In contrast, *Eleanor's Gift* is defined more abstractly by its rhythm, melodic contour, and varied repetitions. Both pieces use a certain melodic sequence. There are many compositional techniques, such as innovative orchestration, sophisticated rhythmic principles, and wide intervals that deeply relate to Chen Yi's music and life experiences from her early days at the Beijing Conservatory, to today's career as an active and established composer. The vast range of elements between Western and Chinese music that have been used in Chen Yi's compositions are truly remarkable. Her masterful capability to combine both worlds is one of the reasons that Chen Yi's work have been so successful all around the world.

The composer's own words are a fitting end to this discussion:

It's a long period and hard effort to bring more civilization to non-educated people in the world. In the concerto, I express my deep sympathy for the people, especially for the women who have suffered or are suffering from violence and ill-treatment, who don't have the rights and freedom that they deserve to have in the society, and my passionate yearning towards the peace in the world. An encouraging Chinese maxim says: To ride

on the long wind, and plough through thousands miles of the waves [sic]. We have lofty ideals, we will overcome the difficulties and continue our success towards the future. The sudden epiphanies presented in the music bring in brilliant hope for the future.¹⁶

¹⁶ Chen. *Eleanor's Gift Concerto for Cello and Orchestra*.

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