A Discussion of Shiguang Cui's Piano Concerto No. 2, Focusing on a Stylistic Analysis and Traditional Chinese Musical Elements

Yuting Ji

University of Southern Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations

Part of the Composition Commons, Music Performance Commons, and the Other Music Commons

Recommended Citation

https://aquila.usm.edu/dissertations/903

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact aquilastaff@usm.edu.
A DISCUSSION OF SHIGUANG CUI’S PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2, FOCUSING ON
A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS AND TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSICAL ELEMENTS

by

Yuting Ji

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
and the School of Music
at The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

Approved:

_____________________________________________________
Dr. Ellen Elder, Committee Chair
Assistant Professor, Music

_____________________________________________________
Dr. Elizabeth Moak, Committee Member
Associate Professor, Music

_____________________________________________________
Dr. Christopher Goertzen, Committee Member
Professor, Music

_____________________________________________________
Dr. Joseph Brumbelow, Committee Member
Associate Professor, Music

_____________________________________________________
Dr. Hsiaopei Lee, Committee Member
Associate Professor, Music

_____________________________________________________
Dr. Karen S. Coats
Dean of the Graduate School

December 2016
ABSTRACT

A DISCUSSION OF SHIGUANG CUI’S PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2, FOCUSING ON A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS AND TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSICAL ELEMENTS

by Yuting Ji

December 2016

Shiguang Cui (崔世光) (b. 1948) is a Chinese composer and pianist. To celebrate the 2008 Summer Olympic Games held in Beijing, his work Concerto for Ten Concert Grand Pianos and Orchestra was commissioned by the Dean of the National Center for the Performing Arts, Mr. Ping Chen. Ten internationally-renowned pianists were invited to give the world premiere on August 19, 2008. The pianists were Claude Frank, Phillippe Entremont, Vladimir Feltsman, Louis Lortie, Yunyi Qin (秦云轶), Shikun Liu (刘诗昆), Lang Lang (郎朗), Cyprien Katsaris, Guillermo Gonzalez, and Sha Chen (陈萨).¹

This piece was originally conceived as Concerto for Ten Concert Grand Pianos and Orchestra, and was composed in 2008 with the title China Jubilee (喜庆中国). The original concerto for ten pianos was never published. The only published edition of this work is for two pianos, with the second piano serving as the orchestral reduction, with a different title: Piano Concerto No. 2.² The work contains four movements.

My dissertation contains four chapters. Chapter I, a brief history of the development of keyboard instruments in China, includes information about several


². Ibid.
important pianists who contributed to the development of the piano and to Chinese piano music. Chapter II gives an overview of Shiguang Cui’s career as a composer, his works for the keyboard, and background information on the Piano Concerto No. 2. Chapter III contains a stylistic analysis of the Concerto No. 2, including pentatonic scale techniques, use of the interval of a fourth, and the employment of traditional Chinese textural techniques as well as Western rhythmic and textural compositional techniques. Chapter IV discusses the influence of Chinese traditional musical elements in the Piano Concerto No. 2. These include Chinese folksongs and dances, quotation from Chinese operas, and the influence of Chinese instruments.

Piano Concerto No. 2 is an important contribution to the genre and to the development of Chinese piano music. My hope is that more Chinese works will be composed, and that more pianists will be inspired to learn and perform Cui’s Piano Concerto No. 2 as well as his solo piano music.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my piano professor and committee chair, Dr. Ellen Elder, who gave me valuable help in the completion of this project. Her professional knowledge, patience, and support have inspired me in my future career as a teacher. I also sincerely thank all of my committee members, Dr. Elizabeth Moak, Dr. Christopher Goertzen, Dr. Joseph Brumbeloe, and Dr. Hsiaopei Lee, for their guidance and encouragement during my years of doctoral study.
DEDICATION

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my parents, who provided their unconditional love, support, and encouragement to me in all aspects of life. I also wish to express my gratitude to respected Mr. Shiguang Cui, and my friends Jessica Ramer (USM Writing Center), Jonathan Embry, and Jingxian Wang, who rendered their help during this period of my project work.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................ ii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................................ iv

DEDICATION ..................................................................................................... v

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ............................................................................... viii

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES ...................................................................... ix

CHAPTER I – A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS IN CHINA .............................................................. 1

CHAPTER II – SHIGUANG CUI AND HIS WORKS FOR KEYBOARD ........... 10

Cui’s Life and Works for Keyboard ................................................................. 10

1948-1973–Student Years ............................................................................. 10


1984-1994–Studies and Work in the United States ...................................... 14

1994 to the Present–Late Career and Return to China ................................ 15

Works for Keyboard ..................................................................................... 16

_Piano Concerto No. 2 (China Jubilee)_ ......................................................... 19

CHAPTER III – ANALYSIS ............................................................................ 24

Stylistic Analysis of_Piano Concerto No. 2_ ................................................. 24

Pentatonic Scales ......................................................................................... 24

Six-Tone Scales ........................................................................................... 29
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1 World Premiere of Concerto for Ten Concert Grand Pianos and Orchestra..... 22
Figure 2 Performance of Northeast Yangko .......................................................... 56
Figure 3 Suona ........................................................................................................ 58
Figure 4 Performance of Guzi Yangko Dance ....................................................... 62
Figure 5 Performance of Er-Ren Zhuan ................................................................. 64
Figure 6 Guzheng ................................................................................................... 67
Figure 7 Erhu .......................................................................................................... 70
LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Musical Example 1 *March of Peace* ................................................................. 4
Musical Example 2 Original Piano Works Written Before Cui’s Studies Abroad (1948-1984) .................................................................................................................................................................................. 17
Musical Example 3 Piano Transcriptions Written Before Cui’s Studies Abroad (1948-1984) ........................................................................................................................................................................................................ 18
Musical Example 4 Original Piano Works Written After Cui’s Return to China ........ 19
Musical Example 5 Piano Transcriptions Written After Cui’s Return to China ........ 19
Musical Example 6 Performances of Multiple-Piano Works ................................ 23
Musical Example 7 Basic Pentatonic Scale ............................................................. 24
Musical Example 8 Gong Mode or Basic Pentatonic Scale .................................... 25
Musical Example 9 Shang Mode ............................................................................. 25
Musical Example 10 Jue Mode ............................................................................... 25
Musical Example 11 Zhi Mode ................................................................................ 25
Musical Example 12 Yu Mode ................................................................................. 25
Musical Example 13 Example of How to Identify a Mode ...................................... 26
Musical Example 14 F Pentatonic Scale ................................................................. 26
Musical Example 15 E Shang Mode (mm. 11-18 of *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. II) .... 27
Musical Example 16 Pentatonic Chord (mm. 319-321 of *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. III) .... 28
Musical Example 17 D Zhi Mode Using Arpeggio Technique (mm. 216-218 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. III) ................................................................. 29

Musical Example 18 Six-Tone Scale (m. 124 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. IV) ............... 30

Musical Example 19 Qingyue Scale ........................................................................ 31

Musical Example 20 Yayue Scale .......................................................................... 31

Musical Example 21 Yanyue Scale ........................................................................ 32

Musical Example 22 Seven-Tone Qingyue Mode (mm. 57-58 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. II) ......................................................................................... 32

Musical Example 23 Seven-Tone Yayue Mode (mm. 71-77 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. II) 33

Musical Example 24 Seven-Tone Yanyue Mode (mm. 38-39 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. IV) ......................................................................................... 34

Musical Example 25 Use of Parallel Fourths (mm. 30-35 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. I)..... 35

Musical Example 26 Use of Parallel Fourths (mm. 112-115 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. II) 35

Musical Example 27 Chords Including Intervals of a Fourth (mm. 38-39 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. IV) ......................................................................................... 36

Musical Example 28 Monophonic Texture (mm. 12-16 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. IV)..... 37

Musical Example 29 Duoju Texture (mm. 315-324 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. III) ........... 39

Musical Example 30 Dynamic Changes (m. 315 and m. 317 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. III) ......................................................................................... 39
Musical Example 31 Polyrhythms Reminiscent of Chopin’s Music (mm. 87-90 of
Concerto No. 2, mvt. II) ............................................................................. 41
Musical Example 32 mm. 6-8 of Chopin’s Fantasie-Impromptu, Op. posth. 66 .... 41
Musical Example 33 m. 45 of Chopin’s Nocturne, Op. 27, No. 2 ................... 42
Musical Example 34 Reminiscent of Liszt’s La campanella (mm. 130-133 of Concerto
No. 2, mvt. II) ............................................................................................... 43
Musical Example 35 mm. 50-52 of Liszt’s La campanella ................................ 43
Musical Example 36 mm. 272-275 of Cui’s Concerto No. 2, mvt. IV (Reminiscent of
Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No. 2) .......................................................... 44
III ..................................................................................................................... 44
Musical Example 38 Use of Glissando Technique (m. 197 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. IV) 46
Musical Example 39 Quotation of Xin Tian You Folk Music (mm. 1-11 of Concerto No.
2, mvt. III) ....................................................................................................... 47
Musical Example 40 Influence of Shandong Xiaodiao Folksong (mm. 102-107 of
Concerto No. 2, mvt. IV) ............................................................................. 49
Musical Example 41 Influence of “Fengyang Hua-Drum” Folksong (mm. 7-10 of
Concerto No. 2, mvt. II) ................................................................................ 50
Musical Example 42 “Fengyang Hua-Drum” Folksong, mm. 1-4 ....................... 50
Musical Example 43 m. 108 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. II ................................. 51
Musical Example 44 Folk song: “Who Would Say My Hometown is Not Beautiful” .... 51
Musical Example 45 mm. 5-9 of “Northeast Lullaby” Folksong .................................................. 52
Musical Example 46 mm. 13-16 of mvt. IV of Concerto No. 2 ................................................. 52
Musical Example 47 Melodic Comparison of “Northeast Lullaby” and Cui’s Concerto No. 2 ........................................................................................................................................... 52
Musical Example 48 mm. 27-29 from the Aria, “Pairs of Birds on the Tree,” from the Huangmei Opera Tian Xian Pei ........................................................................................................................................ 54
Musical Example 49 Cui’s Use of Imitation Reminiscent of “Pairs of Birds on the Tree” (mm. 1-6 of mvt. II of Concerto No. 2) .................................................................................................................. 54
Musical Example 50 Northeast Yangko Dance Accompaniment Influence (mm. 1-7 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. I) ........................................................................................................................................ 57
Musical Example 51 Standard Opening Drum Rhythm of the Northeast Yangko Dance Accompaniment ........................................................................................................................................... 59
Musical Example 52 Opening Rhythm of Concerto No. 2 (m. 1 of mvt. I) ......................... 60
Musical Example 53 Typical Rhythm of Guzi Yangko Dance Accompaniments ............. 63
Musical Example 54 Influence of Guzi Yangko Dance Accompaniments (mm. 1-6 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. IV) ........................................................................................................................................ 63
Musical Example 55 Influence of Er-Ren Zhuan Music (mm. 30-37 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. I)......................................................................................................................................................... 66
Musical Example 56 Guzheng Glissando Texture (m. 124 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. IV). 68
Musical Example 57 Guitar Chord, mvt. II of Alberto Ginastera’s Piano Sonata No.1, Op. 22..................................................................................................................................................... 69
Musical Example 58 Pipa Chord (mm. 182-184 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. I) .................. 69

Musical Example 59 Influence of Dayin Texture (mm. 149-155 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. II) .................................................................................................................................................. 71

Musical Example 60 Rhythm of Xiao Gu Percussion Instruments Found in Ten-Piano Version of Concerto No. 2 (mm. 166-168 of mvt. I) ........................................................................................................... 72

Musical Example 61 Rhythm of Xiao Luo Percussion Instruments Found in Ten-Piano Version of Concerto No. 2 (mm. 166-168 of mvt. I) ........................................................................................................... 72

Musical Example 62 Rhythm of Da Gu and Da Luo Percussion Instruments Found in Ten-Piano Version of Concerto No. 2 (mm. 166-168 of mvt. I) ....................................................................................... 72

Musical Example 63 Influence of Chinese Percussion Set (mm. 166-168 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. I) ........................................................................................................................................................................... 73
CHAPTER I – A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTS IN CHINA

China has a long and rich history of music but only a short history of piano. The earliest record of musical instruments in China can be traced to around 9000 years ago, a fact confirmed by archaeological excavations. Over thirty bone flutes were excavated in three archaeological digs in 1984, 1987, and 2001. They were excavated from Jiahu, in the Henan province, and so they were referred to as Jiahu bone flutes. Seven-tone scales can be played on certain Jiahu bone flutes.3 The first keyboard instrument to be used in China, the clavichord, appeared in 1601, but its use was limited to Emperor Wanli’s (明神宗) court. However, he soon lost interest in it and it fell out of use.4 The piano was not played publicly in China until after the First Opium War (鸦片战争), which began in 1840.5 Due to wars and revolutions, the development of piano literature and performance in Chinese society was limited until 1978. From then on, the piano has flourished in China because of the One Child policy, which has encouraged parents to invest heavily in the education of that child, including music education.

The clavichord, as mentioned above, was the first keyboard instrument to be used in China. An Italian missionary, Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), travelled to China and paid tribute to Emperor Wanli, a ruler of the Ming dynasty. He brought with him over forty gifts, and one of them was an Italian clavichord. The Emperor was attracted by the

---


4. Ibid., 111.

amazing sound of this instrument, so he asked four imperial musicians to take lessons from another missionary, Didacus De Pantoja (1571-1618), who was in China at that time. In order to make sure the Emperor could understand and enjoy the Italian music, the Chinese musicians requested Matteo Ricci to add Chinese words to the music. The lyrics reflected Confucian philosophy and associated moral precepts. As mentioned previously, due to its limited use and the emperor's waning interest, it fell out of fashion.

In 1673, the Portuguese missionary Tome Pereyra went to China and paid tribute to Emperor Kangxi of the Qing dynasty with a harpsichord and an organ. Emperor Kangxi studied harpsichord with Tome Pereyra and asked him to write a Western theory book in Chinese. It was called *LvLv Zuanyao* (律吕纂要). That was the first book in Chinese history to introduce Western music theory principles.

There was no real development of the keyboard in China during this time, because keyboards were only played by a limited number of court musicians; the masses had no opportunity to learn about or even to see these instruments. Although a very few Chinese had known about the clavichord and harpsichord as early as the 1600s, after the period of Emperor Kangxi, keyboard instruments were ignored by the emperors that followed him for more than one hundred years. Keyboard instruments were not used again in the court until the 1840s, when the piano was introduced.

---


7. Liu, 111.

8. Han, Chen and Tan, 4.

In 1840, the First Opium War, also known as the Anglo-Chinese War, pitted the Qing Empire against the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The Qing Empire lost the war, and as a result, some cities in the southeastern coast of China such as Shanghai, Ningbo, Guangzhou, Xiamen, and Fuzhou were required to open for trade with foreign countries. This “door” of China was opened after being closed for 200 years, and many merchants and missionaries entered the country. As churches and schools were built in these cities, hymns were accompanied by piano in Sunday services, and piano classes were opened in schools. Missionaries performed on the piano during church services, and taught the instrument in schools, but their skills were normally very rudimentary. The main purpose of building churches and schools was for missionary work, but these endeavors had the effect of supporting the popularizing of the piano in China through its first public introduction there.

The first piano work composed by a Chinese citizen was the *March of Peace*. Written by Yuanren Zhao (趙元任) (1892-1982) in 1914 after the outbreak of World War I, it advocated peace and opposed the war. This is a simple piano work of only twenty-one measures in length, with moments of polyphony in measures 12 through 19 (see Example 1).

---

11. Ibid.,14.
12. Han, Chen and Tan, 9.
13. Liu, 126.
Musical Example 1 *March of Peace*

After the Opium War, there were two contrasting opinions of Western culture in China. One idea was that China should keep its traditional culture and absorb the advanced Western culture. The other idea was that China should adopt the advanced Western culture completely.¹⁴

---

¹⁴. Liu, 116.
At the end of the nineteenth century, there was a trend to add Chinese words to popular songs from Japan, Europe, and the United States, songs new to Chinese society. This trend was called Xuetang ("study room") Yuege ("musical songs") (学堂乐歌). Due to the large quantity of works and the great popularity of singing groups, the study center gradually expanded from Xuetang to the entire Chinese society. This was the first time Western musical instruments and concepts such as theory and notation were introduced into Chinese society.\(^{15}\) Although traditional music retained its importance, this period marked a trend toward incorporating Western musical concepts into the Chinese repertoire.

In 1927, the Shanghai Conservatory of Music became the first music institute of higher education in China. It was founded by Yuanpei Cai (蔡元培) and Youmei Xiao (萧友梅). Youmei Xiao was the first music student to study abroad. He received his doctoral degree from the Leipzig Conservatory of Music in 1916.\(^{16}\)

During this period, there were several important pianists in China, some of whom were European, who made important contributions to Chinese piano music. Mario Paci (梅百器) was an Italian pianist and conductor who studied with Giovanni Sgambati, who himself was a student of Franz Liszt. In 1904, Paci gave his first recital in Shanghai, which was the first record of a piano recital in China. Fourteen years later, he came back to Shanghai to present another piano recital, but due to an illness he stayed in Shanghai and worked there for the rest of his life. He taught and mentored numerous Chinese professional pianists. One of his students, Fou Ts'ong (傅聰), remarked that Mario Paci

\(^{15}\) Liu, 120.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 134.
was extremely strict in his teaching of technique, favoring independent fingers and strong fingertips. His musical preferences had a deep influence on later Chinese piano pedagogy.\textsuperscript{17}

Another important contributor was the Russian pianist Boris Zakharoff (查哈罗夫), a student of Anna Essipova, and colleague of Sergei Prokofiev during their studies at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory. In 1929, he began teaching piano in the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, which he did for fifteen years. The system of teaching—including the material taught and the textbooks used—was based on the European model, with its strict educational practices and techniques.\textsuperscript{18}

Alexander Tcherepnin (齐尔品), the Russian-born composer and pianist, hosted a competition for composers with the assistance of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 1934.\textsuperscript{19} Luting He (贺绿汀) won first prize in this competition with his work *The Cowherd's Flute*. This work is considered by scholars to be the first mature Chinese piano work.\textsuperscript{20} It combines a characteristic Chinese melody with a Western two-part polyphonic texture.

Between the 1930s and 1940s, the development of art music in China had largely ceased because of the two wars between China and Japan. Most of the musical compositions that were written then were revolutionary songs. They are still popular today, and are often sung during national and military holidays.

\textsuperscript{17} Han, Chen and Tan, 22.
\textsuperscript{18} Liu, 218.
\textsuperscript{19} Han, Chen and Tan, 23.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 39.
With the creation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the new government enacted policies for different areas, such as art and science. In the area of music, China used Russia as its model. Between 1949 and 1966, compositions for the piano were both more numerous and of higher quality. In addition, more conservatories opened. Also, in the early 1950s, students who had studied abroad started to come back to China after they graduated from music schools in England, the United States, and France. These students brought new methods of teaching and a broader range of textbooks to China.

The period between 1966 to 1976 in China was referred to as the Cultural Revolution. Western music was rejected as a matter of policy. In order to avoid political problems, most piano works were transcriptions of traditional songs, instrumental pieces, and Chinese operas.

In 1978, the Chinese government made reforms and became more open to cultural exchange. This was made apparent with the popular slogan of the time: “Reform and Opening Up.” With the development of the Chinese economy and the One Child policy, parents poured all their educational resources into their only child. From 1978 until the present day, it is believed that thirty million Chinese students have studied the piano.\(^\text{21}\)

With the development of piano education, an exam called the Piano Level Examination appeared in China in 1987.\(^\text{22}\) It is extremely popular in China and is held every year at many different institutions. Students at each of the ten levels are required to play scales, arpeggios, one etude, one fugal piece from the Baroque period, one movement of a classical sonata, and one piece from another period of music.

\(^{21}\) Han, Chen and Tan, 109.

\(^{22}\) Ibid., 112.
By the turn of the twenty-first century, Chinese universities added music departments to their programs. A report on art education claims that between 2002 and 2013, the number of newly opened music departments in the universities expanded from 597 to 1679, and the number of students who participated in the music auditions increased from 32,000 to 970,000.23

In recent times, there are three types of Chinese piano works: transcriptions of traditional Chinese music, modernist, and the new style. Xiaosheng Zhao (赵晓生), a retired faculty member at the Shanghai Conservatory created a system of composition that uses the ancient philosophy of Taiji, which is related to Taoism. He wrote a piano work called Taiji, which is an example of the new style.

Every year, there are large numbers of Chinese pianists who are accepted into top music schools all over the world and who frequently win international competitions. Although the piano in China has an extremely short history compared to other countries, China has been narrowing the gap in both the quality of pianists produced as well as the number of piano compositions written by Chinese composers.

This dissertation will focus on the contribution of the Chinese composer Shiguang Cui, and his composition, Piano Concerto No. 2. His compositions for the piano, including his Concerto No. 2, combine Chinese and Western musical elements. In the following chapters, I will provide a stylistic analysis of the work, including the use of pentatonic scale techniques, use of the interval of a fourth, and the use of traditional Chinese and Western textural techniques. The influence of traditional Chinese musical

elements such as Chinese folksongs and dances, quotation from Chinese opera, and the influence of Chinese wind, string, and percussion instruments will also be discussed.
CHAPTER II – SHIGUANG CUI AND HIS WORKS FOR KEYBOARD

Cui’s Life and Works for Keyboard

Cui’s life and music can be divided into four parts, which I will discuss below:

1948-1973–Student Years

1973-1984–Work in China


1994 to the Present–Late Career and Return to China

1948-1973–Student Years

Shiguang Cui (b. 1948) began to play the piano when he was six years old. His mother, Chengmei Wang, was his first piano teacher. She studied math and music in Ginling College in Nanjing. Because the piano was accepted by Chinese society relatively late, there were no professional Chinese piano teachers in the 1930s. Also, there were few colleges in China, and even fewer piano faculty from the Western Hemisphere. Chengmei Wang (王澄美) was one of the fortunate women who went to college and was taught by professional piano teachers who were trained in the Western tradition.\(^{25}\)

When Cui was a young child, his mother began teaching him the piano. As he learned, he began to improvise and became quite skilled in this art.\(^{26}\) Cui’s sister, Meiling


\(^{25}\) Ibid., 4.

Cui, writes about this:

His family found that Cui had a good sense of rhythm when he was two years old. At that age, after listening to the music from a broadcast, Cui was able to memorize and dance using the correct rhythms. Every time my mother was teaching, Cui was looking and listening. Sometimes he might play some random notes on the piano, and our mother would say that he was being ‘naughty.’ After he did that many times, mother asked if he might like to play the piano. The answer from Cui was ‘yes.’

All of Cui’s relatives were Christian. As mentioned in Chapter I, the church was the vehicle for bringing Western music to China. Before that, the “door” of China was not open, and the Chinese had no way of coming into contact with Western music. Most of the music Cui heard during his early years was from hymns, which is how he started to gain understanding of Western harmony and counterpoint.

Until 1961, Cui grew up in his father’s hometown of Dandong, which is in the Liaoning Province. His family then moved to his mother’s hometown, Qingdao, which is in the Shandong Province. Several of Cui’s more famous piano works, Northeast Grand Yangko and Shandong Folk Suite, were inspired by the folksongs and dances from these two towns. China Jubilee was also inspired by these elements.

In 1961, Cui auditioned at the Central Conservatory of Music Middle School in Beijing. The dean found that Cui was superior to other students because he was not only technically skilled at the piano but also because he had an intuitive understanding of music. The Dean accepted him immediately after the audition, but Cui could not enroll for political reasons: the government reviewed his family’s status and found it unsatisfactory, perhaps because his father worked in a hospital that had connections with

---

27. Guan, 6.

28. Ibid., 5.
a foreign country. In 1962 the Dean still remembered Cui and invited him for another audition. Because the political situation in the country had changed, talented students like Cui could be admitted.29

However, in 1964, Chairman Mao Zedong proposed to reform the arts and the Chinese literature. As the result, all of the music and art-related institutions stopped their normal work and the performance of Western music was forbidden. All compositions produced in music schools were required to celebrate the revolution, nationalism, and the masses. Revolutionary and nationalistic pieces were easy to compose, but the third was harder to achieve. Because the piano was a recent introduction to Chinese music, the masses had trouble accepting it. To solve this problem, composers tended to compose piano transcriptions of pieces that were already widely known. This method was effective. On one hand, the third goal of writing “for the masses” was achieved. On the other hand, the “new” instrument had more opportunities to be known and accepted.30

The ten-year period in China from 1966 to 1976 was referred to as the Cultural Revolution. Cui was one of the musicians and witnesses to this part of Chinese history. According to Cui, “the Cultural Revolution frayed the fabric of every aspect of life in China. Musical activities and music education were negatively affected and severely


damaged by the breakdown in political and social life. Educational institutions closed down completely.”

Between 1969 and 1974, formal music education completely disappeared in China. Musicians, educators, artists, and intellectuals were sent to work in the rice fields and to raise pigs in the labor camps and farms. Cui was sent to a farm in the rural area of Tianjin in 1968. The environment was terrible and the workload was extremely heavy. He spent one year adapting to life there and started to compose secretly. At first, he wrote piano accompaniments to existing Chinese vocal melodies. Since the piano was not accepted by Chinese society until the early twentieth century, most of the Chinese melodies still had no piano accompaniment, so Cui helped to greatly contribute to this genre.

Later, in order to gain a more intimate knowledge of the works and their orchestration, Cui transcribed famous orchestral works such as Antonin Dvorak’s New World Symphony, Anatoly Lyadov’s Eight Russian Folksongs for Orchestra, Op. 58, and Reinhold Glière’s Concerto for Coloratura and Orchestra, Op. 82.

1973-1984—Work in China

After five years working on the farm, Cui was sent back to the city and worked in the “Five-Seven” Art School in Jinan. His main job was serving as an accompanist for

---


32. Ibid.

dance companies and the Beijing opera. When there were virtuosic passages in the piano solo parts that other pianists struggled with, Cui could play them easily and perfectly.  

Later, he returned to Beijing and worked in the China National Symphony Orchestra as a composer and a pianist. He made friends with the musicians there and discussed music with them. He was frequently invited by famous singers to compose piano accompaniments to Chinese songs. During these six years of working in the China National Symphony Orchestra, Cui wrote more than 200 accompaniments to Chinese songs. He also wrote some solo piano works at this time, performed frequently as a piano soloist, and made several recordings that have been published.

When the Chinese government made reforms and became more open to cultural exchange in the late 1970s, master musicians and professors came from all over the world to perform. Cui not only began to work alongside them, but he also seized the opportunity to learn from them.

1984-1994–Studies and Work in the United States

Working in the China National Symphony Orchestra provided Cui with economic stability, but in order to make up for the time lost during the ten years of the Cultural Revolution, he decided to study abroad in 1984.

34. Jiang, “Yu Shiguang Cui Tanhua III” [An Interview with Shiguang Cui III].


36. Ibid.

37. Ibid.
In 1987, Cui completed two masters’ degrees from Syracuse University: one in composition, and the other in piano performance. He studied piano with George Pappastavrou and studied composition with Eirl George. Because he had a good academic reputation, he was invited to work at Syracuse University for six years after graduation.\textsuperscript{38}

In 1991, he had the opportunity to travel to the 107th Music Teachers National Association Conference held in Miami, Florida, and gave a presentation on the general music education situation of China. After the presentation, he helped to introduce Chinese music to those in attendance by handing out 2000 copies of scores written by Chinese composers.\textsuperscript{39}

In 1992, Cui’s piano work, \textit{Pianofoste}, won the International Piano Composition competition, celebrating fifty years of the Adamant Summer Piano Camp in Vermont. Later, as a winner of this competition, he performed this work at Carnegie Hall.\textsuperscript{40}

1994 to the Present–Late Career and Return to China

In 1994, he started his teaching career at Hong Kong Baptist University.\textsuperscript{41} During this period Cui produced a large number of high-quality, mature compositions. Most of his compositions are rooted in traditional Chinese music through the use of pentatonic harmony, folksongs, Chinese operas, dances, and instruments. Cui has frequently

\textsuperscript{38} Shiguang Cui, \textit{Shiguang Cui Gangqin Zuopin Xuan} [Shiguang Cui Selected Works for the Piano], ed. Tong Daojin and Wang Qinyan (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 2010), i.


\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., i.
remarked that China missed all the periods of Western musical development and was faced with absorbing all of it in a brief period. Because China missed the development of the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods, it is difficult for the Chinese people to accept recent Western innovations such as twelve-tone technique and expressionism. Consequently, Cui believes that music rooted in traditional Chinese culture is more readily accepted by the Chinese people.\footnote{Cui, “Mantan Gangqin Yinyuezhong De Minzu Secai Yu Shidai Jingshen” [The National Colors and Time Spirits of Piano Music], 326.}

Cui believes that if Chinese music does not continue to develop, China’s musical tradition will eventually decline. In his own composition, Cui prefers to combine Chinese and Western musical elements.\footnote{Bian, 7.} In his view, China needs to learn and absorb the advanced compositional techniques for the piano from Western countries, and to explore the traditional Chinese musical elements from its own traditional instruments. He also believes that China cannot adopt Western musical traditions rapidly. Therefore, its music should combine both Western and traditional elements. Only then will it be accepted by Chinese audiences and leave its own mark on music history.\footnote{Guan, 24.}

**Works for Keyboard**

His compositions can be divided into two groups: original works and transcriptions (see Examples 2 and 3). As mentioned earlier, before his studies abroad, most of his piano works were transcriptions. There are two reasons for this. First, piano transcriptions could shorten the distance between the masses and their adoption of this “new” instrument. Second, during the Cultural Revolution, musicians and composers
were limited to transcriptions of “model” works (样板戏) containing Chinese operatic themes and music with revolutionary themes. Only a few works were regarded as “model” works and only those works were allowed to be performed during the Cultural Revolution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Composition (Chinese)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962-1963</td>
<td><em>A Bumper Harvest</em></td>
<td>《丰收锣鼓》《朝鲜舞曲》</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Korean Dance</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td><em>Gujiang Dance</em></td>
<td>《古疆舞曲》</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td><em>Lark</em></td>
<td>《云雀》</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td><em>Shandong Folk Suite</em></td>
<td>《山东风俗组曲》</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td><em>Four Mountain Pieces</em></td>
<td>《山曲四首》</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980-1981</td>
<td><em>Scherzo</em></td>
<td>《谐谑曲》</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Musical Example 2 Original Piano Works Written Before Cui’s Studies Abroad (1948-1984)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Transcription</th>
<th>Transcription (Chinese)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1963-1964 | *Radiant*  
            *Lantern Festival*  
            *The Fair*                                                      | 《喜洋洋》  
                                《灯节》  
                                《赶集》                                                    |
| 1964-1965 | *Rural Songs*  
            *Ode to Workers*                                                        | 《农村组歌》  
                                《工人颂》                                                |
| 1967-1968 | *By the Songhua River*  
            *Mountain*  
            *People’s Liberation Army occupied Nanjing*  
            *On the way to Guangchang*  
            *Jiuyi Song*  
            *Torch Dance*                                                    | 《松花江上》  
                                《山》  
                                《人民解放军占领南京》  
                                《广昌路上》  
                                《就义歌》  
                                《火炬舞》                                                |
| 1969-1970 | *Piano-part for Peaking Opera - The taking of Tiger Mountain*                  | 为京剧《智取威虎山》全剧编写钢琴伴奏 |
| 1973-1978 | *Study from the Labor Hero*  
            *Literacy Couple*  
            *Shanbei Xiaoiao*  
            *Stars Sleep in the Sky*  
            *Guerrilla Song*  
            *The Trumpeter Sonatina*  
            *Beijing Tiananmen*  
            *Growing up in the Sunshine*  
            *Celebrating harvest by sending grains*  
            *Longjiang Ode*  
            *Cuckoo Mountain*                                                      | 《向劳动英雄看齐》  
                                《夫妻识字》  
                                《陕北小调》  
                                《满天疏星沉睡了》  
                                《游击队歌》  
                                《小号手》  
                                《小奏鸣曲》  
                                《北京天安门》  
                                《在阳光下成长》  
                                《喜送公粮唱丰收》  
                                《龙江颂》  
                                《杜鹃山》                                                |

Musical Example 3 Piano Transcriptions Written Before Cui’s Studies Abroad (1948-1984)

After he moved abroad, most of his piano compositions were original works (see Examples 4 and 5). When Cui was in the United States, there were no limitations on the types of music he could compose. Also, when Cui returned to China in 1994 he could compose any type of music that he wished, due to the Chinese economic policy mentioned in Chapter I, called “Reform and Opening Up.”
My dissertation will focus on one of Cui’s works, *Piano Concerto No. 2*. It was originally conceived as *Concerto for Ten Concert Grand Pianos and Orchestra* and was...
composed in 2008 with the title *China Jubilee*. Cui also provides programmatic subtitles for each movement, which I have included below. In my email correspondence with Cui, he mentioned that the publisher of the two-piano version removed the title *China Jubilee* as well as the programmatic subtitles. There are four movements:

1. Allegro con brio (“Joy of Harvests”)
2. Moderato grazioso (“Hua-Drum”)
3. Adagio moderato (“Homeland Soil”)
4. Allegro brillante (“Grand Yangko”)  

To celebrate the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, the concerto was commissioned by Mr. Ping Chen, the Dean of the National Center for the Performing Arts. Cui met with Mr. Chen in Beijing to talk about the plans for this work on February 11, 2008. Mr. Chen planned to invite ten internationally-renowned pianists to collaborate in one concert. After giving their own solo performance, they gave the world premiere of *Concerto for Ten Concert Grand Pianos and Orchestra*. Six months later, the concerto premiered featuring the ten distinguished pianists and the Beijing Symphony Orchestra. This performance took place in China’s National Center for the Performing Arts on August 19, 2008. The ten pianists were Claude Frank, Phillippe Entremont, Vladimir Feltsman, Louis Lortie, Yunyi Qin, Shikun Liu, Lang Lang, Cyprien Katsaris, Guillermo Gonzalez, and Sha Chen.

---

45. Cui, “China Jubilee–Concerto for Ten Concert Grand Pianos and Orchestra.”

46. Shiguang Cui, e-mail message to author, June 18, 2015.

47. Cui, “China Jubilee–Concerto for Ten Concert Grand Pianos and Orchestra.”

48. Ibid.
The earliest that one pianist could arrive in Beijing was four days before the concert, while the latest arrival was one day prior. This made it difficult to rehearse. In order to solve this problem, ten talented students were invited from the Central Conservatory of Music Middle School to substitute for the missing pianists in the rehearsals until all of them had arrived in Beijing. Cui wrote that “with the most talented pupils, we were able to hone and to gather valuable insights into making this concerto come together in its symphonic effects and melodic rapport.”

The original concerto for ten pianos was never published. The only published edition of this work is for two pianos, with the second piano serving as the orchestral reduction. In my correspondence with Cui, he mentioned that the ten-piano score was available for viewing in the National Center for the Performing Arts, because it would not be published. In the summer of 2015, I was able to visit the Center and see the work. The viewing of that score was very helpful in my research. I was able to compare and contrast the two-piano score with the ten-piano score and to note their similarities and differences of notation, rhythm, and orchestration.

In regard to the performance of the ten-piano concerto (see Figure 1), Cui explains that “the stage directions and the piano placement—in relation to one another, as well as the orchestra—are intimately linked together.”

---

49. Cui, “China Jubilee–Concerto for Ten Concert Grand Pianos and Orchestra.”
50. Cui, e-mail message to author, June 18, 2015.
51. Cui, “China Jubilee–Concerto for Ten Concert Grand Pianos and Orchestra.”
In music history, there are very few examples of concerti for multiple pianos being composed or performed. There are some multiple-piano works that exist (see Example 6), such as *Concerto in A minor for Four Harpsichords*, BWV 1065, by J. S. Bach, and Gioachino Rossini’s *Semiramide Overture* arranged for eight pianos by Carl Czerny, which was performed in the Verbier Festival in 2003. The eight performers were Staffan Scheja, James Levine, Evgeny Kissin, Nicholas Angelich, Leif Ove Andsnes, Emanuel Ax, Lang Lang, and Mikhail Pletnev. In 1984, fifty pianists, performing together, played George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with orchestra at the opening

---

ceremony of the Olympics in Los Angeles. However, all fifty pianists were playing the same score and not different scores as they were in *China Jubilee*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Number of Pianos</th>
<th>With orchestra</th>
<th>Perform Same Part</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concerto in A minor for Four Harpsichords, BWV 1065</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semiramide Overture (Verbier Festival, 2003)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China Jubilee</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhapsody in Blue (The opening ceremony of the Olympics in LA, 1984.)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Musical Example 6 Performances of Multiple-Piano Works
CHAPTER III – ANALYSIS

Stylistic Analysis of Piano Concerto No. 2

Pentatonic Scales

In China, most traditional music uses the ancient pentatonic scale. The earliest surviving record of this can be found in the Commentary of Zuo (左传) around the time of 770 to 476 B.C. The five pentatonic notes are a characteristic of the Chinese traditional scale, and they are called Zhengyin (正音), which means main notes.

A pentatonic scale consists of five notes in a sequence such as C, D, E, G, and A (see Example 7). The five notes of this pentatonic scale are referred to as Gong (宫), Shang (商), Jue (角), Zhi (徵), and Yu (羽). These names carry through to all of the permutations of the basic pentatonic scale.

Musical Example 7 Basic Pentatonic Scale

There are five types of modes based on the basic pentatonic scale (see Examples 8 through 12). This basic pentatonic scale found in Examples 7 and 8 is referred to as C Gong mode since C is its starting note. Furthermore, when D is the starting note, this pentatonic scale is referred to as D Shang mode (see Example 9). This method of labeling the pentatonic scales also remains consistent throughout all of the different permutations.

---

Musical Example 8 Gong Mode or Basic Pentatonic Scale

Musical Example 9 Shang Mode

Musical Example 10 Jue Mode

Musical Example 11 Zhi Mode

Musical Example 12 Yu Mode

There are three steps to identifying a pentatonic mode. First, one needs to look at all of the notes and determine if it is in pentatonic order. In Example 13, the notes are F, D, C, A, and G, and when listed in pentatonic scalar order, it is F, G, A, C, and D (see
Example 14). Second, one needs to examine the intervals in order to determine where the major third is among the notes within the phrase. There is only one major third interval in every pentatonic sequence, and the lower note of this interval is always Gong. When we examine Example 13, the only major third interval is F-A, so F is Gong in this pentatonic sequence. Third, in all Chinese music, the last note of a musical phrase is the anchor and determines the name of the mode being used. The melody moves around this anchor point. When we look at the last note of example 13, we see that the phrase ends on a C, and C serves as Zhi in the F pentatonic scale. Therefore, this phrase is in C Zhi mode.

![Musical Example 13 Example of How to Identify a Mode]

Musical Example 14 F Pentatonic Scale

There are different ways that Chinese composers use pentatonic techniques in their compositions. The first method is to use it melodically. Example 15 shows measure 11 to measure 18 of the second movement of the Piano Concerto. Only five pentatonic notes (D [Gong], E [Shang], F-sharp [Jue], A [Zhi], and B [Yu]) appear in this phrase. The melody of this phrase ends on E. E serves as Shang in this D pentatonic scale, so the mode of this passage is in E Shang.
Musical Example 15 E Shang Mode (mm. 11-18 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. II)

The second pentatonic technique used in Chinese composition is to employ the five notes as a chord (五声纵合化和声). In the first beat of Example 16 (taken from the third movement of the Concerto No. 2), the notes in the left hand are A-flat, D-flat, E-flat, F, and A-flat, while the notes in the right hand are B-flat, E-flat, D-flat, and F. These notes (D-flat, E-flat, F, A-flat, B-flat) are derived from a pentatonic scale, but are played as a chord. Thus, we call it a pentatonic chord.
Musical Example 16 Pentatonic Chord (mm. 319-321 of *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. III)

The third method of pentatonic technique used in Chinese composition is to use the notes in an arpeggiated manner. In measures 216 to 217 of the fourth movement (see Example 17), the downbeats of each arpeggio are G, A, B, D, and E, which create a pentatonic scale. Each arpeggio contains the five notes G, A, B, D, and E. Since this melody ends with a D, this particular example is in D Zhi mode.
Musical Example 17 D Zhi Mode Using Arpeggio Technique (mm. 216-218 of *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. III)

Six-Tone Scales

Besides the basic five note pentatonic scale and its permutations, there are four additional notes that can be added. The six-tone scale consists of the five main pentatonic notes with the addition of one of the *Pianyin* (偏音), which translated means deviating note. The four rarely-appearing notes are described below:

*Qingjiao* (清角) is the note located one half-step above *Jue*. For example, if E is *Jue* then F is the *Qingjiao*. 
Biangong (变宫) is the note located one half-step below Gong. So, if C is Gong then B is the Biangong.

Bianzhi (变徵) is the note located one half-step below Zhi. For example, if G is Zhi then F-sharp is the Bianzhi.

Run (润) is the note located one whole-step below Gong. Therefore, if C is Gong then B-flat is the Run.54

Example 18 shows an example of a six-tone scale found in the fourth movement of the Piano Concerto. The five principal notes are F, G, A, C, and D, which creates a pentatonic scale. The added note E appears only three times at the end of this measure. E is called Biangong because it is a half-step below Gong (F). All of the five principal pentatonic notes and the rarely appearing Biangong create a six-tone scale.

Musical Example 18 Six-Tone Scale (m. 124 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. IV)

---

54 Zuyin Fan, “Zonghe Diaoshixing Qisheng Yinjie De Lilun Jiqi Chuangzuo Shijian Yanju” [The Theory and the Compositional Research of Seven-Tone Tonality], Music Research, no. 160 (Spring 2015): 75.
Seven-Tone Scales

The Chinese scholar Yinghai Li discusses the seven-tone scale in the book *The Modes and Harmony of Han* in 1959. When scholars talk about Chinese harmonic influences, one of the ethnic groups that they discuss is the music of the Han peoples. There are fifty-six ethnic groups in China. Among them, over ninety percent of the population are Han Chinese.

Based on the model of pentatonic scales adding *Pianyin*, the seven-tone scale can be divided into three types (see Examples 19 through 21):

*Qingyue* scale (清乐) adds *Qingjiao* (F) and *Biangong* (B). For example, a *Qingyue* has the exact same structure as a C Major scale, but F and B are used very rarely in the *Qingyue* scale, because the five pentatonic notes serve as the main notes.

*Yayue* scale (雅乐) adds *Bianzhi* (F-sharp) and *Biangong* (B).

*Yanyue* scale (燕乐) adds *Qingjiao* (F) and *Run* (B-flat).

Musical Example 19 Qingyue Scale

Musical Example 20 Yayue Scale

---

55. Fan, 75.

56. Ibid.
Musical Example 21 *Yanyue* Scale

Example 22 is taken from measure 57 and measure 58 of the second movement of the *Piano Concerto*. All of the notes in this two-measure passage form an A Major scale. One might say the key is in A Major, but it is actually in *Qingyue* mode. D and G-sharp only appear once in this phrase, but the other five notes, A, B, C-sharp, E, and F-sharp, appear more frequently. This passage uses the A *Gong* pentatonic scale (A [*Gong*], B [*Shang*], C-sharp [*Jue*], E [*Zhi*], and F-sharp [*Yu*]). D serves as *Qingjiao*, which is a half-step above *Jue* (C-sharp), and G-sharp serves as *Biangong*, which is a half-step below *Gong* (A). These five main pentatonic notes plus the *Qingjiao* and *Biangong* create a seven-tone *Qingyue* mode.

Musical Example 22 Seven-Tone *Qingyue* Mode (mm. 57-58 of *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. II)

In Example 23, there are five frequently used notes in this passage which form the F-sharp *Gong* pentatonic scale (F-sharp, G-sharp, A-sharp, C-sharp, and D-sharp). There are two rarely used notes, B-sharp and E-sharp. B-sharp only appears in the orchestral
reduction in measure 71, while E-sharp only appears in the left-hand of the solo piano part in measure 73. B-sharp is a half-step below Zhi (C-sharp), so it is called Bianzhi; E-sharp is a half-step below Gong (F-sharp), so it is called Biangong. Based on this pentatonic scale and the infrequently used two Pianyin, the mode of this phrase is called Yayue.

Musical Example 23 Seven-Tone Yayue Mode (mm. 71-77 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. II)

By looking at the notes in Example 24, one might identify that it is in C Major because of the notes F-natural and C-natural. However, the mode of this phrase is in Yanyue. In this passage, G (Gong), A (Shang), B (Jue), D (Zhi), and E (Yu) appear frequently, and they are in the structure of a pentatonic scale. C and F naturals rarely appear as Pianyin in a seven-tone scale. C-natural in Example 24 is called Qingjiao,
because it is one half-step above Jue (B), and F-natural is called Run, because it is one whole-step below Gong (G). Therefore, these five pentatonic notes (G, A, B, D, and E, plus Qingjiao C-natural, and Run F-natural) create a seven-tone Yanyue mode.

Musical Example 24 Seven-Tone Yanyue Mode (mm. 38-39 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. IV)

Using The Interval of a Fourth

Besides using pentatonic, six-tone scales, and seven-tone scales, another characteristic of Chinese harmony is the frequent use the interval of a fourth. Contemporary Chinese composers use intervals of a fourth to avoid the triadic harmonies of the Western tradition, thus helping to maintain a Chinese nationalistic aesthetic.  

---

example, instead of composing a C Major chord, Chinese composers tend to use either C-F-G or C-D-G, instead of C-E-G.

Chinese composers use different techniques when writing fourths in their music. The first way that they use fourths is in parallel motion. In Example 25, the melody is in parallel fourths, which creates a thicker texture and a unique Chinese sound. Another similar example of using parallel fourths can be seen in the second movement of Piano Concerto (see Example 26).

Musical Example 25 Use of Parallel Fourths (mm. 30-35 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. I)

Musical Example 26 Use of Parallel Fourths (mm. 112-115 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. II)

Chinese composers also add fourths to their chordal structures. In Example 27 there are three chords that contain a fourth. The first one appears in the right hand on the third bar of measure 38 and the sixteenth note immediately preceding it (D-G-A). The
second one appears in the right hand on the “and” of beat three in measure 38 and then again on the fourth beat of measure 38 (G-A-D). The last one is on the fourth beat of measure 39 (C-D-G).

Musical Example 27 Chords Including Intervals of a Fourth (mm. 38-39 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. IV)

Texture

Traditional Chinese Texture

As mentioned in Chapter I, the piano came into Chinese society relatively late. As a result, most of the piano compositions are transcriptions from existing Chinese works, such as songs, Chinese operas, and instrumental works. During the Cultural Revolution, Western music was rejected as a matter of policy, and Chinese composers could not use Western compositional techniques in their compositions. One influence on Cui’s works is the monophonic texture of Chinese piano compositions. Example 28 shows measure 12 to measure 16 of the fourth movement of Cui’s Piano Concerto. In measure 13 through 16 of the piano solo part, the same melody is played by both hands, one octave apart. The doubling of the same melody is an example of monophony. Occasionally, extra notes are added which do not create an additional voice, but serve to create a fuller sound. In
measure 13 through 16 of the orchestra reduction, the texture is homophonic and serves to accompany the piano soloist.

Musical Example 28 Monophonic Texture (mm. 12-16 of *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. IV)

Chinese composers frequently use monophony when transitioning to another theme. In measure 12 of Example 28, beats 2 and 3 are an example of a monophonic transition. Throughout the *Piano Concerto*, monophonic transition examples can be seen in other movements. Examples include measure 82 (beat 3) to measure 85 (beat 1) of the first movement (the orchestra part accompanies the soloist using a homophonic texture), and measure 136 to measure 143 of the third movement. In measure 136 to measure 143, the orchestra accompanies the soloist with new material that becomes more important later on in this movement. The texture of the orchestra part in these measures is homophonic and contains octaves and thick chords. In measure 143, the monophonic transition ends in the piano solo part. In measure 144, the piano solo part starts to use the thick chordal texture that the orchestra introduced in measures 136 through 143.
The texture of Example 29 demonstrates *Duoju* (垛句). *Duoju* is a traditional compositional technique that Chinese composers use to increase or decrease the intensity of a melodic line by repeating a short fragment. This technique is also used in traditional Chinese genres, such as folk music and opera. The repeating pattern in Example 29 begins on beat three of measure 316 and continues to the end of the passage. The dynamics in the orchestra reduction of measure 315 through 317 are *mp* and *p* (see Example 30). Later in the piano part, the same repeating pattern appears in measure 319 through 323 and is marked *pp* and *ppp*. The repeating passages and dynamics, which gradually become softer until there is silence, create an effect of disappearance or perdendosi.

---

Musical Example 29 *Duoji* Texture (mm. 315-324 of *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. III)

Musical Example 30 Dynamic Changes (m. 315 and m. 317 of *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. III)
Duoju in used in this passage to decrease the intensity of the melodic line. To create the effect of disappearance, Cui gradual softens the music by adding a diminuendo, and removes the D-flat from the D-flat-E-flat-F pattern through the use of rests that occur in the triplets of measures 319 through 323 (see Example 29). The use of the traditional Chinese methods of scales, intervals of a fourth, and texture gives the piece a Chinese identity, even though Cui employs Western techniques as well.

Western Rhythmic and Textural Compositional Techniques

Piano Concerto No. 2 demonstrates the composer’s desire to combine Chinese and Western musical ideas. Cui believes that by combining these two compositional approaches, his music will leave its own mark on the musical world and that Chinese audiences will more readily accept it.59

Example 31 shows measure 87 to measure 90 of the second moment. The texture of the irregular rhythm between the two hands is reminiscent of Chopin and his use of polyrhythms. In Example 31, one can see that Cui has polyrhythmic passages featuring 3 against 2 and 7 against 4. Compare this with measure 6 to measure 8 of Chopin’s Fantasie-Impromptu, Op. posth. 66 (see Example 32), which features 4 against 3 polyrhythms. Also, Chopin’s use of 3 against 2 can be seen in measure 45 of the Nocturne, Op. 27, No. 2 (see Example 33).

Musical Example 31 Polyrhythms Reminiscent of Chopin’s Music (mm. 87-90 of *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. II)

Musical Example 32 mm. 6-8 of Chopin’s *Fantasie-Impromptu, Op. posth. 66*
Musical Example 33 m. 45 of Chopin’s *Nocturne, Op. 27, No. 2*

In measure 130 to measure 133 of *Piano Concerto No. 2* (see Example 34) Cui uses repeated notes followed by an octave leap, creating the effect of two voices. This passage shows a striking resemblance to measure 50 to measure 52 of Liszt’s *La campanella* (see Example 35). However, Cui varies the number of repeated notes before the octave leap. In measure 130 of Example 34, the first octave leap has four repeated notes before the octave leap. The second and third octave leaps of beat two of measure 130 have two repeated notes before their leaps, which is the same pattern and rhythm that Liszt uses. Another similarity between Cui and Liszt’s examples is that both phrases move down six notes and then move up two notes at the end of the phrase. It is apparent that Cui was familiar with and inspired by *La campanella*. 
Musical Example 34 Reminiscent of Liszt’s *La campanella* (mm. 130-133 of *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. II)

Musical Example 35 mm. 50-52 of Liszt’s *La campanella*

In Example 36, the texture of measure 272 to measure 275 in the fourth movement of the *Piano Concerto No. 2* is similar to measure 455 to measure 458 of the
third movement of Rachmaninoff’s *Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 18* (see Example 37).

There are three reasons why these two examples are similar in nature. First, they use the same rhythm. Second, both of the examples use quick alternating chords between the two hands and a thick chordal texture. Third, both examples continue to move in the direction of which the composer starts the phrase (however, Cui’s example ascends while Rachmaninoff’s descends).

Musical Example 36 mm. 272-275 of Cui’s *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. IV (Reminiscent of Rachmaninoff’s *Piano Concerto No. 2*)

Musical Example 37 mm. 455-458 of Rachmaninoff *Piano Concerto No. 2, Op. 18*, mvt. III
Another Western textural trait that Cui uses is the glissandos found in measure 197 of the fourth movement (see Example 38). The right hand plays a glissando on the white keys from A6 all the way down to F3 while the left hand plays a glissando on the black keys from B-flat6 all the way down to G-flat3. The resulting clash of white keys against black keys is extremely dissonant. Also worthy of note is that in the original ten-piano version of the *Concerto*, Cui indicates that measure 197 should be played in “12 seconds,” but in the two-piano score Cui indicates that this measure should be played “in tempo.” In the ten-piano version, the orchestra is resting, which reduces the difficulty of playing the glissandos in “12 seconds.” However, in the two-piano version, Cui reduces the ensemble and technical difficulties here by removing the “12 seconds” mark and also moves some notes from the piano part to the orchestra. Glissando technique is a trait of traditional Chinese instrumental music, but this technique is more rarely used in traditional Chinese keyboard music. Later, in Chapter IV, I will discuss the influence of *Guzheng* glissando texture, which also is found several times in this *Concerto*. However, I feel that Example 38 shows how Cui was influenced by piano glissandos of the Western tradition. The use of these two types of glissandos found in *Concerto No. 2*: the white against black key glissandos discussed here in Chapter III, and the pentatonic *Guzheng*-influenced glissandos that I will discuss in Chapter IV, are further proof that Cui was combining Chinese and Western musical elements in the *Concerto No. 2*.

---

60. Shiguang Cui, “China Jubilee 喜庆中国” (full score, Beijing, National Center for the Performing Arts, Art Gallery 5F, J647. 619/1/F, 2010).
Musical Example 38 Use of Glissando Technique (m. 197 of *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. IV)
CHAPTER IV – TRADITIONAL CHINESE MUSICAL ELEMENTS

Folksongs

Folksong Elements

“Homeland Soil” is the subtitle of the third movement of Piano Concerto No. 2.61 Its Chinese translation, Huang Land (黄土地), refers to the Shanbei area of China. Xin Tian You is one of the traditional types of folk music in the Shanbei area of China, located in the center of the Loess Plateau. Xin Tian You is similar to a mountain folksong. The way the music is sung varies with the occasion and the mood of the singer. The folksongs also vary depending on the location where the people lived. The music of Xin Tian You has a broad melody and a free rhythm, which is reminiscent of other mountain folksongs by people living in the area. An example of Xin Tian You influence can be found in Example 39 from Cui’s Piano Concerto No. 2.

Also, in Xin Tian You folksong, most of the intervals are second, fourth, and fifth relationships. This same type of intervallic relationships also can be seen in Example 39.

Musical Example 39 Quotation of Xin Tian You Folk Music (mm. 1-11 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. III)

61. Cui, “China Jubilee–Concerto for Ten Concert Grand Pianos and Orchestra.”
In addition, most *Xin Tian You* folksongs use the pentatonic modes of *Gong*, *Shang*, and *Zhi*. In Example 39, the pentatonic notes used are G-flat, A-flat, B-flat, D-flat, and E-flat, and the two *Pianyin* are C (*Bianzhi*) and F-sharp (*Biangong*). All of these notes form a *Yayue* mode. Since the ending note is A-flat, and it serves as *Shang* in the pentatonic order, the mode of Example 39 is in A-flat *Shang Yayue*.

Most popular types of Chinese traditional folksongs are related to work in rural areas, such as *Haozi* (call and response genre work songs), *Shan’ge* (mountain folksongs), and *Tian’ge* (field songs). *Xiaodiao* is another popular type of traditional folksong, literally meaning “small tune.” The difference between *Xiaodiao* and the other three types is that it is not only widespread in the rural area, but it is also popular in the cities. The lyrics of *Xiaodiao* are related to everyday life, and the melodies are easier to sing. The regional variations in *Xiaodiao* are reflected in their names. For example, *Shandong Xiaodiao*, which reflects the local dialect, is flowing and characterized by greater changes in pitch. Among Shandong folksongs, the most popular of them is *Xiaodiao*.62

In a lecture-recital document from 2009, Cui mentions that he uses elements of *Shandong Xiaodiao* in the fourth movement of the *Piano Concerto No. 2*.63 In Example 40, Cui mostly uses the intervals of seconds and thirds in the melodic line in order to show the lyrical and flowing aspect of Shandong dialect. Also, he uses the leaps of larger intervals to show greater changes in vocal pitch. For example, there are octave leaps (C-C and F-F), and leaps of a seventh (G-F) in measure 103 of the melodic line; a leap of a

---


fourteenth (D4 to C6) in measure 104; a seventh (A-G) in measure 105; and sixths in measure 105 (D down to F and B-flat down to D) and measure 106 (G-E-G).

Musical Example 40 Influence of Shandong Xiaodiao Folksong (mm. 102-107 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. IV)

Cui also uses the Western compositional technique of polyphony in combination with Shandong Xiaodiao, which is traditionally monophonic. In Example 40, Cui is writing in a polyphonically-inspired style that is clearly influenced by Shandong Xiaodiao.

Quotation of Chinese Folksongs and Traditional Chinese Instruments

Hua-drum is a traditional type of singing and dancing accompanied by the smaller sized Tang Luo (a type of Chinese traditional gong) and Hua Gu (a type of Chinese traditional drum). It is popular in the Han ethnic area, especially in the Anhui, Zhejiang, and Jiangsu provinces. In the present day, when people talk about Hua-drum, it usually relates to the Fengyang Hua-drum, which most often is performed by two people. One performer plays a small Tang Luo while the other plays a small Hua Gu while singing.
and dancing. The second movement of Cui’s Piano Concerto No. 2 was subtitled Hua-Drum, and the melody of measures 7 through measure 10 (see Example 41) was directly borrowed from measure 1 through 4 of the folksong “Fengyang Hua-Drum” (see Example 42), although there are slight differences in rhythm and meter.

Musical Example 41 Influence of “Fengyang Hua-Drum” Folksong (mm. 7-10 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. II)

Musical Example 42 “Fengyang Hua-Drum” Folksong, mm. 1-4

In Cui’s Piano Concerto No. 2, one can identify several motives related to Chinese popular folksongs. The fourth movement is subtitled Grand Yangko, which is related to the Shandong province, the home of Cui’s mother where Cui lived for several years. The melody of measure 108 from Piano Concerto No. 2 (see Example 43) is similar to the melody of measure 4 (see Example 44) of the folksong “Who Would Say My Hometown is Not Beautiful.” Although there are slight differences, people who are familiar with this folk song can hear the similarity between these two examples.

---

64. Yuan, Zhongguo Chuantong Yinyue Gailun [A Course in Chinese Traditional Music Basics], 78.
Musical Example 43 m. 108 of *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. II

Musical Example 44 Folk song: “Who Would Say My Hometown is Not Beautiful”

The next example is borrowed indirectly from an existing folksong, but it has the same underlying melodic structure of a song called “Northeast Lullaby.” As the title indicates, “Northeast Lullaby” is a popular folksong from the northeast region of China.

Through a comparison of the “Northeast Lullaby” folksong shown in Example 45 and the circled notes of Example 46 (taken from mvt. IV of the *Piano Concerto No. 2*), one can identify a melodic connection between the two examples. However, the rhythms and keys of the two examples are different. Please see Example 47 for further comparison of the intervals of the folksong and the passage from the *Piano Concerto No. 2.*
Musical Example 45 mm. 5-9 of “Northeast Lullaby” Folksong

Musical Example 46 mm. 13-16 of mvt. IV of Concerto No. 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northeast Lullaby</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>(F</th>
<th>D)</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piano Concerto No. 2</td>
<td>F-sharp</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F-sharp</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>F-sharp</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Musical Example 47 Melodic Comparison of “Northeast Lullaby” and Cui’s Concerto No. 2

Chinese Operas

Chinese opera is based on classical Chinese literature and incorporates music, dance, visual arts, acrobatics, and martial arts. The performance consists of singers who
sing and narrate, accompanied by ensembles of traditional Chinese instruments. There are around 360 types of traditional operas in China. Cui’s Piano Concerto No. 2 is influenced by Huangmei opera, the main traditional opera of Anhui province, and is sung in the local dialect.

Huangmei opera had its beginnings with the folksong called the Tea Picking Song (采茶歌) which originated in Huangmei county of the Hubei province. In the late Qing dynasty, this type of song migrated to Anhui province. Local folk art and songs using the Anhui dialect were two characteristics of Huangmei opera that were added gradually as this style of opera developed into its own.

The second movement of the Piano Concerto No. 2 contains musical elements of the folksong “Fengyang Hua-Drum” associated with Anhui Province, and the melody at the beginning is reminiscent of Huangmei opera. In the second movement of the Piano Concerto No. 2, Cui is influenced by the soprano-tenor duet “Pairs of Birds on the Tree” (树上的鸟儿成双对) from the famous Huangmei opera Tian Xian Pei (see Example 48). Example 49 shows the beginning of the second movement of the Piano Concerto subtitled “Hua-Drum” of the Piano Concerto No.2. The melody of the first two measures of the movement is similar to the tenor voice of the aria “Pairs of Birds on the Tree,” but with slight difference in notes and rhythms. Also, Cui uses a duet-like texture in the Concerto. For example, the right hand is heard in the first two measures, and another

---


67. Ma, 71.
lyrical voice enters in the left hand of the third measure and dialogues with the right hand
top voice.

Musical Example 48 mm. 27-29 from the Aria, “Pairs of Birds on the Tree,” from the
Huangmei Opera Tian Xian Pei

Musical Example 49 Cui’s Use of Imitation Reminiscent of “Pairs of Birds on the Tree”
(mm. 1-6 of mvt. II of Concerto No. 2)

Folk Dance Influence

Northeast Yangko

There are around 1500 types of folk dances in China. Yangko is a category of
traditional dance often performed in rural areas during the Lunar New Year. In recent

---

times, it has become extremely popular in the provinces above the Huang River. This
dance form originated in a region just south of the Changjiang River during the Qing
dynasty but now enjoys its greatest popularity in the north of China. *Yangko* is found
throughout numerous provinces in the north of China and varies from region to region
both in the music used and in the dance movements used. Often, these types of dances are
named after the provinces in which they were first developed. The varieties of *Yangko*
include *Northeast Yangko*, *Shanbei Yangko* of Shanxi (陕西) province, *Mao Yangko* of
Gansu province, *Qitai Yangko* of Shanxi (山西) province, and *Guzi Yangko* of Shandong
province. The most famous of these dance types is *Northeast Yangko* (see Figure 2).
This dance type can be enthusiastic, vigorous, scherzo-like, lyrical, or some combination
of these characteristics.

---

69. Yi Qi, *Zhongguo Minzu Minjian Yinyue* [Chinese National Folk Music] (Baoding: Hebei
Scholars summarize three types of melody used to accompany the *Northeast Yangko* dance. One of these melodic types moves stepwise and stays within the interval of a fifth. A second type moves stepwise and stays within the interval of an octave. The third type, and least frequently used, moves outside of the octave, and demonstrates musical contrasts of timbre and register. In the first measure of Example 50, the melody of the orchestral reduction is E-B-D, which moves within the interval of a fifth. In measure 2, for a contrasting effect, a similar melody occurs in the piano solo part, but written one octave higher than the orchestral reduction. The only difference is that a few passing tones were added to the piano solo, and as a result, the rhythm of the piano solo is slightly different.

---


In the *Northeast Yangko* dance accompaniment, the melody is usually played using two Chinese woodwind instruments, called *Suona* (see Figure 3), which are trumpet-like instruments with a bright and powerful sound. The other instruments in the accompanying ensemble usually consist of multiple *Da Tai Gu* (drums), *Xiao Cha* (small cymbals), *Da Cha* (large cymbals), and *Luo* (gongs). In Example 50, the melody alternates between the ensemble and the piano solo, just as it would be played by two

---

72. Wang and Qiu, 1.
Suona in the Northeast Yangko dance accompaniment. In the orchestral score, Cui uses the Northeast Yangko accompanying instruments that were mentioned earlier—Da Gu (large drums), Xiao Gu (small drums), Da Cha (large cymbals), and Xiao Cha (small cymbals).

Most of the existing Northeast Yangko dance accompaniments are in 2/4 meter, but some of them are in 4/4 or 1/4 meter. However, there are no existing or published

---

73. Cui, “China Jubilee 喜慶中国.”

dance accompaniments in 3/4 or 6/8 meter except for a few short fragments which are in 3/4 meter. In a 4/4 meter Northeast Yangko dance accompaniment, the typical accent is usually on the third or fourth beat.\textsuperscript{75} In Example 50, the meter changes from 3/4 to 2/4 in measure 5 and back to 3/4 in measure 6, which is reminiscent of this dance accompaniment type.

Wenhan Wang and Liuqin Qiu write that “the rhythm supports the structure of the dance music the way a skeleton supports a human body.”\textsuperscript{76} Chinese dance music accompaniments are identifiable through their rhythm. There are certain standard formats of drum rhythms used for different situations. Example 51 is the first measure of the standard opening drum rhythm of Northeast Yangko dance accompaniment.\textsuperscript{77} In the Concerto, Cui uses this standard opening drum rhythm as a motive, but he changes the meter from 2/4 to 3/4, exchanges the order between the second eighth-note and the quarter note of the motive, and adds an eighth note and eighth rest to the third beat (see Example 52). By doing this, Cui produces a syncopated rhythm, which makes the composition seem more festive and dance-like.

![Musical Example 51 Standard Opening Drum Rhythm of the Northeast Yangko Dance Accompaniment](image)

75. Wang and Qiu, 5.
76. Ibid., 7.
Musical Example 52 Opening Rhythm of Concerto No. 2 (m. 1 of mvt. I)

Northeast Yangko dance accompaniment frequently uses Duiju (对句). In comparing Duiju and Western musical terms, Duiju is like a dialogue or call and response. There are four types of Duiju in the Northeast Yangko dance accompaniments:

1. A plays one phrase, then B continues another phrase.
2. A plays one phrase, then B imitates the same melody.
3. A plays one phrase, then B plays an improvisation or variation that starts and ends with the same notes A used, and has the same number of measures.
4. A and B play alternately. For example, in a four-note phrase of sixteenth notes, A might play the first and third notes, while B would play the second and fourth.\(^78\)

In Example 50 from the Concerto, measures 2, 4, and 7 of the piano solo enter into a dialogue with measures 1, 3, and 6 of the orchestral reduction. This is an example of the third type of Duiju. The orchestra plays E-B-D, while the pianist plays the same melody, but with slight changes due to the addition of passing tones.

Most of the Northeast Yangko dance accompaniments use pentatonic modes, but there are also examples of six-tone and seven-tone modes. Two of the typical modes used in Northeast Yangko dance accompaniments contain five pentatonic notes plus the

\(^{78}\) Wang and Qiu, 6.
Biangong which is the Pianyin (B in C pentatonic mode, for example), and five pentatonic notes plus Qingjiao which is the Pianyin (F in C pentatonic mode, for example). In the existing Northeast Yangko dance accompaniments, composers rarely use the six-tone modes, but when they do, it has the format of the five pentatonic notes plus Bianzhi (F-sharp in C pentatonic mode, for example).\textsuperscript{79} Cui does the same thing in Piano Concerto No. 2. In the first two measures of Example 50, the notes are D, E, F-sharp, G-sharp, A, and B, which is a six-tone D pentatonic mode plus Bianzhi (G-sharp).

In the Northeast Yangko dance accompaniments, Gong and Zhi modes were used more than Yu and Shang modes, and Jue mode was the least used. The reason why Gong and Zhi modes were used the most was because of their bright sound, which was more effective in representing the enthusiastic, vigorous, and scherzo-like features of the Northeast Yangko dance accompaniments.\textsuperscript{80} These two modes are similar in structure to a Major scale, which is why they sound more “bright” in character. In the Piano Concerto, the first two measures of Example 50 are in D Gong six-tone mode.

\textit{Guzi Yangko Influence}

Shandong is one of the earliest Chinese provinces to experience significant cultural development. Archaeological finds have confirmed that as early as five or six thousand years ago, agriculture, fishing, and the production of pottery and jade were already important industries. Traditional music called Yangko often was sung and danced by farmers laboring in the fields while they were transplanting rice seedlings.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{79}. Wang and Qiu, 2.

\textsuperscript{80}. Ibid., 3.

\textsuperscript{81}. Miao, Jin, Xing, Ping, Gu and Ji, 1.
There are several types of Yangko in Shandong province, such as Guzi Yangko, Jiaozhou Yangko, Haiyang Yangko, and Pingyin Yangko. While there are several types of Yangko in Shandong province, Cui often incorporated Guzi Yangko (see Figure 4) in his compositions. Different from the Northeast Yangko, Guzi Yangko is only accompanied by Chinese percussion instruments, such as different sized Gu (drums), Cha (cymbals), and Luo (gongs).

Figure 4 Performance of Guzi Yangko Dance

Example 53 is the typical percussion rhythm used in the opening or the transitions of Guzi Yangko dance accompaniment. The purpose of the first four quarter notes was to serve as a count off for the instruments of the ensemble. In Example 54, Cui adds


83. Miao, Jin, Xing, Ping, Gu and Ji, 37.
accents on each of the first four beats of measure 1 and measure 5 of the fourth movement, much like the typical opening rhythm of the Guzi Yangko dance accompaniments mentioned above. The ensemble part is played by Chinese percussion instruments, such as Da Gu, Xiao Gu, Da Cha, Xiao Cha, and Xiao Luo, which provide a strongly festive atmosphere.

Musical Example 53 Typical Rhythm of Guzi Yangko Dance Accompaniments

Musical Example 54 Influence of Guzi Yangko Dance Accompaniments (mm. 1-6 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. IV)

Er-Ren Zhuan Influence

Er-Ren Zhuan music is a comprehensive art combining the elements of singing and dancing, narrated music, and Chinese opera. It has singing, dancing, and

---

performances using plots and costumes (see Figure 5). *Er-Ren Zhuan* is well-known in China and extremely popular in three provinces of Northeast China—Heilongjiang, Jilin, and Liaoning provinces. *Er-Ren Zhuan* music is typically funny and humorous. In a lecture from 2009, Cui mentions that the *Piano Concerto No. 2* has many of the characteristics of *Er-Ren Zhuan* music.\(^85\)

![Figure 5 Performance of Er-Ren Zhuan\(^86\)](http://www.chinaexpeditiontours.com/upload/201209100219319531.jpg)

There are three types of *Er-Ren Zhuan* performances: those with two performers, one performer, and two main performers with some unimportant characters. The most popular type is usually performed by two people—one male and one female.\(^87\)

---

\(^85\) Cui, “Two-Piano Concerto Lecture Recital,” 2.


\(^87\) Qi, 127.
The Piano Concerto No. 2 contains many examples of Er-Ren Zhuan influence. In measure 30, the right hand plays the role of a soloist, while the left hand imitates Chinese woodwind-like instruments and serves as an accompaniment (see Example 55). From measures 32 to 35, the two hands use staccato articulation in a joking manner to imitate the two Er-Ren Zhuan dancers. In measure 32, G-E-F-sharp of the left hand imitates one performer in a questioning manner, while G-F-sharp-D of the right hand imitates another performer responding. To continue the joking effect, the left hand plays G-E-F-sharp again in measure 32 in a questioning manner, but the right hand replies with a different answer in measure 33 and 34, as if to say, “I’ve already told you…I’ve already told you.” Measures 35 to 37 are similar to measure 30–the right hand part plays the melody as a soloist with the Chinese woodwind-like instruments serving as accompaniment. In addition, from measures 30 to 37, in order to provide a joke-like or comical character, Cui uses short phrases with staccato articulation in the right hand that remind the listener of laughter.
Influence of Chinese Wind Instruments

As mentioned earlier, the Suona, a Chinese wind instrument, often plays the melody in Northeast Yangko dance accompaniments. Other popular Chinese wind instruments include: the Di, a Chinese bamboo flute; the Xiao, a Chinese vertical bamboo flute; and the Sheng, a portable and polyphonic instrument with pipes.

Influence of Chinese Plucked String Instruments

The Guzheng (Chinese zither) and the Pipa (Chinese lute) are the two most well-known plucked string instruments of China. Chinese composers often use Guzheng and Pipa-like textures in their piano works. Guzheng usually has twenty-one plucked strings
and is tuned in a pentatonic sequence (see Figure 6). One characteristic of a Guzheng performance is the frequent use of glissandos.\textsuperscript{88}

\textit{Figure 6 Guzheng}\textsuperscript{89}

In measure 124, the five notes of the piano part of the \textit{Concerto} are indicated below (F, G, A, C, and D), and form a pentatonic scale (see Example 56). The piano texture in measure 124 of the fourth movement of the \textit{Piano Concerto No. 2} is an imitation of the \textit{Guzheng} playing pentatonic glissandos. Measure 124 reminds the listener of an arpeggio-type texture, but since the \textit{Guzheng} is tuned in pentatonic sequence, they would both sound very similar. The glissandos in \textit{Guzheng} pieces can either serve as melody or accompaniment. In measure 124, the melody is in the orchestra, and the \textit{Guzheng} glissando texture serves as the accompaniment and helps to increase the forte dynamic of the orchestra part. It is also worth noting that in Chinese instrumental music, Chinese composers often write glissandos for the \textit{Erhu}. However, Cui is imitating the \textit{Guzheng} in the \textit{Concerto No. 2}, not the slides of the \textit{Erhu}. The influence of \textit{Dayin} texture in relation to the \textit{Erhu} will be discussed later in this chapter.


Musical Example 56 *Guzheng* Glissando Texture (m. 124 of *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. IV)

The guitar chord was based on the open strings of the guitar (E, A, D, G, B, and E), and was used by the Argentinian composer Alberto Ginastera in his compositions.

Example 57 is the ending of the second movement of his *Piano Sonata No.1, Op. 22*. There is a guitar chord in the left hand part (E-A-D-G-B-E). Similarly, the pitches of the open strings of the Chinese *Pipa* are A, D, E, and A, which produces a “*Pipa* chord.”

Example 58 is the ending of the first movement of the *Concerto*. In measures 183 and 184 of the *Concerto No. 2*, there are chords that contain the notes D, G, A, and D. These chords have the exact same structure as the open strings of the *Pipa*. As a result, D-G-A-D is a “*Pipa* chord.”

---

Musical Example 57 Guitar Chord, mvt. II of Alberto Ginastera’s *Piano Sonata No.1, Op.*

Musical Example 58 *Pipa* Chord (mm. 182-184 of *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. I)

Also, the rhythm in Example 58 is a typical ending rhythmic pattern of a Chinese percussion piece. This rhythm is associated with the harvest. Chinese farmers celebrated large harvests with music, and the *Luo* and *Gu* were used during these celebrations.
Influence of Chinese Bowed String Instruments

Erhu, Jinghu, and Banhu are the most well-known Chinese string instruments with bows. In the Piano Concerto No. 2, many of the sounds are reminiscent of those produced by Erhu, often referred to as the “Chinese violin.” The instrument has two strings and a bow, and the bow hairs run between the two strings (see Figure 7).

Figure 7 Erhu

In the last measure of Example 59 (taken from movement two of Concerto No. 2), simply speaking, C is an ornament and D is a staccato note. This is a texture that is often found at the end of a piece for the Erhu and is called Dayin (打音). Dayin is one of the

techniques that is often heard on the Erhu and literally means “hit the note.” When Dayin is used at the end of an Erhu piece, it is similar to program music, and carries with it certain associations. In Example 59, the dynamics change from pp to ppp and the rhythm of the melody contains a long, sustained trill, which gives the audience a sense of fading out since it is found at the end of this movement.

Musical Example 59 Influence of Dayin Texture (mm. 149-155 of Concerto No. 2, mvt. II)

Influence of Chinese Percussion Instruments

The use of Chinese percussion instruments as an accompaniment to traditional dance music was mentioned earlier in the dissertation. I would now like to discuss how Cui uses the characteristics of the Chinese percussion instruments in the Piano Concerto No. 2.

In the Piano Concerto No. 2, the only traditional Chinese orchestration that Cui uses is a Chinese percussion set consisting of drums, cymbals, and gongs. Xiao Gu is a small drum while Da Gu is a large drum. Da Cha is a pair of large cymbals while Xiao Cha is a pair of small cymbals. The Luo is a regular-sized gong, the Xiao Luo is a small gong, and the Da Luo is a large gong. From measure 166 to 168 of movement one of the Concerto, Cui uses Xiao Gu (see Example 60), Xiao Luo (see Example 61), Da Gu (see
Example 62, and *Da Luo* (see Example 62) in the ten-piano version. When transcribing it to the two-piano reduction (see Example 63), Cui transfers the rhythms of *Xiao Gu* and *Xiao Luo* to the right hand of the second piano reduction. I believe that Cui is trying to imitate the bright timbre of the *Xiao Gu* and *Xiao Luo* instruments. And this works well in this passage because the orchestra/second piano has the melody. Also, he transfers the rhythm of *Da Gu* and *Da Luo* to the left hand of the second piano part. These percussion instruments have a lower range in timbre, which also works well for this passage, because Cui writes it for the left hand of the orchestra/second piano.

Musical Example 60 Rhythm of *Xiao Gu* Percussion Instruments Found in Ten-Piano Version of *Concerto No. 2* (mm. 166-168 of mvt. I)

Musical Example 61 Rhythm of *Xiao Luo* Percussion Instruments Found in Ten-Piano Version of *Concerto No. 2* (mm. 166-168 of mvt. I)

Musical Example 62 Rhythm of *Da Gu* and *Da Luo* Percussion Instruments Found in Ten-Piano Version of *Concerto No. 2* (mm. 166-168 of mvt. I)

---

92. Cui, “China Jubilee 喜庆中国.”
Musical Example 63 Influence of Chinese Percussion Set (mm. 166-168 of *Concerto No. 2*, mvt. I)

In summary, *Piano Concerto No. 2* combines both Chinese and Western musical elements. Since a performance of the ten-piano version of this work is hard to achieve due to the space and logistics, the two-piano version was published for practical use. *Piano Concerto No. 2* is an important contribution to the genre and to the development of Chinese piano music. In my opinion, Chinese piano music is still in its beginning stages. My hope is that more Chinese works will be composed, and that more pianists will be inspired to learn and perform Cui’s *Piano Concerto No. 2* and his solo piano music.
REFERENCES


http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDIzMzMxMjA=.html?from=s1.8-1-1.2&spm=a2h0k.8191407.0.0.


http://photo.blog.sina.com.cn/photo/1348137961/505af3e9t6ee6a5fef560.


Traditional Theory. *Dazhong Art*, no. 120 (October, 2013): 143.


Zhao, Qiuhong. “Shiguang Cui Jiqi Gangqin Zuopin De Minzuhua Yanjiu” [The Research of Nationalization on Shiguang Cui and His Piano Works]. Master diss., Harbin Normal University, 2011.

