

A Study of "Chinese Style" in 20th Century Piano Adaptations of Traditional Chinese Music

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Abstract

Traditional music adaptations, which account for the largest proportion of Chinese piano works, have become the concrete embodiment of the universal characteristics of "Chinese style" with their title, melodic tune, cultural connotation, ethnicity of musical language, simulated timbre and sound, and richness of regional characteristics, and so on. It is also the most direct and natural way to realize the "Chinese style" of piano music. In this paper, we select the piano adaptations of traditional Chinese music published by the People's Music Publishing House and the Shanghai Music Publishing House as the object of study, and try to systematically sort out and summarize their nationalization characteristics, hoping to gradually clarify the inner relationship between nationalization and "Chinese style" in the process of in-depth analysis.

Keywords: Chinese traditional music, piano adaptations, Chinese style, nationalization.

Introduction

In China, piano music composition started from "Peace March", "Hua Bashan and Xiangjiang Waves", and gradually went

During the century of maturity, with the changes of the times, the "Chinese style of piano music" reflected different stylistic characteristics and ideological connotations at different stages of history, and a large number of distinctive and diversified styles emerged.

piano works, became a dynamic and evolving concept. It is gratifying to see that different genres and styles are emerging

Some excellent and even classic works have emerged. It can be said that these different styles and genres of Chinese piano

The music compositions together testify to the general state of the prosperous development of Chinese piano music. From the initial stage, when the pursuit of national folk melodic tones was an

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important means to reflect the "Chinese style (flavor)", to the climax of quoting traditional music tunes and exploring the nationalization of harmonic writing during the Cultural Revolution, until the 1980s, based on the abandonment of the previous single model, with the influence of the globalization trend and the increasing awareness of nationality. After the 1980s, based on the abandonment of the previous single model, with the influence of globalization and the increasing awareness of nationality, piano music composition is increasingly diversified, diversified, complicated and personalized. In general, "the continuous exploration and pursuit of "Chinese style of piano music" with "nationalization" as the main line is not only the main vein of the development and evolution of Chinese piano music, but also the root of the formation of Chinese piano music style. It is also the basis of the formation of Chinese piano music style." This study summarizes the stylistic characteristics and expressions of different styles and types of Chinese piano works, and further clarifies the inner relationship between nationalization and "Chinese style". Therefore, this study attempts to summarize the nationalized characteristics and common expressions in Chinese piano works from different perspectives, such as the way of thinking of creation and the stylistic connotation of works, based on in-depth research and systematic combing, in order to further clarify the inner relationship between nationalization and "Chinese style".

1. Concept definition

Based on the classification of traditional Chinese music by two academic authorities, Wang Yaohua and Du Yaxiong (see chart 1), piano adaptations of traditional music can be roughly divided into several types of piano adaptations based on folk songs, folk instrumental music, folk songs and dances, opera music, rap (operatic) music, and music of literati.

In his paper "The Concept, Composition and Construction of Chinese Music Theory Discourse System" published in 2018, Du Yaxiong (2018) pointed out that "Chinese traditional music is the root of Chinese music and the basis for developing national music in the new era." The most distinctive and vivid form of traditional Chinese music embodies the rich and profound aesthetic concepts and aesthetic connotations of the Chinese nation. Therefore, composers have taken the transplantation and adaptation of traditional Chinese music as an important way to seek "Chinese style". After systematizing, there are about 212 piano works based on traditional music, accounting for 44%, which is the main body of piano adaptations and almost half of the entire Chinese piano music creation. (See Figure 2-3.) These works are one of the most important forms of piano art that can be promoted and popularized in China, and they are still popular and frequently performed. Therefore, this paper takes piano adaptations of

traditional Chinese music and some of the piano works composed with traditional music elements as the main object of study, in order to find out what are the most essential and continuous compositional rules and characteristics of traditional Chinese music that influence and govern the practice of "Chinese style" piano music.

2. Quantitative study on the characteristics of "nationalization" of piano adaptations of traditional music

Ethnic characteristics are the common features that artists condense in the process of artistic creation to reflect social life and embody their unique cultural connotation, spiritual quality and thoughts and feelings with their own way of thinking, aesthetic consciousness and creative techniques. Chinese traditional music piano adaptations are uniquely "Chinese style" because of their title, melodic tune, ethnicity of musical language including rhythm, harmony, modulation, tune, etc., simulated timbre and sound, and profound cultural connotation.

In the quantitative comparison of the scores of different types of piano works, we can see that among all types of Chinese piano works, piano works based on traditional music and piano works composed with traditional music elements account for the largest proportion, and the national characteristics of Chinese piano works are more direct and prominent than those of other types of Chinese piano works. The national characteristics of these works are more direct, distinct and prominent than those of other types of Chinese piano works. Therefore, although the adaptation of traditional Chinese music based on Western compositional techniques is not the only way to realize the "Chinese style", it is the ultimate shortcut to highlight the national characteristics of piano music and form the "Chinese style".

3. Nationalized characteristics of piano adaptations of traditional music

Chinese piano adaptations have become the central embodiment of the universal characteristics of the "Chinese style" of piano music, with their nationalized features such as the title of the subject matter, the established nature of the melody, the richness of the cultural connotation, the ethnicity of the musical language, the simulation of the timbre and sound, and the richness of the regional characteristics. The adaptation and composition of traditional Chinese music is the most direct and natural way to realize the "Chinese style" of piano music.

3.1 Title nature of the subject matter content

"The title of music" means that the music work is condensed and summarized by the intuitive image and easy-to-understand title of the music content. Throughout the Chinese piano music works, the vast majority of Chinese piano adaptations have the content of the work as the title, which is really title music in the true sense. It can be said that

the title character is the distinctive feature of piano adaptations and even the whole Chinese piano music creation.

For example, in Jiang Zuxin's "Temple Fair", there are five pieces of music: "The Artiste's Ditty", "Double Dance", "The Old Man's Story", "Sheng Dance" and "Social Opera"; in Wang Jianzhong's "Four Adaptations of Folk Songs from Northern Shaanxi", there are four pieces of music: "The Great Production of the Military and the People", "Embroidered Golden Plaque" and "Turning Over to the Way"; in Cui Shiguang's "Shandong Style Suite", there are "Native Ditty", "Pair of Flowers", "South Flying Geese" and "Fine Rain"; and in Ding Shande's "Toccata", there are many pieces with titles such as "The Sun Comes Out and the Happy New Year" by Chu Wanghua, and "The Happy Herd Boy" by Huang Huwei. The Toccata "Happy News" by Ding Shande, "The Sun Comes Out" and "New Year in the First Month" by Chu Wanghua, and "Happy Shepherd Boy" by Huang Huwei, etc., all clearly indicate the content of the music in the form of titles and show us a typical picture of folk customs and life on the piano. There are also some Chinese piano adaptations which, through the content shown in the title, are linked to Chinese literature, painting, history and other aspects of culture, so that the audience can develop rich associations with the content of the music, either an evocative storyline or a fresh and elegant ink painting, and thus understand the music more truly and deeply, achieving a kind of "understanding before hearing the sound". This is a kind of artistic realm of "understanding the meaning before hearing the sound". This kind of title, which highly condenses the spiritual connotation of the content of the work, also plays a suggestive and prescient role in revealing the content of the work to the performers and appreciators. For example, Wang Jianzhong's "Chasing the Moon with Colorful Clouds" and "Butterfly Lovers", Li Yinghai's "Sunset Cocktail Drum", Zhu Song's "Two Cranes Listening to the Spring", and Yang Xuzhao's "Spring Morning in the Seaside" paint a fresh and elegant ink painting for us, while Lin Eryao's "All Members of the Society are Sunflowers", Dan Zhaoyi's "The Story of the Cowherd", and Chu Wanghua's "Full River Red" tell us an evocative story, arousing our memory of a specific period. The works such as Lin Eryao's "All the members of the society are sunny flowers", Dan Zhaoyi's "The story of the cowherd boy" and Chu Wanghua's "Full River Red" tell us an evocative story, causing us to recall and think about the historical stories of a specific period.

3.2 Determinism of melodic tunes

Melody, as the basic statement and the main means of expression, is the main basis for the inheritance and development of traditional music, and is also an important factor for the "nationalization" of piano music. The melodic tones that have been gradually formed during the long history of traditional music, which are very characteristic of the

nation, provide a wide space and rich melodic materials for the creation of Chinese style piano music. Most of the melodic tunes of Chinese piano adaptations are based on familiar folk music, either directly quoting folk tunes as the theme melody for adaptation and development, or pianistic processing of folk tunes fragments as the theme material of the piece. The character of melody and tune plays an important role in reflecting the national characteristics. Although this specific national characteristic is the "Chinese style" in the category of appearance, it is the preferred way to realize the "Chinese style" in piano music. As Mr. Ding Shande said, in order to express the content and main idea of Chinese themes, "we need to have a national style and use national tones" Some of the best works are: Wang Jianzhong's "Shandandan Blossoms Redly" based on two folk songs from northern Shaanxi, "When the Red Army's Brother Comes Back" and "The Girl Carries Water"; Liu Xue'an's "Flying Geese" based on the guqin piece "Ping Sha Falling Geese"; and Yin Cheng's The song "Flying Geese" by Liu Xue'an is based on the guqin song "Ping Sha Falling Geese", "Ambush from Ten Sides" by Yin Chengzong is based on the pipa song of the same name, "Selling Groceries" by Chen Peixun is based on the Guangdong folk ditty "Dressing Table", "Echoes of the Empty Valley" by Huang Huwei is based on the Tibetan folk song "Snow on the Mountain, Like a Flower" by Mao County, and so on, to name a few.

3.3 Ethnicity of musical language

Music language is the language system used by composers to express their meaning. As the soul of music and the expression of the content of a musical work, it is presented through the interplay of melody, rhythm, harmony, timbre, modulation and many other elements. The search for the "ethnicity" of music language is an important means to highlight the "Chinese style" of piano music and seek the national temperament. It is mainly reflected in the following aspects:

3.3.1 Rhythm

Rhythm is one of the earliest musical elements to emerge and one of the most dynamic elements of musical expression, playing a crucial role in the formation of a typical musical style. Unlike the regular rhythms of Western musical works, the internal rhythms in Chinese music are more flexible and free-flowing. A series of unique rhythmic styles constitute the unique rhythmic styles of different ethnic groups and regions. Therefore, rhythm is an important factor in reflecting national and regional characteristics, and manifesting the "Chinese style".

Chu Wang Hua's Xinjiang Fantasia (example 1), Ding Shan De's First Xinjiang Dance, Deng Er Bo's Xinjiang Fantasia, Zhuang Yao and Guo Zhi Hong's Xinjiang Dance (example 2), etc. The most characteristic

dance and instrumental rhythms of Xinjiang, syncopated rhythms and rhythms with dots, which are often placed behind the first eight and then sixteen rhythms, are the core of the composition. The syncopated rhythm makes Xinjiang music more lively, light and full of power. The dotted rhythms, on the other hand, show a sense of "intonation and staccato" rhythm, strengthening the dynamics of Xinjiang music.



Score example 1: Chu Wang-Hua's "Xinjiang Fantasia" (bars 49-54)



Score example 2: Guo Zhihong "Xinjiang Dance" (bars 1-6)

The "Overture and Dance" was composed by Huang An-Lun in response to a Taiwanese folk song sung to him by his sister Wei Li, a member of the Alpine tribe, and the dance movements he performed. (Score example 3)



Score example 3: "Overture and Dance" by An-Lun Huang (bars 50-51)

Qu Wei and Xi Qiming's "Flower Drum" uses the rhythmic pattern of the gongs and drums (dongdong dong dong dong| dong dong choke), the most popular and popular Chinese "flower drum", throughout the piece, introducing people to a lively, joyful and festive atmosphere in a tightly ordered drum beat. (The rhythmic pattern)



(dong dong dong dong| dong dong choke) brings the piece to a climax little by little, fully reflecting the people's excited and joyful celebratory mood, and the music is in a more hearty and dynamic mood. (Score example 4-5)



Score example 4: Qu Wei's "Flower Drum"(bars 1-6)

Score example 5: Xi Qiming's "Flower Drum"(bars 36-44)

3.3.2 Tuning

Melody is the most direct and prominent expression of the "nationalization" of piano music, and the key, which is the basis of melody, becomes an important factor to highlight the "nationalization" of piano music. The pentatonic national tuning, which is based on Gong, Shang, Horn, Emblem and Feather, has good stability and high harmony, and is an important symbol of the "nationalization" of piano music. Even the Chinese heptatonic scale, which is formed by adding two deviations to the pentatonic scale, is fundamentally different from the Western heptatonic scale, which is not divided into positive and negative tones. Therefore, the inheritance and development of the pentatonic national scale is one of the important factors for the "nationalization" of Chinese piano adaptations.

For example, Chu Wanghua's "Two Springs Reflecting the Moon" and "Zheng Xiao Yin", Chen Peixun's "Autumn Moon at Pinghu", Lai Yinghai's "Three Folded Yangguan" and "Sunset Xiong Drum", Wang Jianzhong's "Chasing the Moon in the Colorful Clouds", and Qu Wei's "Lotus Dance", etc. The music is based on the national pentatonic tuning, with the appropriate addition of partials, so that the music exudes the traditional aesthetic flavor of ancient simplicity and elegance, as well as a very fresh and contemporary atmosphere.

Song Name	Modulation
Autumn Moon of Ping Lake	A \flat tonic
The Three Stacks of Yang Guan	F feather tuned
Sunset cocktail drum	Drop A Merchant
Colorful clouds chasing the moon	E levy
lit. two springs reflecting the moon	B levy
Zhengjiao Yin	Descending E Feather
Lotus Dance	Descending D sign, descending E palace

Tan Dun's "Memories of Eight Watercolor Paintings", Cui Bingyuan's "Sketches of Tibet" and Zhang Chao's "Ballad of Yunnan Mountain" are based on the traditional pentatonic melody and boldly use the western modern polytonal or even toneless composition method, resulting in a very different artistic effect from the western heptatonic scale, which has no positive or negative distinction, and the music sounds both ancient and remote, fresh and elegant, and extremely rich in a hazy modern sense. The music sounds ancient, fresh and elegant, but also has an ethereal and modern feel.

3.3.3 Harmony

In the composition of Chinese piano adaptations, composers have been actively exploring and practicing "nationalization" in terms of composition style, harmony, and weaving to avoid the conflict and dissonance between traditional Western functional harmony and national tones on the basis of established national folk melodies. The composers have actively explored and practiced "nationalization" in terms of composition, harmony, and weaving. Chu Wanghua advocates that "adaptation is not only the transplantation of melody, but also the harmonization and weaving of the melody, the integration with the national emotion and temperament, and the adaptation to the national appreciation habits to form an artistic whole with national style." It can be seen that the nationalization of harmony is an important factor and necessary means to realize the "Chinese style" of piano music. Composers often use the following harmonic techniques: diatonic intervals and superimposed chords, fourth and fifth intervals and superimposed chords, pentatonic longitudinal chords, etc.

Chu is particularly fond of the collision effect produced by discordant diatonic intervals, and calls it "touching tone". In "Liu Hai Chopping

Woodcutter" (example 6), Chu Wang-Hua uses the superposition of small diatonic intervals, as well as the characteristic harmonies of additive chords, front leaning tones, and superposition of non-homonymous diatonic patterns to subtly reflect the unique charm of Hunan Flower Drum Opera.



Score example 6: "Liu Hai Chopping Woodcutters" by Chu Wang Hua (bars 1-4)

In "Guess the Tune", Wang Jianzhong uses the dissonance of minor and major second chords to create a witty and humorous atmosphere, bringing to life the scene of children calling on their friends and competing to guess riddles. (Score example 7)



Score example 7: Wang Jianzhong in "Guess the Tune" (bars 1-4)

Cui Shiguang's "Three Improvisations by Liu Tianhua" includes "Birds Talking on Empty Mountains" (example 8). At the beginning of the piece, the composer uses the unique harmonious and empty sound effect of parallel fourth harmony to create a quiet and empty "empty mountain" mood, which reproduces the aesthetic realm of the original poem "No one is seen on the empty mountain, but the sound of birds' voices" and "The bees' noise in the forest The aesthetic realm of the original poem "The forest is more than quiet, the birds are singing and the mountain is more secluded".



Score example 8: Cui Shiguang's "Birdsong on Empty Mountain" (bars 1-3)

In the introduction, interlude and conclusion of "Flower Drum", Qu Wei uses melodic voices framed by interval chords in fifths. The empty and simple sound effect of empty fifths and the lively and cheerful rhythmic patterns simulate the sound effect and national flavor of folk percussion instruments. (See example 4)

In "Tibetan Sketches", the accompaniment pattern of the chords in high fourths is used throughout the piece, and the unique acoustic effect reproduces the joyful and flexible dance steps of Tibetans. (Score 9)



Score example 9: Cui Bingyuan, "Zhuo - Dance of the Villagers" (bars 102-106)

Xie Geng's "Neon Dress" (example 10) is a piece with pentatonic longitudinal harmonies in the form of decomposed arpeggios, giving the harmonies a melodic beauty.



Score example 10: Xie Geng's "Neon Dress and Feather Cloth Song" (bars 22-26)

Chu Wanghua's "Spring to the Farmhouse" (example 11) breaks through the traditional third plus chords and uses the "block" chord form to pursue a special acoustic effect, expressing a witty and cheerful musical atmosphere.



Score example 11: Chu Wanghua "Spring Arrives at the Farmhouse" (bars 33-37)

The above-mentioned writing techniques produce dissonance in the acoustic effect, greatly expanding the expressive power of pentatonic harmony, which plays a role in enhancing the harmonic colorfulness

and depiction and rendering the mood of the piece while maintaining the strong national style characteristics of the original work.

3.3.4 Structure

Traditional Chinese music is very sensual and often does not adhere to a fixed form of structural form, and the structure of music is mostly extended according to the development of emotions, with the most common form of multi-part scattered and non-representational structure, in line with the structural characteristics of traditional music multi-part spread, cycle and repeat, in one go. For example:

The structure of the Erquan Yingyue is basically the same as that of the original Erhu piece, with a theme, three variations and a final coda. The development of the music is based on the changing mood of the piece, with each variation moving forward and gradually falling back after the climax is formed in the second and third variations, fully reflecting the "Chinese style" of the piano piece. "The music is structured in a way that the mood of the piece changes.

3.4 Tone sound simulation

There are many different types of Chinese folk instruments and a variety of techniques. Different types of instruments and their playing techniques present very different timbre and sound. In Chinese piano adaptations, composers pay great attention to the simulation of the sound effects of Chinese folk instruments as another important factor to reflect the "Chinese style". For example:

Chu Wanghua's "The Day of Turning Over" uses a small second touch to simulate the high, delicate slide of the Banhu. (Example 12)



Score example 12: Chu Wang-Hua, "The Day of Turning Over"(bars 16-21)

Jiang Wenya's "Festive Poem of the Countryside"(example 13) highlights the "Chinese style" of the piece by simulating the ornamental scraping up and down of the zheng, as well as the sweeping, shaking, playing, picking and other special techniques of the pipa.



Example 13: Jiang Wenya's "Festive Poems of the Countryside"(bars 10-17)

Chen Yi's "Doye"(example 14), through the collision of musical rhythms and dissonances and the echoing of long tones, imitates the counterpoint between folk percussion instruments and Dong wind music, reproducing the festive scene of Dong people singing and dancing with great joy.



Score example 14: Chen Yi "Doyle"(bars 1-3)

These works further enhance the Chineseness of piano music through the simulation of the timbre and sound of ethnic instruments, and are an important factor in highlighting the "Chinese style" of the works adapted by Chinese pianists.

3.5 The profundity of cultural connotation

As an important part of Chinese traditional culture with national characteristics and cultural connotations, Chinese traditional music is deeply rooted in the soil of the excellent cultural traditions of the ancient Chinese nation for thousands of years and has great national characteristics. With its rich and diverse forms, broad ideas and unusual continuity, it has been integrated into the bloodline of the Chinese nation and has a long history, mapping out all aspects of the Chinese national spirit.

For example, "Three Blossoms of Plum Blossom", which is based on the ancient qin piece, uses the proud snow and frost of the plum blossom and its iron bones to imply the noble and arrogant spiritual qualities of the ancient literati. At the same time, it combines the

poetic context of Chairman Mao's poem "Winged Plum", which not only retains the ancient and elegant literati spirit of the original piece, but also gives it a profound contemporary connotation. The "Two Springs Reflecting the Moon" condenses the bitterness and hardship in the life of the author Ah Bing, his deep sympathy for the toiling masses and his indomitable spirit in the face of hardship through the notes. As Chu Wang-Hua, the arranger, said, "This piece has depth because it contains the inner speech, passion and temperament of a people that transcends time and space."

Through the vivid imitation and image reproduction of various birdsong in nature, "Hundred Birds Towards the Wind" aims to convey a love of nature, love of life, optimistic and positive spiritual power. The "Lotus Dance", which is based on the melody and tune of Longdong folk songs, is a beautiful and elegant music that shapes the beautiful and dignified artistic image of the lotus flower, with the unique and distinctive elegance of the lotus flower as a metaphor for the gentleman's purity and high moral character. As Zhou Dunyi said in "Love the Lotus", "I am the only one who comes out of the mud and does not dye it, and I wash the lotus without any demon."

These works, through metaphor and symbolism, fully reflect the aesthetic concept and profound cultural connotation of the Chinese nation as a whole, and not only allow us to deeply feel, experience and appreciate the unique aesthetic realm and national flavor of the works, but also serve as an important way for the excellent Chinese traditional culture to manifest the "Chinese style" through piano music. It is also an important way for Chinese traditional culture to be expressed through piano music.

3.6 Richness of Geographical Features

China is a multi-ethnic country with a long history. Due to the regional differences, the relatively independent cultural characteristics and unique musical styles of each ethnic group have been formed, and the piano adaptations also present a rich variety of regional characteristics as a result.

For example, "Sketches of Tibet" (Cui Byung-won), which expresses the regional flavor of the Tibetan people, "Xinjiang Fantasia" (Chu Wanghua), "Xinjiang Suite" (Shi Fu and Zhuang Yao) and "Xinjiang Fantasia" (Deng Erbo), which expresses the exotic style of the Uyghur people, "Combination of Long and Short" (Kwon Gil-ho), which expresses the rhythmic characteristics of the Korean people, "Overture and Dance" (Huang Anlun) and "Alpine Suite" (Tian Feng), which express the characteristics of the Alpine people, "Improvisation - Dong Town Drum Tower" (Zou Xiangping) and "Dong Town Drum Tower" (Tian Feng), which express the flavor of the Dong people. The Overture and Dance (Huang Anlun) and the Alpine Suite (Tian Feng),

etc., which express the flavor of the Dong people; the Improvisation - Dong Township Drum Tower (Zou Xiangping) and Donglan Copper Drum Dance (Lu Huabai), which express the flavor of the Zhuang people; the Zhuang Township Suite (Ni Hongjin) and Doye (Chen Yi), which express the flavor of the Miao people; the Miao Folk Song Theme Piano Ditty (Sang Tong), which express the regional flavor of the Miao people; and the Jiangnan region."Painting of Bashu" (Huang Huwei), which expresses the humanistic characteristics of Sichuan and Shu; "Four Adaptations of Shaanxi Folk Songs" (Wang Jianzhong), "Blue Flower" (Wang Lisan), etc., which expresses the rough and unrestrained style of Shaanxi folk songs.

Conclusion

The century-long development of piano art in China is also a process of gradual integration of Chinese and Western cultures across the differences, and for more than 100 years, composers have been exploring and experimenting with "nationalized" techniques and "Chinese style", and a large number of The piano works are excellent. Among them, the adaptation of traditional Chinese piano music has been widely recognized and loved by the public for its melodic tunes, profound cultural connotation, ethnicity of musical language and richness of regional characteristics, which has promoted the promotion and popularity of piano art and become the most direct and natural way to form the "Chinese style" of piano music, It has become the most direct and natural way to realize the "Chinese style" of piano music. This successful experience is not only the theme of Chinese piano music creation in the 20th century, but also should provide guidelines and paths for the development of Chinese piano music today and in the future, so that piano music will continue to make breakthroughs and innovations in the process of forming the "Chinese style".

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