

“A BLOSSOMING TREE”: A STUDY AND INTERPRETIVE GUIDE TO THE SONGS OF NAN-CHANG

CHIEN ON SELECTED POEMS OF MUREN HSI

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According to a recent United Nations report, China's population of 1.4 billion represents 19% of the world's entire population of 7.6 billion. As the distance between east and west contracts in business, so too do the arts. This dissertation focuses on six selected contemporary Chinese art songs composed by Nan-Chang Chien. By providing the references of musical facts, synopsis of the poems, word-for-word translation, IPA transcription, poetic translation, and interpretive and performance guides, singers and pianists will have an overall understanding and detailed directions for learning the Chinese language and Chinese art songs. This dissertation also provides the foundation and model for further exploration and research into Chinese art song literature by scholars in the west.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Songs and poetry have played an integral part in Chinese culture for millennia. Formerly, singers were proud to transform famous poems into songs; poets also tried to compose poems to fit with an existing famous tune. Scholars have found collections of poems dating from 1000 BC such as the *Classic of Poetry*.¹ This collection contains works by aristocrats, songs for religious ceremonies, and many folk songs. For years, poets competed with each other, in setting their poems to music. If these songs became popular, they were evaluated as being a better poet.²

Approximately 200 years ago, western culture began influencing Chinese culture. Scholars and educators advocated for written vernacular Chinese to be used in the writing of poetry instead of Classical Chinese. New poems written in vernacular Chinese no longer followed the strict rules of rhymes, rhythms, tones, and forms. Novels became more popular than poetry. Poetic anthologies were no longer valuable in the market, and poets lost their social status within the culture. Meanwhile, musicians continued to compose songs from poems and began to enter into new popular forms such as musical theater and pop music. Since the later became the major art form for songs, the public lost their interests for poetic songs.³

In 1992, Taiwanese classical singers and voice teachers founded the Association of Vocal

¹ Yu-Ting Liu, *Union of Poetry and Music* (M.M. thesis, National Taiwan Normal University, 2009), 1.

² Ibid, 2.

³ Liu, 2.

Artists (AVA) of R.O.C.⁴ with the goal of raising the standard of vocal arts and vocal training, and promoting contemporary vocal compositions in Taiwan to encourage international integration.⁵ For more than 20 years, AVA has committed to holding concerts engaging contemporary composers and poets of contemporary art songs. In this manner, Taiwanese audiences are beginning to have a new appreciation for poetry and music.⁶ For example, in August 2003, AVA organized the fifth concert of the series of *Premiere of Commissioned Works: Our Poets Our Songs*, in which they premiered 17 songs based upon 15 different poems (two poems were set twice by 4 different composers) from 4 poets.⁷ These songs were published in June 2005, under the title of *你的歌我來唱 (2) – 當代中文藝術歌曲集 (Your Song I Sing 2 – Contemporary Chinese Art Songs)*. This anthology has since become a standard resource for Chinese repertoire selections in the music schools in Taiwan.

In America, four languages are considered to be the most important languages for singers to master in the study of classical vocal arts: English, Italian, German, and French.⁸ Although the Chinese language and culture is being introduced into American society, Chinese art songs are rarely performed in American music schools. The most significant obstacle for western students to overcome when studying Chinese is the character verses alphabetical spelling of the language. For example, there are many homophonic Chinese words with

⁴ Republic of China, official title of the country of Taiwan.

⁵ About AVA, <http://www.vocalistasso.org.tw/front/bin/ptlist.phtml?Category=102257>.

⁶ Liu, 3.

⁷ Mu-De Hsi, "Our Poets, Our Songs", *Your Song I Sing 2 – Contemporary Chinese Art Songs*, compiled by Hsueh-Yung Shen (Taipei: Mercury Publishing House, 2005), 5.

⁸ Clifton Ware, *Adventures in Singing* (NYC: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 83.

different meanings, such as 維 (maintain), 圍 (around), 微 (tiny), 惟 (but), 唯 (only), that are all pronounced [wéi], however, they all have different meanings. While it may be easy to recognize the first, fourth and fifth characters because they share the same right side of the character; the second and the third characters are extremely different in appearance, but they still share the same pronunciation. This distinct difference presents a significant challenge for American singers wanting to perform Chinese repertoire.

This study will focus on the selected songs from the above mentioned anthology, *Your Song I Sing 2 – Contemporary Chinese Art Songs*, composed by Nan-Chang Chien on selected poems of Muren Hsi, and provide an interpretive guide with English translations and International Phonetic Alphabet transcriptions to aid in the correct pronunciation and articulation of the language. This research will provide the reader a better understanding of Nan-Chang Chien's music, in order to introduce western music teachers and singers to this growing body of repertoire. Moreover, this study can serve as a bridge for non-Chinese readers to have access to Chinese culture and eastern ideology.

Literature

A substantial amount of research and study on Nan-Chang Chien has been published in degree theses and dissertations. Details about Chien's life can be found in an autobiography which he and his wife published.⁹ There are many program notes in which Chien has written about his compositional ideas, the standard he used to select poems, and his compositional

⁹ Nan-Chang Chien and Mei-Chen Lai, *South Wind Musical Movement: A Composer's Life of Nan-Chang Chien* (Taipei: Rye Field Publishing Company, 2007).

process. Recently, a DMA document published in 2014 from Ohio State University written by Szu-Yu Chu, focused on the *Four Aboriginal Lieder for Soprano and Orchestra* composed by Chien in 2005.¹⁰ Chu included the biography of Chien and his interviews with the press. In addition, she interviewed both the soprano who sang the premiere (Hui-Chen Lin) and the soprano who made the studio recording (Ling-Hui Lin). Chu included references about Chien's life and an extensive bibliography of Taiwanese music and culture, however, her musical analysis focused on different repertoire than the focus of this study.

Another important reference is the Master's thesis published by Yu-Ting Liu from National Taiwan Normal University in 2009. In her thesis, Liu covered Hsi's writing style and Chien's compositional style. Most importantly, Liu did an analysis of all 20 songs from the concert of *Nan-Chang Chien Music Festival: A Blossoming Tree* in 2005, organized by National Art Center. Her thesis covers matters of tonality, harmony, form, and Chien's compositional choices in setting Hsi's poems and the Chinese language. However, there is no practical application of her analysis for singers or pianists. This study will focus on six songs, *At the River Pier*, *A Touch of Zen*, *From a Borrowed Line*, *Temptation*, *Artiste*, and *A Blossoming Tree*, which were premiered in 2003, and discuss interpretive issues for singers and pianist, specifically for students from the west, include Chinese word-for-word translations, poetic translations, IPA transcriptions, a listing of range, tessitura, and appropriate voice type for each song. This study will provide not only an introduction and interpretive guide, but also aid non-Chinese readers with a better understanding of the art of Chinese poetry, culture, and ideology.

¹⁰ Szu-Yu Chu, *A Study Guide of the Taiwanese Composer, Nan-Chang Chien, and his Four Aboriginal Lieder for Soprano and Orchestra* (DMA diss., Ohio State University, 2014).

Pronunciation and Tones of Chinese

Modern Chinese, the standard, common language of China, is based on the speech sound of the Beijing dialect, and known as Mandarin to the western world.¹¹ Since the Chinese language is a logographic system in its written form, Chinese characters have been rendered phonetically into the orthography of western language and this is referred to as Romanization.¹² However, none of the Romanization systems provide authentic pronunciations.¹³ As the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) is a written phonetic system of symbols to aid in the correct pronunciation of any sound in any language, according to the linguistic studies by DeFrancis (1963), Chao (1968), Chen (1970), Lin (1989), Shibles (1994), Duanmu (2000, 2007), and Karna (2012), the author will catalogue Taiwanese Mandarin pronunciations into the IPA system in this study.

In Taiwan, Mandarin Phonetic Symbols (MPS) are the major Chinese transliteration system for Taiwanese Mandarin. It contains 37 pronunciation symbols and five tone marks. It has been introduced to children from their first grade at school, however, it now is only employed in Taiwan for educational purposes. Since IPA has become the major approach for transcribing foreign language for classical singers, this study will employ IPA symbols for transcribing pronunciation for these six songs. The relationship of Mandarin Phonetic Symbols and IPA is listed below.

¹¹ Shou-Ying Lin, *College Chinese* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1989), iv.

¹² Warren A. Shibles, "Chinese Romanization System: IPA Transliteration," *Sino-Platonic Papers*, no. 52 (November 1994): 1.

¹³ *Ibid*, 1-3.

Table 1.1. Mandarin Phonetic Symbols¹⁴ with International Phonetic Alphabet¹⁵

ㄅ	[bə]	ㄆ	[də]	ㄍ	[gə]	ㄑ	[dʒi]	ㄑ	[dʒi]	ㄒ	[dʒi]
ㄆ	[pə]	ㄊ	[tə]	ㄎ	[kə]	ㄎ	[tʃi]	ㄒ	[tʃi]	ㄑ	[tsi]
ㄇ	[mə]	ㄋ	[nə]	ㄏ	[hə]	ㄗ	[ʃi]	ㄗ	[ʃi]	ㄘ	[si]
ㄈ	[fə]	ㄌ	[lə]					ㄗ	[ʒi]		
ㄇ	[i]/[j]			ㄚ	[a]	ㄛ	[aɪ]	ㄜ	[an]	ㄝ	[ɜ]
ㄏ	[u]/[w]			ㄛ	[ɔ]	ㄜ	[ɛɪ]	ㄝ	[ən]		
ㄏ	[y]/[ɥ]			ㄛ	[ə]	ㄜ	[aʊ]	ㄝ	[aŋ]		
				ㄛ	[ɛ]	ㄜ	[ɔʊ]	ㄝ	[ɔŋ]		

There are a few IPA symbols that are not commonly employed for classical singers in the United States,

- [ç], voiceless alveolo-palatal fricative, an initial consonant sound, similar to [j] with relaxed lips and slight smile
- [tʃ], voiceless alveolo-palatal affricate, an initial consonant sound, similar to [tʃ] with relaxed lips and slight smile

¹⁴ The Manual of the Phonetic Symbols of Mandarin Chinese. Ministry of Education, Taiwan. http://language.moe.gov.tw/001/Upload/files/site_content/M0001/juyin/html_en/index.html

¹⁵ Full IPA Chart. International Phonetic Association. <https://www.internationalphoneticassociation.org/content/full-ipa-chart>

- [dʒ], voiced alveolo-palatal affricate, an initial consonant sound, similar to [dʒ] with relaxed lips and slight smile
- [ʒ], voiced retroflex fricative, an initial consonant sound, similar to [z]+[ɹ]
- [dʒ], voiced retroflex affricate, an initial consonant sound, similar to [dz]+[ɹ]
- [ʃ], voiceless retroflex fricative, an initial consonant sound, similar to [s]+[ɹ]
- [tʃ], voiceless retroflex affricate, an initial consonant sound, similar to [ts]+[ɹ]
- [i], central closed vowel, similar to [ə] with the mouth opening of [i]

Taiwanese Mandarin, like all other dialects in Chinese, is a tonal language. Many non-native Chinese speakers have difficulties mastering the tones of each character, but correct tonal pronunciation is essential for intelligibility because of the vast number of words in the language that only differ by tone. Statistically, tones are as important as vowels in Standard Chinese.¹⁶ There are five tones in Mandarin, but most commonly, people employ the four main tones for education purposes and daily conversations. In the following graph, the X-axis indicates the length of a tone, while the Y-axis indicates the intonations of a tone; here, 5 is in the higher pitch, and 1 is in the lower pitch.

¹⁶ Surendran, Dinoj and Levow, Gina-Anne, "The functional load of tone in Mandarin is as high as that of vowels", *Proceedings of the International Conference on Speech Prosody 2004*, (Nara, Japan, 2004), 99–102.

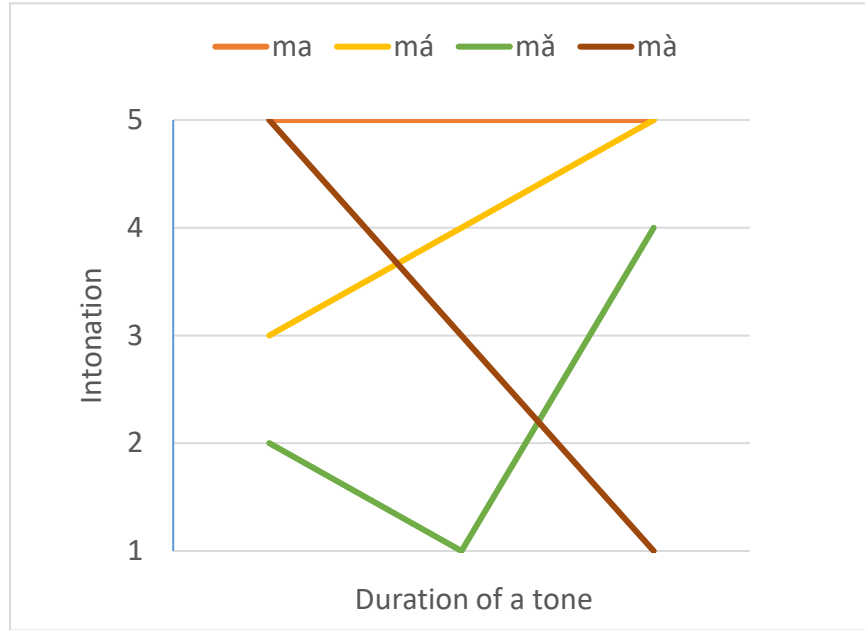


Figure 1.1. Four intonations in Chinese language

The accent on the stressed vowels in the IPA transcription indicates the tones of the Chinese language, as we call [mā]/[ma55] as tone 1, [má]/[ma35] as tone 2, [mǎ]/[ma214] as tone 3, and [mà]/[ma51] as tone 4. According to *Five-tone Notation* written by Yuen-Ren Chao (1892-1982), the tonal qualities of Mandarin in Chinese can be categorized into four tones, these four tones are named 陰 [īŋ], 陽 [ján], 上 [jǎŋ], 去 [tjỳ].¹⁷ If we intergrade these four tones with Figure 1.1, and rename the four tones in the numeric system, they will become 陰 [iŋ55], 陽 [jaŋ35], 上 [jaŋ214], 去 [tjỳ51]. Interestingly, Chien follows the tonal flow of individual Chinese words and the broader tonal context of the language when composing the vocal line. This connection must be understood by the non-Chinese speaking artist when preparing these songs. Although he has already set the tones of the words in the melodic lines, it is still important for singers to know how Chinese words sound for authentic pronunciation.

¹⁷ Yuen Ren Chao, *The Study of Contemporary Wu* (Beijing: Science Press, 1956), 3-4.

Example 1.1. Chien's composition treatment on vocal lines with Chinese intonation, from "A Blossoming Tree", mm. 4-7

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system is the vocal line, starting at measure 4. It is marked *mp*. The lyrics are: 如何讓你遇見我在我最美麗的^{*}. Below the lyrics is numeric notation: (35) (35) (51) (214) (51) (51) (214) (51) (214)(51)(214)(51). The second system is the piano accompaniment, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef).

From the example above, the numeric notation is noted under the words showing how Chien applies the tones of the spoken language to his vocal composing. Chien composes the vocal lines with a macroscopic vision for the flow of whole speaking line, rather than every single word. In measure 6, the word 你 (you) is pronounced with tone 2, sliding down then up. With the relationship of neighboring words i.e., a higher tone descending on the left, and a higher tone following on the right, this connected flow of descending then ascending naturally forms the tone 2 of 你 (you). Without adding extra notes to every single word, this approach retains the connected flow of the Chinese language.

CHAPTER 2

NAN-CHANG CHIEN AND HIS MUSIC

Biography

Chien was born in Jiangsu, China in 1948.¹⁸ Eight months after his birth, his father, Tung-Sun Chien, decided to move his family to Taiwan, due to the Chinese Civil War¹⁹ between KMT and CPC.²⁰ Music was an important part of his life since childhood, when he was admitted to sing on a children's radio program, *Happy Children*, broadcasted by Broadcasting Corporation of China.²¹ Through high school and college, he participated in many choirs. As he recounts, "I have liked to sing from a young age...participating in many different choirs and it has influenced me in the composing of vocal works in the future."²²

In 1966, he began his study at the Chinese Culture University majoring in music. He was a piano performance major with a minor in voice. There, he met Professor of Music Theory, De-Yi Liu, who introduced Chien to composition. Chien took private composition lessons with Liu, and because of his influence, he chose composition for further study at the Hochschule für Musik und Theater München from 1973 to 1978.²³ During his time in Germany, he studied with Prof. Wilhelm Killmayer (1927-2017), who influenced his approach to harmonic progression and

¹⁸ Chien and Lai, 18.

¹⁹ Chinese Civil War was a civil war in China from 1927 to 1936, then 1946 to 1950. After the war, China divided into two countries, Republic of China (ROC) governed by Kuomintang (KMT) in Taiwan; and People's Republic of China governed by Communist Party of China (CPC) in mainland China.

²⁰ Chien and Lai, 24.

²¹ Ibid, 30.

²² Ibid, 36.

²³ Chien and Lai, 31-9.

melodic line, and encouraged him to find his individual style. Killmayer told Chien: "...look for yourself; you don't have to be a German composer."²⁴

Chien spent more than 10 years developing his personal compositional style. He endeavored to find a connection between western contemporary music and Chinese traditional music by composing arrangements of traditional folk songs in a western compositional style. He endeavored to integrate Taiwanese folk idioms into his compositions. From 1978 to his retirement in 2013, Chien served as a theory and composition professor at Chinese Culture University and Taipei National University of the Arts. Since 1997, he has received many national awards in Taiwan, including the Best Composer (1997, 1998, 2002, 2005), and the best Religious Music Album (2005) of the Golden Melody Awards (the Taiwanese equivalent of the Grammy Awards); he was awarded the National Award of Arts in the music category in 2005.²⁵ His art songs and choral pieces are sung regularly throughout Taiwan, and internationally with increasing frequency. For example, with Taipei Philharmonic Chamber Choir, Chien's choral works including *I am flying*, and *Sunset*, have been performed in many international occasions, such as ACDA National Conference, World Choral Symposium, Europa Cantat, Oregon Bach Festival, and Music Fest Vancouver. For more than 20 years, TPCC has traveled more than 20 countries, and performed more than 100 concerts around the world. Western choirs such as Brigham Young University Concert Choir²⁶, and the Festival Choir of Madison²⁷, have performed Chien's *I am*

²⁴ Ibid, 48.

²⁵ Ibid, 239.

²⁶ Concert information, March 08, 2005, <https://cfac.byu.edu/2005/03/08/byu-concert-choir-plans-performance-march-19/>.

²⁷ Concert information, May 12, 2012, <http://today.wisc.edu/events/view/51027>.

flying in their concerts.

Songs on Selected Poems of Muren Hsi

In 2003, Chien was invited by AVA to compose and present a joint concert of contemporary Chinese art songs using contemporary Chinese poems.²⁸ In this concert, he selected 6 poems by Muren Hsi. Hsi was born in Sichuan, China, grew up in Taiwan, and graduated from National Taiwan Normal University. After college, she studied art at the Academie Royale des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles, Belgium. As an artist, she won many awards both in Belgium and in Taiwan, including the Royal Golden Award of Belgium, the Golden Award of Brussels City, two bronze medals in the European Association for the United States, Best Lyricist in Golden Tripod Awards, and Chung-Hsing Literary Medal Poetry Award. Hsi has published many poem anthologies, literature works, and painting albums.²⁹ Her first poem anthology *七里香* (*Seven-Mile Fragrance*) was reprinted seven times during the first year.³⁰ Most significantly, more than any other poet, her poems are used in contemporary Chinese art songs.³¹ In 2005, Chien selected 14 poems by Hsi, and combined them with six songs previously composed in 2003, to present a lieder concert.³² Prior to this, lieder concerts in Taiwan consisted primarily of one poet with various composers, or one composer with various poets. This concert in 2005 pioneered the idea of presenting a lieder concert featuring one composer

²⁸ Shen complied., 4.

²⁹ Shen complied., 14.

³⁰ Liu, 12.

³¹ Ibid, 7.

³² Ibid, 80.

with one specific poet. This concert received positive affirmation from the public and the press:³³

This is a unique lieder concert...if we take the concept of merchandise, it is an *Album*. All the texts are from the poems of Hsi, the selections including the elements of time and space, past to present, Taipei to Mongolia. Nan-Chang Chien utilized his unique and special taste of the human voice, to achieve this vocal recital.³⁴

Hsi was also quoted as saying after the concert:³⁵

I really enjoyed the process of this cooperation. It was very special and unique. It is also my honor that my poems can be composed into art songs. I think the most precious part during this working process is that, I felt being cherished and treasured from an artist to an artist. Because of this working experience, it brings to me other ideas about writing. It is not focusing more on the techniques of rhetoric, but much deeper ideas. It also makes me feel again that writing is a wonderful enjoyment and journey.³⁶

This concert was a huge success with more than 90 percent of the tickets being sold. Chien mentions in his book: "..., there were so many people lining up for Muren Hsi's autograph after the press promotion. Concerts promoting local composers were never popular with the public. I think this success is because of the fame of the poet."³⁷

³³ Wei-Shu Tsai, trans., 2018.

³⁴ PTS Concert Hall – Nan-Chang Chien Music Exhibition, Public Television Service Taiwan, May 29, 2007, <http://web.pts.org.tw/php/mealc/main.php?XMAENO=277>.

³⁵ Wei-Shu Tsai, trans., 2018.

³⁶ Liu, 305.

³⁷ Chien and Lai, 136.

CHAPTER 3

MUSICAL STRUCTURE AND INTERPRETATION GUIDE

In order to provide helpful guidelines about these selected songs, and the musical ideas that Chien composed in the music, this study will provide singers and pianists with several tools to assist them in their preparation. First, each song will include an information table about the piece, including meters³⁸, key signature, tempo, vocal range, tessitura, and synopsis of the poem. Next, a word-for-word translation and an IPA transcription in the style of Nico Castel³⁹, followed by a poetic translation will complete the table. An analysis of the text and descriptive elements found in the accompaniment will follow. Finally, this study will discuss specific musical and vocal issues that may be challenging for singers and pianists, with suggestions for interpretive solutions during rehearsal and performance. Since Chien already utilizes the Chinese intonations in his vocal line, it is also important that singers and pianists recite the texts during the learning process. This will be essential for preparing the vocal lines, and assisting singers in understanding the flow of the language. For example, it is significant that there are no punctuation marks in Hsi's poems. Reciting the poems will assist the performers in locating potential breathing places. Chien adds a few breath marks in the music indicating his thoughts about phrasing as well. Even for Chinese speaking singers, one must recite the poems several

³⁸ Chien does not use traditional time signatures. Performers will find parentheses with numbers indicating how many beats per measure, in random order, and a note value indicating what note value is equivalent to one beat.

³⁹ Nico Castel (1931–2015) was a comprimario tenor and well-known language and diction coach, as well as a prolific translator of libretti and writer of books on singing diction. A polyglot, Castel spoke Portuguese, Ladino, German, French, Spanish, Italian and English with native or near-native fluency. He was an internationally known language and diction coach, writing the book *A Singer's Manual of Spanish Lyric Diction* and translating an extensive annotated series of librettos of French, German and Italian operas that show the pronunciation of every word in the operas' original languages using the International Phonetic Alphabet.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nico_Castel

times to identify phrases and to mark one’s potential breathing choices. This study will be indicating potential breathing places on the music in the appendix.

“At the River Pier”

Meter of Music: 3/4

Key Signature: F major

Tempo: Moderato meno mosso (dotted-half-note time)

Musical Form: AABA

Vocal Range: C4 – G5

Tessitura: F4 – E5

Suitable for: All voice type

Synopsis

We will be parting tomorrow, so allow me to shake your hands on this pier for farewell. From this time forward, our yearning and juvenile age are pausing within our memories. Take my blessings with you, since we will be divided to the end edges of the world.

IPA with Word-for-Word Translation

zàŋ wǒ	ǎ nǐ	wò bié
讓我	與你	握別
allow me	with you	shake hands at parting

dzài	tǐn tǐn	tʃʊtʃʊ	wǒ de	shǒu
再	輕輕	抽出	我的	手
then	gently	pulling out	my	hand

dʒi dàu sɿ njèn tsóŋ tsǎ ʂəŋ gəŋ
知道 思念 從此 生根
knowing yearning hence taking root

fú yín bái zì ʂan tʂwan dʒwan jén wən zóu
浮雲白日 山川 莊嚴溫柔
clouds and sun mountains and rivers solemn and gentle

zàŋ wǒ ǎ nǐ wǒ bjé
讓我 與你 握別
allow me with you shake hands at parting

dzài tɕiŋ tɕiŋ tʂɔu tʂu wǒ də ʂɔu
再 輕輕 抽出 我的 手
then gently pulling out my hand

hwá njén tsóŋ tsǎ tíŋ dwàn
華年 從此 停頓
juvenile time hence pausing

zè lèi dzài ɕiŋ dʒɕŋ hwèi tʂəŋ há líú
熱淚 在 心中 匯成 河流
hot tears in heart converging into river

ʂì nà jàn wàn ban ú nài də níŋ ʂì
是 那樣 萬般 無奈的 凝視
(be) such extremely helpless gazing

dù kǒu páng qǎo bú dào ì duǒ kě yǐ cǎn sòng de huā
 渡口旁 找不到 一朵 可以 相送的 花
 by the pier cannot find one be able presenting flower

dzjò bǎ qǔ fú bié dzài dzin sànj ba
 就 把 祝福 別 在 襟上 吧
 then take the blessings to pin on the collar !⁴⁰

ér míng rì
 而 明日
 and tomorrow

míng rì jòu gé tiān yá
 明日 又 隔 天涯
 tomorrow again separated at the ending edges of the world

*Poetic Translation*⁴¹

渡口

At the River Pier

讓我與你握別
 再輕輕抽出我的手
 知道思念從此生根
 浮雲白日 山川莊嚴溫柔

Allow me, shaking your hands at parting,
 then gently pulling out my hand,
 knowing yearning from this point forward taking root...
 Clouds and sun, mountains and rivers, solemn and gentle.⁴²

⁴⁰ Emphatic final particle; used at the end of a sentence to indicate a suggested action; often used to express imperative mood: let us ...; why don't you ...

⁴¹ Wei-Shu Tsai, trans., 2018. All the poetic translation for these six songs are translated from the original language by the author.

⁴² Liu, 115. This phrase describes the surrounding scene at the pier.

讓我與你握別
再輕輕抽出我的手
華年從此停頓
熱淚在心中匯成河流

Allow me, shaking your hands at parting,
then gently pulling out my hands,
Juvenile time from this point forward pausing,
hot tears in the heart converging into a river.

是那樣萬般無奈的凝視
渡口旁找不到一朵可以相送的花
就把祝福別在襟上吧
而明日
明日又隔天涯

Gazing with extreme helplessness,
by the pier, unable to find a flower as a gift,
then I put the blessings on your collar,
and tomorrow,
tomorrow again separated at the ending edges of the world.

This song portrays two dear friends bidding farewell to one another. In order to emphasize the melancholy feeling, Hsi chose to repeat the first two lines in the first and second stanzas. With this idea, Chien also sets the same motives and same vocal melodies to begin the first two stanzas. Chien integrates the piano and vocal melodies, as Liu states in her theses: “these motives are forming the farewell theme”⁴³.

⁴³ Liu, 118.

Example 3.1. Farewell theme, verse 1, from “At the River Pier”, mm. 1-19

中慢 (♩.) *mp*

讓

10

我 與 你 握 別 再 輕 輕 抽 出 我 的 ^{*} 手 知 道

Detailed description: This musical score is for the first verse of the 'Farewell theme' from 'At the River Pier'. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked '中慢 (♩.)' and the dynamic is 'mp'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line begins with a rest, followed by the lyrics '讓'. At measure 10, the vocal line has the lyrics '我 與 你 握 別 再 輕 輕 抽 出 我 的 * 手 知 道'. A red box highlights the notes for '再 輕 輕 抽 出 我 的 * 手'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and chords in the left hand.

Example 3.2. Farewell theme, verse 2, from “At the River Pier”, mm. 30-51

30

山 川 莊 嚴 溫 柔

dim. *mp*

41

mp

讓 我 與 你 握 別 再 輕 輕 抽 出 我 的 手

Detailed description: This musical score is for the second verse of the 'Farewell theme' from 'At the River Pier'. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is '中慢' and the dynamic is 'mp'. The key signature has one flat and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line begins with the lyrics '山 川 莊 嚴 溫 柔'. At measure 41, the vocal line has the lyrics '讓 我 與 你 握 別 再 輕 輕 抽 出 我 的 手'. A red box highlights the notes for '再 輕 輕 抽 出 我 的 手'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and chords in the left hand. A 'dim.' marking is present in the piano part at measure 30.

In order to create the melancholy mood of departing, Chien uses second inversion, dotted half note, seventh chords in the left hand of the piano for approximately half of the song. In measure 14 and 49, the voice sings 再輕輕抽出我的手 (then gently pulling out my hand), by repeating the notes of C with tenuto, accentuating the feeling of hesitation. Likewise, the farewell theme reprises in the last stanza, but now heard in the piano accompaniment rather than the voice.

Example 3.3. Altered farewell theme, from “At the River Pier”, mm. 93-112

The image displays a musical score for Example 3.3, consisting of two systems of music. The first system, starting at measure 93, features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the character '花' (flower) and includes a breath mark. The piano part starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic and includes markings for *dim.* (diminuendo), *rit.* (ritardando), and *a tempo*. A red bracket on the right side of the piano part spans from measure 112 to the end of the system. The second system, starting at measure 104, continues the vocal line with the lyrics '就把祝福別在襟上吧而明日' and '就把祝福別在襟上吧而明日'. The piano accompaniment in this system has a *mp* (mezzo-piano) dynamic. A red box highlights a specific melodic phrase in the piano part of measure 103, which is the altered farewell theme mentioned in the text. A red bracket on the right side of the piano part spans from measure 103 to the end of the system.

At mm. 103, the opening theme of the song C, F, G, A returns in the piano. It is slightly altered and immediately followed by the repeating Farewell C motif, originally found in the voice part as the original theme, (mm. 14 in example 3.1, and mm. 49 in example 3.2). By hearing the altered theme in the closing section, it creates a mood of parting reluctantly. The speaker wishes to

bless the dear friend, but realizes they may not ever meet again.

Another significant feature also found in the music is the use of the seventh, both in the use of seventh chords, and as an interval.

Example 3.4. Descending seventh chords, from “At the River Pier”, mm. 1-19

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the piece "At the River Pier". The first system (measures 1-7) is marked "中慢 (♩.)" and "mp". The piano part features a series of descending seventh chords in second inversion, highlighted by a red box. The second system (measures 8-19) is marked "mp" and includes the lyrics: "我 與 你 握 別 再 輕 輕 抽 出 我 的 手 知 道". The piano part continues with descending seventh chords, also highlighted by a red box.

As mentioned above Chien uses second inversion, dotted half note, seventh chords in the piano for 63 of the 123 total measures of the song. The chords move in a descending motion, down a second, creating an unresolved feeling, and reflects with the text of the poem that speaks of parting reluctantly. Notice that the distance from the chords in measure 2, and in 11 are also seventh intervals from the chords in measure 8 and in 18. Furthermore, the descending seventh intervals plays a significant role in the climax of this song.

Example 3.5. Descending seventh intervals, from “At the River Pier”, mm. 93-103

The image shows a musical score for the piece "At the River Pier" from measures 93 to 103. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts at measure 93 with a forte (*f*) dynamic and a breath mark. The piano accompaniment begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and features descending parallel seventh intervals in the right hand, which are highlighted by a red box. The piano part includes dynamics of *f*, *dim.*, *rit.*, and *mp*. The tempo is marked *a tempo*.

In the figure of the piano part in measure 93 and the following, there is melancholy, an emptiness with the descending parallel sevenths over ten measures in the right hand of the piano accompaniment. Supporting the high note of G in the voice part of the climax, the continuous descending seventh intervals in the piano part implies the reluctant emotion of the speaker for the farewell.

For the pianist, it is important to clearly articulate the theme, especially at mm. 36, and mm. 103. Before mm. 71, Chien has already provided a breath mark indicating the change of stanzas or sections, but not before mm. 36 and 103. The pianist may employ some *rubato* for phrasing the end of the theme before the voice line re-enters. Once the voice has entered, return to *a tempo*. During the section of the repeating C motif, the pianist shall be flexible to allow the singer for executing the tenuto indicated for the text. At the altered theme section (mm. 106), the pianist shall project the repeating Cs imitating the singing of the words of 再輕輕抽出我的手 (then gently pulling out my hands).

For the singer, it is recommended to count in one, and keep the dynamic level smooth and easy between *mp* and *mf* for the melancholy mood. In the B section (mm. 71-102), the

dynamic gradually grows from *mp*. As the melody rises into a higher tessitura, the singer can naturally sing with more open vowels for a louder dynamic toward the climax at mm. 93 on the word of 花 (flower).

It is also important to execute the rhythm of two-against-three correctly. Since there are seventh chords and intervals in the piano part implying parting reluctantly, the polyrhythm of duplets over triplets conveys the conflicted emotion of the speaker. At mm. 105, the dynamic returns to *mp* through the end of the song. Depending upon the level of the singer, the advanced performers may cut off together with the piano after the *fermata*, however young singers may cut off on the downbeat at mm. 122. A *diminuendo* for the final long note is recommended for bidding farewell to the dearest friend.

“A Touch of Zen”

Meter of Music: 3, 4, 6 quarter-note time, in random order

Key Signature: E-flat minor

Tempo: Moderato

Musical Form: Through-composed

Vocal Range: Db4 – Gb5

Tessitura: Eb4 – Eb5

Suitable for: All voice type

Synopsis

The memories of you have faded away since you left. I embedded my tears between the pages. Maybe, several years later during an afternoon, just like those jasmines we put in the book when we were young, then falling out from the pages, without a scent and no

sound..., maybe then, it will be drizzling outside the window.

IPA with Word-for-Word Translation

daŋ ní tʃən mwò də lí tɕy̯
當 你 沉 默 地 離 去
when you silently leaving

ʃwɔ gwò də hwò méi ʃwɔ gwò də hwà
說 過 的 或 沒 說 過 的 話
have been said (told) or not have been said (told) words

dɔɔ ǐ wàn dzì
都 已 忘 記
all already forgotten

wǒ dzjaŋ wǒ də ku tɕì jě dzjá dzàɪ ʃu jè lí
我 將 我的 哭 泣 也 夾 在 書 頁 裏
I take my tears also embedded pages in between

hǎo cjàŋ wǒ mən njén tɕiŋ ʃí də nà dzǐ dwǒ mwò lì
好 像 我 們 年 輕 時 的 那 幾 朵 茉 莉
just like our juvenile age those few jasmines

jé cǎ hwèi dzàɪ dwo njén hòu də
也 許 會 在 多 年 後 的
maybe will be several years later

ì gə	hwáj hwən	lǐ
一個	黃昏	裏
an	afternoon	in

tsónj	ǒu zán	fan kai də	fěi jè	dzəŋ	lwò cjà
從	偶然	翻開的	扉頁	中	落下
from	occasionally	opened	pages	between	fell down

méi jǒu	fan cjan	dzàì u	səŋ cí
沒有	芳香	再無	聲息
have no	scents	also no	sound

tʂwan wài	nà ʂí	jě cǚ
窗外	那時	也許
out of the window	then	maybe

hwèi	dzəŋ lwò dzə	cì cì də	cì cì də	ǚ
會	正落著	細細的	細細的	雨
will	be dropping	drizzling	drizzling	rain

Poetic Translation

禪意

A Touch of Zen

當你沉默地離去
說過的 或沒說過的話
都已忘記
我將我的哭泣也夾在
書頁裏 好像
我們年輕時的那幾朵茉莉
也許會在多年後的
一個黃昏裏
從偶然翻開的扉頁中落下
沒有芳香 再無聲息

When you left silently,
those words have been said or not,
all are already forgotten.
I also embedded my tears
in between the pages, just like
those jasmines when we were young.
Maybe after several years,
during an afternoon,
falling out from the pages that opened accidentally,
having no scents, and no sound...

窗外那時 也許
會正落著細細的細細的雨

Maybe then, outside of the window,
it is drizzling, drizzling rain.

Stated in Liu's thesis: "in this prose-like poem, Chien chose a through-composed form to portray the change of the state of mind between the sighing for the passing of youth and cherishing the memory of the passed love".⁴⁴ He took the very last word, 雨 (rain), as his main musical idea, and one finds in this song, different varieties of word painting associated with rain composed throughout the whole piece. In the piano part of the prelude, he uses descending notes for rain drops in the right hand, and D-flat to E-flat in the left hand for imitating the Chinese pronunciation of rain.

⁴⁴ Liu, 121.

Example 3.6. Pronunciation motif, from “A Touch of Zen”, mm. 46-50

46 *dim.*

會正落著 細細的 細細的 雨

Sound of [y214]

pp

pp

As found in the very last word of the song, the pronunciation of 雨 is [y214]. Chien uses the ascending second from D-flat to E-flat to represent the sound of Chinese pronunciation. This sound imitation begins the song in the opening section.

Example 3.7. Pronunciation motif in the opening, from “A Touch of Zen”, mm. 1-8

中速 (3, 4, 6 ♩)

席慕容詩

mp

mp

Descending intervals in the right hand of the piano accompaniment mirror the rain drops. Chien also created other textures depicting storms and drizzling rain.

Example 3.8. Word painting of storm, from “A Touch of Zen”, mm. 22-26

22
 多 年 後 的 一 個 黃

In mm. 20-28, there are descending first inversion 7th chords, one octave apart, the left hand one eighth note behind the right hand, representing the heavy rain and reflecting the sorrowful feeling of seeing the book which is embedded with tears.

Example 3.9. Word painting of drizzling rain, from “A Touch of Zen”, mm. 46-50

46
 會 正 落 著 細 細 的 細 細 的 雨

dim.
p
sub.

Mm. 29-38, and mm. 46-55, are similar to what preceded, with the extension higher and lower registers of the piano, and now at offset quarter notes. The eighths have changed to quarters, the texture is now considerably less dense and very sparse for representing the drizzling rain.

However, the left hand of the piano in both sections is moving in different directions.

Example 3.10. Word painting of falling of the flowers, from “A Touch of Zen”, mm. 32-37

32

開的扉 頁中 落下

dim.

8va

dim.

dim.

In mm. 29-38, the left hand plays descending pentatonic scales as the reflection of the falling of the flowers along with the rain fall. Both hands end on D-flat in mm. 38 with a fermata. In contrast, the ascending pentatonic scales in mm. 46-50 reflect the melancholy feeling of past memories, with a surprising dissonant note of C-natural.

Example 3.11. Pentatonic scales with inharmonic C-natural, from “A Touch of Zen”, mm. 51-55

46

會正落著 細細的 細細的 雨

dim.

8va

p

8va

dim.

non legato

sf

51

This ascending line surprisingly stops at the non-harmonic tone of C-natural in mm. 51, as though the thought has stopped, perhaps indicating that the past memories are no longer important. The ascending major second, surprising in the context, breaks the pattern, and seems to represent the end of the rain.

For the pianist, it is recommended to play slightly faster during mm. 20-28. This will help the singer to successfully negotiate the melody in the higher register with less breath breaks. During the transition between the heavy storm and the light drizzle in mm.28-29, a slight *ritardando* is recommended for the changing color of word painting. At the end of mm. 39, a sufficient amount of time must be taken on the fermata printed above the breath mark, as the vocal line is singing 再無聲息 (also no sound). During the very last section of the piano from mm. 52, it is important to play *sforzando* on the note of C-natural to underscore the surprising dissonance, and also to play *non legato* as indicated in the score.

Example 3.12. Guide to the pianist, from “A Touch of Zen”, mm. 51-55

The image shows a musical score for piano, measures 51-55. The score is written for the right hand (treble clef) and left hand (bass clef). The right hand part features a melodic line with rests between notes, and a fermata above the final note. The left hand part features a bass line with a fermata above the final note. The score includes dynamic markings: *dim.* (diminuendo) in measure 51, *sf* (sforzando) in measure 52, and *non legato* in measure 53. The *sf* and *non legato* markings are circled in red. The score is in a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and a common time signature.

As the rain ends, there are rests in between notes in the right hand. Playing *non legato* while maintaining the tempo will represent the image of rain drops.

For the singer, Chien designed the rests for phrasing and breathing. However, there are some places where no rest has been indicated.

Example 3.13. Suggested breaths, from “A Touch of Zen”, mm. 51-55

It is recommended to breathe after mm. 19, and mm. 23, according to the original poem. In mm. 39, the singer may enter after the down beat and the fermata in the piano part, in order to capture the silence for the word painting of 再無聲息 (also no sound).

Example 3.14. Style of recitativo, from “A Touch of Zen”, mm. 38-41

At mm. 39, in the style of *recitativo*, the singer may have more freedom for the tempo, but still must observe the rhythms, and maintain the momentum of the music much like the spoken language. In mm. 47-50, the singer must remain *a tempo* to the end of the phrase.

Example 3.15. Maintain the tempo to the end, from “A Touch of Zen”, mm. 46-50

46 *dim.*

會正落著 細細的 細細的 雨

p

sub.

Even with the rest in between vocal lines, it is important to maintain the tempo, since the piano part represents the steady rain drops. The singer must also *diminuendo* without sacrificing tone quality.

“From a Borrowed Line”

Meter of Music: 2, 3, 4, 6 quarter-note time

Key Signature: C Major

Tempo: quarter-note = 160

Vocal Range: A3 – G5

Tessitura: E4 – F5

Suitable for: All voice type

Synopsis

I clean the table, hoping life can be in order again. But I have never learned how to say

goodbye to the past, so I am back to this chaotic world. It is too late to save my history.

IPA with Word-for-Word Translation

ì ʂəŋ dàu jǔu bàn ʂəŋ
一 生 倒 有 半 生
in whole life there is half-life

dzɔŋ ʂì dzàɪ tɕiŋ lí ì dʒaŋ dzwɔ dzǐ
總 是 在 清 理 一 張 桌 子
always cleaning one piece (of) table

dzɔŋ ǐ wéi dʒǐ jàu tʂwaŋ míŋ dʒi dzɪŋ
總 以 為 只 要 窗 明 几 淨
always thinking as long as bright and clean

ʂəŋ mìŋ dzjǔu kǎ ǐ tʂɔŋ ɕiŋ kai ʂǐ
生 命 就 可 以 重 新 開 始
life can be restarted

ý ʂì bú dwàn djɔu tɕì nà ɕjɛ bèi hu lɥè lə də ljɔu jén
於 是 不 斷 丟 棄 那 些 被 忽 略 了 的 留 言
then keep on discarding those (have been) forgotten messages

bú dwàn si hwěi nà ɕjɛ ú fǎ wán tʂəŋ də ʂì pjɛn
不 斷 撕 毀 那 些 無 法 完 成 的 詩 篇
keep on tearing those unable completed poems

bú dwàn wèi tàn bú dwàn fa t̚su àn àn də dziŋ hu
不斷 謂嘆 不斷 發出 暗暗的 驚呼
keep on signing keep on making secretly exclamations

uén lái dzwó z̄i də dzi ì tsəŋ dziŋ ʂi nə jàn də gwan hwá tsàn làn
原來 昨日的 記憶 曾經是 那樣的 光華燦爛
so that yesterday memories used to be that brilliant shining

t̚cɥè bèi líŋ lwàn di dwɛi djé dzàɪ t̚sɔɔ ti dzwɛi hòɔ dzwɛi ʂəŋ d̚zi t̚sù
卻被 零亂地 堆疊在 抽屜 最後 最深 之處
but being messily stacked in drawer very back deepest at the place

d̚zwo mjèn də hwe t̚sən iŋ gai dɔɔ néŋ ʂi dziŋ
桌面的 灰塵 應該 都能 拭淨
on the desktop dust should be able to wipe clean

píŋ d̚zəŋ də hwa jě kǎ ĩ swé ʂí hwàn cɪŋ
瓶中的 花 也可以 隨時 換新
in the vase flowers also could at any time be replaced

ʂí dzàɪ j̄ɔɔ ȳ nán ʂǎ də gwò wǎŋ dzjò bǎ ta mən d̚zwan dziŋ d̚z̄
實在 猶豫 難捨的 過往 就把 他們 裝進 紙箱
really hesitated hard to give up the past than them put in the boxes

dàn ʂi jàɔ zú há fəŋ tswən
但是 要如何 封存
but how to archive

nà ʃən tsán dzàɪ wən dzì lí də wǒ njén tɕiŋ də líŋ hwón
那 深藏 在 文字裡的 我 年輕 的 靈魂
that deeply stored in the words of my juvenile soul

tsónɿ láɪ jě méi jǒ ɕyé hwèɪ zú hé ɕjàŋ dzì dzǐ dàu bjé
從來 也沒有 學會 如何 向自己 道別
always never learned how to myself saying goodbye

wǒ dʒǐ nánɿ bǎ í tɕjè dzàɪ hwán gěɪ nà gə hwǎn lwàn də ʃì
我 只能 把 一切 再 還 給 那個 混亂 的 世界
I only can take everything then return to that chaotic world

dzàɪ wéi ỹ də tʃwan tɕjén dzàɪ tíŋ dwən də tʃà nà dzjen
在 微雨的 窗 前 在 停頓 的 剎那間
during the raining in front of the window at the pausing moment

mǒ ɕje mwó hú də dzǎŋ lwò jò hwèɪ dzú dzjè fù yén
某些 模糊的 角落 又會 逐漸 復原
those blurry corner again will be gradually recovered

ý ʃì dʒɔɔ ʃ fù ʃǐ
於是 周而復始
then again and again

ì ʃən dàu jǒ bàn ʃən
一生 倒有 半生
in whole life there is half-life

dzɔŋ ʃɿ dzàɪ	tɕiŋ lí	ì dʒaŋ	dzwɔ dzǐ
總是在	清理	一張	桌子
always	cleaning	one piece (of)	table

tɕiŋ lí	swɔ̃ jǒ	gwò ʃɿ	tswò dʒɿ	í waŋ
清理	所有	過時	錯置	遺忘
cleaning	all of	outdated	misplaced	forgotten

ĩ dʒɿ	dʒɔŋ ý	lái bù dzí	wǎn dzjòɔ də	wɔ̃ də	li ʃɿ
以致	終於	來不及	挽救的	我的	歷史
so that	eventually	too late	to rescue	my	history

Poetic Translation

借句

From a Borrowed Line

一生倒有半生 總是在
 清理一張桌子
 總以為 只要窗明几淨
 生命就可以重新開始

In whole life there is half-life, always.
 I clean the table
 always thinking, as long as it is bright and clean,
 life can be restarted.

於是 不斷丟棄那些被忽略了的留言
 不斷撕毀那些無法完成的詩篇
 不斷謂嘆 不斷發出暗暗的驚呼
 原來昨日的記憶曾經是那樣的光華燦爛
 卻被零亂地堆疊在抽屜最後最深之處

Then, keep on discarding those forgotten messages,
 keep on tearing up those incomplete poems,
 keep on sighing, keep on making secret exclamations,
 so that yesterday's memories, that used to be such brilliant shining,
 but were a mess, deeply in the back of the drawer.

桌面的灰塵應該都能拭淨
 瓶中的花也可以隨時換新
 實在猶豫難捨的過往就把他們裝進紙箱

Dust on the desktop should be able to be cleaned,
 flowers in the vase also could be replaced at any time,
 even the past memories, hesitant or hard to give up, put them in boxes.

但是 要如何封存
那深藏在文字裡的我年輕的靈魂

But how does one archive
the soul of my youth, deeply stored in the words.

* (要怎麼向她解釋
說我們同行的路途最好到此為止?) *

* (how do I explain to her⁴⁵,
our path together is better finished right here?) *

從來也沒有學會如何向自己道別
我只能把一切再還給那個混亂的世界
在微雨的窗前 在停頓的剎那間
某些模糊的角落又會逐漸復原

I never learned how to say goodbye to myself³⁸,
I can only take everything then give it back to that chaotic world.
In front of the raining window, at the pausing moment,
those blurry corners again will be gradually recovered.

於是 周而復始 一生倒有半生
總是在清理一張桌子
清理所有過時 錯置 遺忘
以致終於來不及挽救的我的歷史

Then, again and again, in whole life there is half-life.
Always cleaning the table,
cleaning all of the outdated, misplaced, forgotten
history of mine, that is already too late to rescue.

* : 音樂中省略的段落

*: omitted in the music

Hsi composed this poem by borrowing a line from one poem by In-Di⁴⁶: 『一生倒有半生，總是在清理一張桌子。』 (Half of the whole life, always cleaning one table). With rhetorical parallelism, Hsi repeated this line again in the ending paragraph. Chien also took this approach and repeated the same music in his ending section.

⁴⁵ The author suggests that “her” and “myself” refer to the past.

⁴⁶ Ching-Hwa Ko (b. 1937), best known by his pseudonym In-Di, is an award winning writer and poet in Taiwan. He is also the founder and publisher of Elite Books LLC.

Example 3.16. Musical parallelism 1, from “From a Borrowed Line”, mm. 7-17

7 *fp* 生 倒 有 半 生

13 *fp* 總 是 在 清 理 一 張 桌 子

Example 3.17. Musical parallelism 2, from “From a Borrowed Line”, mm. 80-97

80 *rit.* 於 是 週 而 復 始 *a tempo fp* *cresc.* *molto*

84 *fp* 生 倒 有 半 生 總 是 在 清 理 一 張 *mf poco stretto*

90 *(V) cresc.* 桌 子 清 理 所 有 過 時 錯 置 遺 忘 以 致 終 *(V) cresc.*

Another parallelism can be found in the second paragraph, on the lines of 不斷丟棄 (keep on discarding), 不斷撕毀 (keep on tearing), 不斷謂嘆 (keep on sighing), 不斷發出 (keep on making).

Example 3.18. Musical and rhetorical parallelism, from “From a Borrowed Line”, mm.28-37

The image displays two systems of a musical score. The first system, starting at measure 28, features a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in bass clef. The lyrics are: 被 忽 略 了 的 留 言 (The message that was overlooked), 不 斷 撕 毀 那 些 無 法 完 成 (Keep tearing those that cannot be completed). A red box highlights the vocal melody for '不斷撕毀' (Keep tearing), which consists of a repeating eighth-note pattern: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and a more complex eighth-note pattern in the right hand.

The second system, starting at measure 33, continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: 的 詩 篇 (The poem), 不 斷 喟 嘆 (Keep sighing), 不 斷 發 出 暗 暗 的 驚 呼 (Keep emitting dark screams). Two red boxes highlight the vocal melodies for '不斷喟嘆' and '不斷發出', both featuring the same repeating eighth-note pattern: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The piano accompaniment continues with similar rhythmic patterns.

Chien employs repeating notes of E for reflecting these repeating movements of discarding, tearing, sighing, and making. These repeating patterns are also found in an expanded context in the piano part through the entire song.

Example 3.19. Expanded repeating patterns, from “From a Borrowed Line”, mm.1-17

席慕蓉 詩

♩ = ca 160 (2, 3, 4, 6 ♩) *stacc.*

mf stacc.

7 *fp*

生 倒 有 半 生

13 *fp*

總 是 在 清 理 一 張 桌 子

From the poem, Chien took two words for his compositional ideas: chaotic, and order. As stated in Liu's these, "by cleaning the table, the speaker wishes to bring back the order of one's life; unfortunately, the speaker cannot bid farewell to the past self, and life returns to chaos".⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Liu, 133.

Example 3.20. Ascending and descending C major scales, from “From a Borrowed Line”, mm1-12

席慕容 詩

$\bullet = \text{ca } 160$ (2, 3, 4, 6 \bullet) 8^{va}

mf stacc.

fp

8^{va}

C major ascending scale **C major descending scale**

生 倒 有 半 生

In the opening two measures of the piece, Chien uses an ascending C major scale of quarter notes, set in a pointillist manner, each note being displaced from the previous note by at least an octave or more, either above or below. Both order and chaos exist in this figure. Abrupt, repeated eighth note minor second chords, doubled at the octave, follow on beats three and four in measure 3, perhaps reflecting the interrupted feeling of conflicts between order and chaos. A C major descending scale returns in measures 4-6 with similar characteristics as measures 1-2, followed again by the minor second chords. These elements are found throughout the entire song.

Example 3.21. C major scales at the ending, from “From a Borrowed Line”, mm. 98-103

98 *allargando cresc.* *f* *rit.*

於來不及挽救的我的歷史

mf *stacc. cresc.* *rit. cresc.* *f* *a tempo*

Another significant design of this song is the insert of recitative style in the middle section of the music.

Example 3.22. Style of recitativo, from “From a Borrowed Line”, mm.76-79

73 *recit.* (快板) *mp*

從來也沒有學會如何向自己道別

dim. *mp*

76

我只能把一切再還給那個混亂的世界在微雨的窗前

In contrast to earlier vocal material occupied with quarter notes and eighth notes, in this recitative portion, more eighths and sixteenths are employed. Liu suggests in her theses, “it creates unstable feelings of absurdity and disharmony”.⁴⁸ According to Chien:⁴⁹

Because of practices and rehearsals for this concert, it was quite often to see Muren Hsi. There was one time she asked me: “(From a Borrowed Line) is quite a long poem, and the texts are trivial nags. Before hearing the song, I was wondering why you picked this one, and how it is going to become a song. Now I have heard, I think it is indeed different from all other ordinary songs.”

I said: “For this concert, I picked six poems.....it seems to me they could become a suite, which needed some varieties in styles, to be arranged together in a groups.....’From a Borrowed Line’ is very conversational, just like the poem itself, keep on nagging. Later, I add the singing style of recitative from western music, with other transitions, it concludes in a dramatic ending.”⁵⁰

In addition, Chien omitted the original lines in the parentheses. It is perhaps that the composer and the poet have different point of view on the interpretation. In his biography:⁵¹

There are two lines in ‘From a Borrowed Line’ that Muren Hsi put in the parentheses: “How to explain to her saying our accompanying route is better ended right here?” I had already omitted them at the first concert in 2003. Before the second concert, I learned that these two lines are the most important lines that Hsi would like to express. However, it is impossible to put them back to the song. Here, my solemnly apologies to Muren Hsi.⁵²

⁴⁸ Liu, 130.

⁴⁹ Wei-Shu Tsai, trans., 2018.

⁵⁰ Chien and Lai, 130-131.

⁵¹ Wei-Shu Tsai, trans., 2018.

⁵² Chien and Lai, 131.

For the pianist, although it is not printed on the notes, it is printed at the beginning of the music indicating *staccato*, and at mm. 50 and mm. 100. It is also recommended to keep the beats steady to act as the sign of order.

For the singer, Chien has suggested the phrasing with the rests, however, there are several phrases where no rests exist. It is recommended that the singer breath before the third beat of measure 34, before measure 38, before beat three of 61, before 66, 69, optional breath after the slurred quarter-notes of 75, before 81, optional breath only after beat four of measure 84, and before 101.

“Temptation”

Meter of Music: 2, 3, 4, 5 quarter-note time

Key Signature: F-sharp minor

Tempo: Adagietto

Musical Form: ABA’

Vocal Range: C4 – F5

Tessitura: F4 – F5

Suitable for: All voice type

Synopsis

Finally, I understand what temptation is on this leaves falling autumn day. This forever beautiful stance, appearing at my indefensible moment, which is the fate that is unacceptable yet not refusable. Regardless which choice I made, all makes me weep with deep regret on that leaves falling day.

IPA with Word-for-Word Translation

dzɔŋ y̌ dzɿ dàʊ lə
終於 知道了
finally understood

dzàɪ dzɛ̌ yè dzjaŋ lwò dzìŋ də tɕjɔ zì
在 這 葉將 落盡 的 秋日
on this leaves will be falling autumn day

dzɔŋ y̌ dzɿ dàʊ
終於 知道
finally understand

ʃé mɔ dzjàʊ dzwò jòʊ hwò
什麼 叫 做 誘惑
what is called temptation

ɤŋ ɤěn ǐ dzɤé mǐɪ də dzi tàɪ
永遠 以 絕 美 的 姿態
always having most beautiful stance

tʂu cʂèn dzàɪ wǒ dzwɛɪ méɪ nɛŋ tí fán də ʃí kə də
出現 在 我 最 沒 能 提防的 時刻的
appearing at my least able defensive moment

ʃì nà bù nɛŋ dzɤje ʃòʊ
是 那 不能 接 受
is that not be able to accept

jě	bù nán	dzÿ dzu'é də	mìn òn
也	不能	拒絕的	命運
and	not be able	to refuse	fate

é	ú lwàn	ʂì	nǎ ì dǒŋ	cɥěŋ dzé
而	無論	是	哪一種	選擇
and	regardless	being	which kind of	choices

dɔɔ hwɛɪ	ʂǐ wǒ	ljóɔ lèi
都會	使我	流淚
all	makes me	tearing

ʂǐ wǒ	dzàɪ	jè	dzɔŋ y	lwò dzìŋ də	nà	í zì
使我	在	葉	終於	落盡的	那	一日
makes me	on	leaves	eventually	falling	that	one day

ʂən ʂən di	hòɔ hwɛɪ
深深地	後悔
deeply	regret

Poetic Translation

誘惑

Temptation

終於知道了
 在這葉將落盡的秋日
 終於知道 什麼叫做
 誘惑

Finally, I learned
 on this autumn day when the leaves will finish falling.
 Finally, I understand what is called
 temptation.

永遠以絕美的姿態
出現在我最沒能提防的
時刻的
是那不能接受 也
不能拒絕的命運

Forever, having the most beautiful look,
appearing at my least defensible
moment,
is the fate that I cannot accept,
nor am able to refuse.

而無論是哪一種選擇
都會使我流淚
使我 在葉終於落盡的那一日
深深地後悔

And regardless what kind of choice,
all makes me weep,
makes me on that leaves falling day
deeply regret.

“In this poem, the speaker describes temptation as the conflicts between the ideal and the reality of life; whatever the choices one has made, you will eventually have feelings of regret”⁵³, Liu states in her theses. With this helpless feeling, Chien employs minor keys throughout the whole piece. Moreover, as in the poem, there are three stanzas of the texts, and Chien clearly composed a ternary form in the key signature order of F-sharp minor, G-sharp minor, then back to F-sharp minor.

Example 3.23. Key modulations, from “Temptation”, mm. 9-13, 33-36

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Temptation". It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The score is divided into two systems. The first system (measures 9-13) is in F-sharp minor, indicated by a red box and the label "F-sharp minor". The second system (measures 33-36) is in G-sharp minor, indicated by a red box and the label "G-sharp minor". A red arrow points from the first system to the second, showing the modulation. The lyrics are: 秋 日 終 於 知 道 什 麼 叫 做 誘 惑. The score includes a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#), and a common time signature.

⁵³ Liu, 141.

To begin the prelude, Chien uses four quarter note F-sharp minor triad chords to secure the tonal center, with a syncopated descending melody played in the left hand.

Example 3.24. Syncopated piano melody, from “Temptation”, mm. 1-4

席慕蓉 詩

稍慢 (2, 3, 4, 5 ♩)

Against the quarter note chords steadily playing in the right hand, this syncopated piano melody with irregular rhythms indicates the struggle of pulling between acceptance and resistance of temptations. The same motif returns after the vocal line in measure six.

Example 3.25. Struggle motif, then key modulation, from “Temptation”, mm. 5-13

The image displays a musical score for the piece "Temptation" from measures 5 to 13. The score is written for voice and piano. The key signature is G major (one sharp). The tempo is marked *mp*. The vocal line begins in measure 5 with the lyrics "終於知道了" (Finally, I know) and continues with "在這葉將落盡的" (In this leaf that will fall). The piano accompaniment features a "struggle" motif, which is a descending eighth-note scale. This motif is highlighted with a red circle in measure 6 and again in measure 10. In measure 9, the vocal line introduces the second line of the poem: "秋日終於知道" (Autumn, finally I know) and "什麼叫做誘惑" (What is called temptation). A red box highlights the piano accompaniment in measures 12 and 13, where a key change to G-sharp minor is indicated by the text "Key change to G-sharp minor". The piano accompaniment in measure 12 features a major seventh chord built on the sixth scale degree, VI⁷⁺, which resolves into the second inversion of a half-diminished seventh chord as ii^{ø7} in measure 13.

The vocal line introduces the first line of the poem in measure five. As the “struggle” motif reappears again in measure six and ends in measure ten, the second line of the poem enters, paralleling of the same texts and vocal melody of measure five. Later in measure twelve, the piano plays a major seventh chord built on the sixth scale degree, VI⁷⁺ suggesting the acceptance of temptation, resolving into the second inversion of a half-diminished seventh chord as ii^{ø7}, with the common notes of G-sharp and F-sharp modulating into the second section in G-sharp minor in measure 14.

Example 3.26. Descending scale degrees, from “Temptation”, mm. 14-25

The image shows a musical score for Example 3.26, consisting of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 14 to 19, and the second system covers measures 20 to 25. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 4/4. The piano part features a descending scale of degrees 5, 4, 3, 2, 5, 4 in measures 14-19, and 3, 2, 5, 4, 3 in measures 20-25. The vocal line includes the lyrics: (天使的臉孔) (Face of angel) 永遠以絕美的姿態出現在.

In the B section, Chien added a short performance guide line in measure 14 with the parentheses, 『天使的臉孔』 (face of angel), corresponding with the text 永遠以絕美的姿態 (Forever, having the most beautiful look). Chien changes the register for the piano and the texture become more transparent with large melodic leaps in both hands perhaps suggesting the beauty of temptation. At the same time, Chien repeats the pattern of descending scale degree 5 to scale degree 2 three times between measures 14-25 in both hands, separated by an octave. This, as catalogized by Liu in her dissertation in chapter four, produces a feeling of stagnation within the repeating patterns.⁵⁴ With the syncopated vocal line indicating struggling,

⁵⁴ Liu, 281.

this suggests that the speaker is immersing in the beauty of temptation, but is still struggling in one's conscience. Chien then employs eighth notes patterns, increasing the momentum of the music.

Example 3.27. Descending D-Dorian scale, from "Temptation", mm. 29-36

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the piece "Temptation". The first system, starting at measure 29, features a vocal line with the lyrics "那 不 能 接 受 也 不 能" and a piano accompaniment. The piano part consists of a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and block chords in the left hand. The second system, starting at measure 33, has the lyrics "拒 絕 的 命 運". The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pattern. A red box highlights a specific passage in the bass line from measure 34 to 36, which is a descending D-Dorian scale: E3, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F#3, E3. The word "dim." is written above the notes in measure 35.

At the transition between section B and A' in measure 34 to 36, Chien uses an abrupt D-Dorian descending bass line returning the tonal center back to F-sharp minor. This scale begins with E3, the sixth scale degree in G-sharp minor, down a descending scale, with D-natural and A-natural, preparing the return to the key of F-sharp minor. The scale ends at D-natural serving as a dominant functioning chord for F-sharp minor in measure 36. This abrupt D-Dorian descending scale may suggest that the speaker's conscience is coming back, and the feelings of regret are gradually emerging from inside. After the transition, the tonal center returns to F-sharp minor in

the third section at measure 37, with the “struggle motif” reappearing in the piano part, although slightly altered.

Example 3.28. Altered struggle motif, from “Temptation”, mm. 37-44

After the climax in measures 47 and 48, this song nears the end.

Example 3.29. Inharmonic sonority, from “Temptation”, mm. 50-54

While the piano plays a sustained pedal on the sixth scale degree at measure 51, the voice ends on a sustained G-sharp, or second scale degree, recalling the sonority of the half-diminished seventh chord before section B. Finally, in the final measure, the right hand of the piano plays an F-sharp triad chord, dissonant to *i* and *ii*⁰⁷ enhancing the feeling of regret, as the texts reads 深深的後悔 (deeply regret).

For the pianist, it is important to project the struggling motif in the left hand of the piano. Similarly, during the first half of the B section in measure 14 to 25, the pianist must project the pattern of four measures with the repeating descending scale degrees. At the end of section B in measures 34 to 36, the performers must not slow down but maintain the momentum as the singer holds the note of C-sharp. Finally, in the climax of measure 47 and 48, the pianist must play *colla voce* as the singer may need additional time for emphasizing the consonants of 那一日 (that day).

For the Singer, there are a few spots that the composer wrote a rest or a breath mark indicating phrasings, e.g. breath mark in measure 26, and rests in measure 28, 44, and 47. Therefore, it is important to refer back to the original poem for phrasing identification. The only spot that one may break the phrase is in measure 52, between 深深地 (deeply), and 後悔 (regret). This would only pertain to young singers.

Example 3.30. Suggested breath, from “Temptation”, mm. 50-53

Singer must hold the fermatas in order for the sonority to be clearly heard, but this phrasing

allows young singers have more time for preparing the emotion and enunciation for the final word of “regret”.

“Artiste”

Meter of Music: 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 quarter-note time

Key Signature: F mode

Tempo: Andante moderato

Musical Form: Through-composed

Vocal Range: C4 – G5

Tessitura: F4 – F5

Suitable for: All voice type

Synopsis

Please do not believe my appearances and my emotions with my performance.

Underneath the face full of makeup, I have the heart of an artiste. Dear friends, I am an artiste in this present life, living in the story of other people, weeping with my own tears.

IPA with Word-for-Word Translation

tɕiŋ	bú jào	ɕjaŋ ɕiŋ	wǒ de	měi lì
請	不要	相信	我的	美麗
please	do not	believe in	my	beauty

jě	bú jào	ɕjaŋ ɕiŋ	wǒ de	ài qíng
也	不要	相信	我的	愛情
also	do not	believe	my	love

dzàɪ tú mǎn lə jóu tsǎi də mjèn zón dʒi ɕjà
在 塗滿了 油彩的 面容 之下
be fully covered with oil paint face under

wǒ jǒu də ʂì kə ɕì dʒi də ɕiŋ
我 有的 是 顆 戲子的 心
I having am an artiste heart

swǒ ǐ tɕiŋ tɕje wàn bú jàu
所以 請 千萬 不要
and so please ever never

bú jàu bǎ wǒ də bei ai daŋ dʒən
不要 把 我的 悲哀 當真
never take my sorrow seriously

jě bú jàu swéɪ dʒə wǒ də bjǎu jěŋ ɕiŋ swèɪ
也 不要 隨著 我的 表演 心碎
also never along my performance break hearts

tɕiŋ ài də pón jǒ dʒiŋ ʂəŋ dʒiŋ ʂì wǒ dʒi ʂì gə ɕi dʒi
親愛的 朋友 今生 今世 我只是 個 戲子
dear friend in this present life I only am an artiste

uǒŋ uěŋ dzàɪ bjé zán də gù ʂì lí
永遠 在 別人的 故事 裏
forever be of others the stories in

ljóu dṣə	dṣì dṣí dṣə	lèi
流著	自己的	淚
weeping	my own	tears

Poetic Translation

戲子

Artiste

請不要相信我的美麗
 也不要相信我的愛情
 在塗滿了油彩的面容之下
 我有的是顆戲子的心
 所以 請千萬不要
 不要把我的悲哀當真
 也不要隨著我的表演心碎
 親愛的朋友 今生今世我只是個戲子
 永遠在別人的故事裏
 流著自己的淚

Please do not believe in my beauty.
 Also do not believe my love.
 Under the face fully covered with oil paint,
 I have an artiste heart
 And so, please never ever,
 never take my sorrow seriously.
 Also do not break your hearts with my performance.
 Dear friend, in this present life I only am an artiste,
 forever in the stories of others,
 weeping my own tears

As an actor on the stage, the speaker discloses that he is portraying a character, and expressing the emotions of another character. However, underneath the makeup/mask of the character, the speaker is truly weeping his or her own tears. In order to portray the ideas of the performing stage and acting artiste, Chien employs the musical and performing elements from Chinese opera⁵⁵. From the beginning of the song, the piano part is imitating Chinese percussion patterns found in Chinese opera, and the voice imitates the singing of Chinese opera.

⁵⁵ Traditional Chinese opera is a popular genre of drama and musical theater in Chinese societies. Famous forms including Peking opera, Cantonese opera, and Taiwanese opera.

Example 3.31. Sound imitations of Chinese opera, from “Artiste”, mm. 1-4

Andante moderato (2, 3, 4, 5, 6 ♩) 席慕容 詩

mf

請 不要相 信 我 的美 麗

percussive sound

Chinese opera singing

From Liu’s thesis, “the half step dissonance, including diatonic semitone and chromatic semitones, these are commonly heard in eastern music for imitating the percussive sounds”.⁵⁶

Meanwhile, for imitating the singing of Chinese opera, one can find grace notes in the beginning and the end of the vocal lines. Chien also uses the style of 拖腔⁵⁷ (protraction singing) in this song.

Example 3.32. Protraction singing, from “Artiste”, mm5-7

5

也 不要相 信 我 的 愛 情

在 在 在 在 在 在

f rit. accel.

f rit. accel.

In order to create this singing style, the singer must begin with *ritardando* for the repeated syllable, then gradually *accelerando* to a faster tempo. It is very similar to the baroque trillo⁵⁸.

⁵⁶ Liu, 150.

⁵⁷ 拖腔 (protraction singing): In traditional Chinese opera, it is employs by protracting a word for expressing more emotion. It appears in variety of lengths, often be heard in a line, or at the end of a line. Similar to inserted ornaments in a line, or cadenza at the end of a line.

⁵⁸ As Giulio Caccini (1551-1681), described in the preface of his *Le nuove musiche*, ‘trillo’ is repeating a note from slow to fast; ‘gruppo’ is a rapid alternation between two neighboring notes, commonly known today as “trill” or

Not only borrowing musical aspects from Chinese opera, Chien also includes his own stage directions for this song.

Example 3.33. Stage directions, from “Artiste”, mm. 15-17

In the measure of 16, 17, and 18, there is an asterisk marked on top of each measure. With the description at the bottom of the page on the sheet music, Chien indicates “Forcefully throw a handful of chopsticks to the ground”. The sound of chopsticks dropping on the floor imitates the sonority of 梆子⁵⁹ (wooden block). This surprising and crisp sound, reinforces the tone of denial of the speaker on the first three lines of second stanza, “please never ever, take my sorrow seriously, also don’t break your hearts with my performance”. The flow of the music was even and gentle before this section. But now, with this dramatic stage direction and surprising sonority, it is suggested that the speaker is conflicted with feelings of helplessness against the life as an artiste.

Performers will notice the absence of a key signature for this song. Originally composed for soprano, Chien chose the key of F for matching the tessitura of F4 to F5, for presenting the

“shake”.

⁵⁹ A wooden block, small, rectangular, high-pitched wood block used in Chinese folk music and opera. <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/梆子>

best vocal range of a soprano voice. However, for imitating the sound of Chinese percussion instruments, Chien would then have to enter a massive amount of accidentals in the music. In order to make the music clearer for musicians to read, the author supposes that Chien chose not to use any key signatures. Therefore, with the tonal center of F, the author is suggesting musicians consider this song to be in F mode.

For the pianist and the singer, both must negotiate the tempo change in the sections of protraction singing in measure 7 to 8, and then 25 to 29.

Example 3.34. Suggested phrasing, from “Artiste”, mm. 5-10

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system covers measures 5 to 8. The vocal line begins with the lyrics '也不要相信我的爱情' followed by a series of '在' characters. The piano accompaniment features a complex rhythmic pattern with many accidentals. Handwritten red annotations include slurs and 'rit. accel.' markings. The second system covers measures 8 to 10. The vocal line continues with '在在在在在在 在 在 在'. The piano accompaniment features a complex rhythmic pattern with many accidentals. A 'Tempo I' marking is present above measure 8, and dynamic markings 'mf' and 'mp' are also visible.

The author suggests that in measure 7 to 8, forming the first four notes in the slower tempo, then faster tempo for the following four notes, followed by a slight *ritardando* to the end of measure 8 for preparing the *Tempo Primo* in measure 9. Similarly, in measure 25 to 29, the

author suggests treating the eighth notes in the groups of four notes. The singer may be able to sing with more clarity without miscounting the notes. It also may be easier for the pianist to play *colla voce* during these patterns. At the end of measure 29, a slight *ritardando* is recommended for preparing the *Tempo Primo* in measure 30.

Breath marks are only indicated before measure 25; another optional place is before the fourth beat in measure 36. The singer may breathe before measure 5, 7, 9, 13, 14, 15, 21, 22, 23, 24, 30, 34, 35.

“A Blossoming Tree”

Meter of Music: 3, 4, 5, 6 quarter-note time

Key Signature: F major

Tempo: Moderato

Musical Form: Through-composed

Vocal Range: C4 – G5

Tessitura: F4 – F5

Suitable for: All voice type

Synopsis

In order to encounter you, I have already prayed to Buddha for five hundred years. Thus, Buddha transformed me into a tree, growing by the roadside where you pass by. Underneath the sun, I discreetly blossomed all over with flowers, which are my preexistence yearnings. However, you are passing on without notice. Ah, my friend, those petals fallen behind your back are my broken heart.

IPA with Word-for-Word Translation

zú há zàŋ nǐ ỵ dzjèn wǒ
如何 讓 你 遇見 我
how to make you encounter me

dzàɪ wǒ dzwèɪ měi lì də ʃí kə
在 我 最 美麗的 時刻
at my most beautiful moment

wèi dzə wǒ ǐ dzàɪ fwó tɕjén tɕjɔʊ lə wú bǎi njén
為這 我 已在 佛 前 求了 五百 年
for this I have already in front of Buddha have prayed for five hundred years

tɕjɔʊ ta zàŋ wǒ mən dzjé í dwàn tʃán yén
求 祂 讓 我們 結 一段 塵 緣
prayed to him letting us to connect one bond of this world

fwó ỵ ʃí bǎ wǒ hwà dzwò ì kə ʃù
佛 於是 把我 化作 一棵 樹
buddha thus has me transformed into a tree

dzǎŋ dzàɪ nǐ bì dzɪŋ də lù páŋ
長 在 你 必經的 路旁
growing on you required to pass through roadside

ján gwan cjà ʃən dzɔŋ də kai mǎn lə hwa
陽光 下 慎重 地 開滿了 花
under the sunlight discreetly blossom all over flowers

dwǒ dwǒ dɔʊ ʂì wǒ tɕjé ʂì də pàn wàn

朵 朵 都 是 我 前 世 的 盼 望

the blossomings all are my preexistence yearnings

daŋ nǐ dzɔʊ dzìŋ tɕiŋ nǐ cì tiŋ

當 你 走 近 請 你 細 聽

when you approaching please you listen carefully

nà qzàn dǔʊ də jè ʂì wǒ dǎŋ dài də zè tɕiŋ

那 顫 抖 的 葉 是 我 等 待 的 熱 情

those trembling leaves are my awaiting passion

ɣ da nǐ dzɔŋ y ú ʂì di dzɔʊ gwò

而 當 你 終 於 無 視 地 走 過

but when you eventually regardless passing by

dzàɪ nǐ ʂən hòʊ lwò lə í di də

在 你 身 後 落 了 一 地 的

behind your back fallen all over the ground

pəŋ jɔʊ a nà bú ʂì hwa ban

朋 友 啊 那 不 是 花 瓣

friend Ah! those are not petals

ʂì wǒ djaʊ líŋ də cɪŋ

是 我 凋 零 的 心

is my withered heart

Poetic Translation

一棵開花的樹

A Blossoming Tree

如何讓你遇見我
在我最美麗的時刻 為這
我已在佛前 求了五百年
求祂讓我們結一段塵緣

How to make you encounter me
at my most beautiful moment? For this,
I have already prayed in front of Buddha for five hundred years,
praying to Him to let us make a bond in this world.

佛於是把我化作一棵樹
長在你必經的路旁
陽光下慎重地開滿了花
朵朵都是我前世的盼望

Buddha thus, has transformed me into a tree,
growing on the roadside where you are required to pass through,
under the sunlight, I discreetly blossom all over with flowers,
all the blossoms are my preexistence yearnings.

當你走近 請你細聽
那顫抖的葉是我等待的熱情
而當你終於無視地走過
在你身後落了一地的
朋友啊 那不是花瓣
是我凋零的心

When you approach, please listen carefully.
Those trembling leaves are my awaiting passion.
But when you eventually, pass by without seeing,
behind your back, fallen all over the ground,
Ah, friend, those are not petals,
but my broken heart.

This beautiful poem is the most famous icon of Muren Hsi. It has been composed into songs by various composers and artists.⁶⁰ There are three stanzas in this poem, and Liu suggests in her thesis that three images could portray these three stanzas:⁶¹

The first image is the Maiden's Prayer, the devoted heart of praying to Buddha; the second image is the Maiden Transformed into Tree, with all the yearnings blossoming underneath the sun; the third is the Falling of the Broken Heart. Muren Hsi transforms the abstract image of courtship into an image of multiple-dimensions with feeling, aural,

⁶⁰ Mu-De Hsi, "Thoughts About Nan-Chang Chien's Songs", *Nan-Chang Chien Music Exhibition Program Notes*, March 13, 2005.

⁶¹ WeiShu Tsai, trans., 2018.

and vision sensations.⁶²

Chien also composes this song into three sections, with the first two sections describing the prayer and yearning for love. The theme of love is presented at the beginning of the piano introduction.

Example 3.35. Love theme motif, from “A Blossoming Tree”, mm. 1-7

中速 (3, 4, 5, 6 ♩)

mp

4 *mp*

Love Theme

如何 讓你 遇見 我 在我最美麗的*)

This motif is found throughout the whole piece, with the imitation in measure 8-10, shortened form from the end of measure 11 through 12, altered form in measure 19-20, then finally, as a reprise with an altered ending from measure 40 to the end.

Example 3.36. Altered love theme motif, from “A Blossoming Tree”, mm. 40-43

40 **Tempo I** *mp (rall.)* *rit.* *a tempo*

是我 凋零的心

mp *(rall.)* *rit.* *a tempo* *rall.*

⁶² Liu, 136.

With the harmonic language set in tonality, Chien employs F minor in the middle section from measure 21-39, followed by the reprise and return to the original key of F major, with the love theme. Chien also chooses the altered ascending arpeggio, plus the dissonance of prolonged G in the bass against F major chord, in order to bring the feeling of desolated loneliness to the audience. (See example 3.6.2)

In the middle section, Chien illustrates the image of the tree and the falling of the petals with the tremolo of G and A-flat.

Example 3.37. Word painting of trembling leaves 1 , from “A Blossoming Tree”, mm. 20-24

20 *mp*

前世的盼望 當你走近 請你細聽

With the tone cluster of F, C, D, G, and A-flat, this odd and sudden sonority, Liu suggests, “it implies the tragic destiny at the end of the story”.⁶³ In measure 23, the same sonority is heard an octave higher, perhaps reflecting the urge of the speaker to be heard by making the trembling leaves, but also illustrating the line of text 當你走近(When you approach), when the lover is walking closely. Later in measure 25-31, with the lover nearing, the voice and piano gradually modulate into their higher registers.

⁶³ Liu, 138.

Example 3.38. Expanding into further registers, from “A Blossoming Tree”, mm. 25-28

25

那 顫 抖 的 葉 是 我 等 待 的 熱 情 而

mp

The piano plays eighth note ascending octaves in the left hand. The author suggests that the speaker is getting anxious and the heart rate of the speaker is quickening. Later, both the voice and the piano parts continue expanding their registers into the climax at measure 31-34.

Example 3.39. Hemiola rhythm of triplets against duples, from “A Blossoming Tree”, mm. 29-34

29

當 你 終 於 無 視 地 走 過 在 你

mf

32

身 後 落 了 一 地 的

mf

At measure 28, the descending arpeggio minor chords portray the falling of the petals, perhaps depicting the speaker trying to get the attention of the lover. However, after the lover passes by without seeing, the piano part plays descending F minor scales in the right hand, against ascending scales in the left hand. In addition, Chien also employs the vertical hemiola rhythm of triplets in the right hand against duples in the left hand, in order to create this eager and dramatic scene. With the extreme range of C1 to Db7 in the piano part, and the dissonance created by polyrhythms and retrograde scales in both hand, the sonority creates the feeling of the breaking heart. Followed by the return of the motif of trembling leaves, the piano cuts off the unfinished voice line.

Example 3.40. Word painting of trembling leaves 2, from “A Blossoming Tree”, mm. 35-39

The musical score for Example 3.40, measures 35-39, is presented in two systems. The top system shows the vocal line in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (F minor). The lyrics are written below the notes: '朋友啊' (Friend, oh) and '那不是花瓣' (That's not a petal). The bottom system shows the piano accompaniment in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The right hand plays descending arpeggios, and the left hand plays ascending scales. Dynamic markings include 'dim.' (diminuendo) and 'p.' (piano).

This time, the motif of trembling leaves descends three times before the reprise section. It is portraying the leaving of the lover, at the same time, implying the emotion of despairing hopelessness.

For the pianist, it is important to project the love theme motif. Moreover, it is recommended to play a slight *ritardando* during the lines of 五百年 (five hundred years), 結一段塵緣 (make a bond in this world), and 前世的盼望 (my preexistence yearnings). These

lines are the endings of the love theme, it is essential to allow time to the singers for enunciating those words. During the sections of trembling leaves, the voice part is in *recitativo* style. The pianist has some liberty for when they enter, depending upon the acoustics of the performance venue. In measure 25-34, it will be helpful to the singer if the pianist plays with *con agitazione*, so the singer successfully sustains the lines without taking unnecessary breaths.

For the singer, Chien marks *mp* all the way through the music, except the *mf* in measure 31-34. The author suggests that singers endeavor to adhere to these dynamic levels. The singer must remember in these measures the speaker is in despair, and crying out with his or her falling petals and not his or her voice. Chien raises a challenge however by setting the melodic line in the top range of the voice, and with sustained bright vowels. The singer must endeavor to not sing *forte* during this climax section, in order to prevent the sounding of shouting out loud, and depict only the sound of the blossoms.

In addition, the breathing suggestions of this song are, before measure 6, before the third of m. 8, before the fifth beat of m. 9, before m. 11, optional breath before m. 12, before m. 13, before the third beat of m. 15, before m. 17, before m. 19, optional breath before m. 20, before m. 25, before the third beat of m. 26, before the pickup of m. 29, before m. 31, before m. 33, before m. 42.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Poem, a written work which has strong inclusiveness, it is self-contained with rhythms and rhymes; however, when poems are composed into songs, it is going to be traveling further, be delivered deeper...

Muren Hsi

Throughout history, music and literature have been integrated in various forms and genres, such as novels to operas, or poems to art songs. Especially for the latter, this integration of art forms is the most refined and concentrated representation. In Chinese cultures and sub-cultures, this representation of fine arts can be traced back 3000 years. The study of Chinese cultures and arts is gradually becoming popular in the 21st century. With the growth of economy in China, plus their population of 1.4 billion people (around 19% of the world's population)⁶⁴, it is becoming popular to learn the Chinese language in US society.

This study introduces 6 songs composed by Nan-Chang Chien whose contemporary art songs and operas are as popular and relevant in Taiwan as the works of Jake Heggie are in the US. With the composition styles of Chien, these songs are relatively accessible to non-Chinese speakers to learn and to study. First, Chien composes the Chinese language intonations into the voice lines. Singers can study the songs without worrying about the misunderstanding from mispronouncing the tones. Second, the ranges and the tessituras are suitable for any college vocal students. These songs are originally composed for high voices, but with the transposition

⁶⁴ World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, June 21, 2017.
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/publications/world-population-prospects-the-2017-revision.html>

down a minor third or lower, medium and low voice singers have no worries singing over the second passagio. Furthermore, this study provides complete word-for-word translations with IPA transcriptions, as well as the poetic translations, providing singers with a basic understanding of the language flow and grammar in the Chinese language. The explanations of the compositional choices as well as performance suggestions for the singer and pianist, provide the understanding of the meanings and thoughts behind the poems. Finally, this study may provide the foundation and model for further exploration and research into Chinese art song literature by scholars in the west.

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