MODERN CHINESE PIANO COMPOSITION AND ITS ROLE IN WESTERN CLASSICAL MUSIC: A STUDY OF HUANG AN-LUN’S PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 IN C MINOR, OP. 57

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Dissertation Prepared for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

December 2006

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China’s role in Western music is ever-expanding. Echoing the growth of classical music in China is the importance of Chinese musicians in the global music world. However, it is easy to forget that Western classical music is a foreign import to China, one that has been resisted for most of its history.

The intent of this study is to evaluate the role of Chinese music in the Western classical world. This includes Western education, Western repertoire, and also a historical exploration into the mutual influence of the two styles. One Chinese composition in particular, Huang An-lun’s Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 57, is selected to analyze the Western and Chinese elements present in the work. This analysis will shed light on the relationship of the two styles and how they amalgamate in modern Chinese music.

Although Western classical music today has a strong foothold in China, Chinese contributions to piano literature are largely unknown to the West. China possesses one of the richest musical histories in the world, one which until the twentieth century has largely remained unaffected by Western elements. Its musical heritage extends over thousands of years, deeply rooted in tradition and nationalism. Over the last century, Chinese composition began to incorporate Western musical ideas while still holding on to
its own heritage and traditions. This synthesis of Western and Chinese musical elements created a new compositional sound founded on Chinese roots.

Huang An-lun, one of China’s most prominent living composers, embodies this style in his compositions. Chinese composition is no longer something that is exotic or alien to Western music. Instead, it integrates many Western ideas while still being founded in Chinese heritage, creating a new style that has much to offer the Western classical world.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

China’s role in Western music is ever-expanding. Echoing the growth of classical music in China is the importance of Chinese musicians in the global music world. It is difficult to imagine a major conservatory or orchestra anywhere in the United States or Europe that does not have at least one Chinese musician. In Beijing, there are close to a dozen professional orchestras, two conservatories, innumerable music schools and piano departments, a growing number of first-rate concert halls, and a major music festival, the Beijing International Music Festival. With all of this it is easy to forget that Western classical music is a foreign import to China, one that has been resisted for most of its history.

Although Western classical music has gained a strong foothold in China, Chinese contributions to piano literature are largely unknown to the West. China possesses one of the richest musical histories in the world, one which until the twentieth century has largely remained unaffected by Western elements. Its musical heritage extends over thousands of years, deeply rooted in tradition and nationalism. Over the last century, Chinese composition began to incorporate Western musical ideas while still holding on to its own heritage and traditions. This amalgamation of Western and Chinese musical elements created a new compositional sound founded on Chinese roots. Huang An-lun, one of China’s most prominent living composers, embodies this style in his compositions.
More specifically, his Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 57, exemplifies Chinese tradition infused with Western influence. Chinese composition is no longer something that is exotic or alien to Western music. Instead, it integrates many Western ideas while still being founded in Chinese heritage, creating a new style that has much to offer the Western classical world.
CHAPTER 2

THE INTRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN MUSIC IN CHINA

China has always had a strong sense of national identity. Its musical history is likewise rooted in strong nationalistic ideals. Chinese music is an ancient art developed over thousands of years with virtually no outside influence. Western music was not introduced to China until the 17th century, and it met much resistance along its slow development in China.

In the late 16th century, Matteo Ricci, a Jesuit priest, came to China in hopes of meeting the Emperor. Ricci’s goal was to try to gain permission to establish a permanent Jesuit mission in the Imperial Capital and perhaps one day convert the Emperor himself to the Catholic faith. The clavichord was a part of his plan, as it was one of many gifts to be presented to the Emperor in an effort to spark his curiosity and allow the Jesuits to remain in Beijing. Ricci made three attempts to meet the Emperor. The Jesuits failed to even reach Beijing on the first attempt in 1595, and on the second voyage in 1598, they were unable to find anyone to help petition the Emperor on their behalf. Finally, on January 24th, 1601, Father Ricci arrived in Beijing for the third time. Emperor Wan Li, intrigued by Ricci’s gifts, allowed the Jesuits to stay by granting them a small subsidy of gold and a regular allowance of rice, meat, salt, wine, vegetables, and firewood. The clavichord in particular excited the Emperor’s interest, who ordered four eunuchs to take
clavichord lessons from the Jesuits and perform a recital for him.¹ During Father Ricci’s 27 years in China, he laid the foundations of a mission that would see hundreds of Jesuits working in China over the next two centuries. He was the one who first opened the door to the study of European music in China.

The Jesuits maintained a close relationship to the Ming dynasty, and when the dynasty ended in 1644, they worked on their relationship with the new Qing Dynasty. Father Johann Adam Schall von Bell developed a close relationship with the first Emperor, Shunzhi. The Emperor gave Father Schall land to build a church, and when it was completed in 1652, an organ was installed, making it a vehicle for spreading European liturgical music.²

The two most significant and longest reigning emperors of the Qing dynasty were Kangxi and Qianlong. Both took music lessons with European priests and commissioned important treatises on Western music. Kangxi, Shunzi’s heir, was 13 years old when he became emperor in 1668, and he eventually became the first emperor to take European music lessons. He was interested in learning the harpsichord, as well as Western music theory and notation. He learned how to play the Daoist prayer song *Pu Yen Zhau* on the harpsichord, and he commissioned several Western based musical treatises, including *The Elements of Music* and *The True Meaning of Pitch Temperament*.³

Emperor Qianlong, like his grandfather Kangxi, had a great interest in Western music. During his reign the palace received 10 violins, 2 cellos, 1 bass, and 8 woodwind instruments, as well as a mandolin, guitar, xylophone, and harpsichord. He employed music teachers to teach eighteen palace eunuchs to perform Western music while wearing

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Western-style clothes, shoes, and wigs. The eunuchs were also taught to sing castrati roles in Italian operas. Western music study and performance had become a significant part of court life. Outside the court, however, Western music was slowly spreading in churches, but it was not accepted socially. There were many, often violent, anti-missionary activities of local officials.

European music in China had come a long way since its introduction in 1601, yet it was limited by strong anti-foreign and anti-Christian currents. China’s own music was an ancient art intimately connected with every aspect of life in China. It would require a broader acceptance of all things foreign for Western music to develop deeper roots in China. China’s view of itself and the world beyond was about to be radically altered in a long process that can be traced in part to 1793, when Lord George Macartney sailed into China with two violins, a viola, a violoncello, an oboe, a bassoon, two basset horns, a clarinet, a flute, and a fife. He was neither a musician nor a missionary. Instead, he was a diplomat funded by the British East India Company with a mission to open up trade between China and Great Britain. Emperor Qianlong, however, turned down the trade offer made by Great Britain. Since the Emperor could not fathom a world in which his empire operated as an equal, and Great Britain could not accept a world in which its right to free trade was not recognized, one of the two views would have to give. The failure of the Macartney embassy did much to set the scene of the Opium War that would begin in 1839.

The Opium War marked China’s passage into the modern era, as well as the start of a new era in the spread of Western music in China. When China lost a second Opium

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4 Ibid., 75.
5 Ibid., 78.
War in 1860 to Britain and France, the rights of foreigners in China were vastly expanded. With the required legality of Christianity, missionaries came in even larger numbers and education became an increasingly important component of their work as well as a key vehicle for the spread of Western music. The curriculum in many secondary schools and colleges began to include Western music. Chinese students learned about great classical European composers and even learned to play Western musical instruments, especially the violin and piano. As early as 1849, a Chinese priest conducted the student orchestra at Shanghai’s Xuhui School in a performance of a Haydn symphony. The musical education in missionary schools was so thorough that the vast majority of China’s early generations of classical musicians would be the product of missionary education.

The post Opium War era marks the true start of the spread of Western music through secular channels, especially bands. The first was the Shanghai Municipal Band. Then by the turn of the century, Western-style bands had become an accepted part of China’s changing political-military culture. Bands played military-style marches at official functions and also provided entertainment for soirees. With the expanding influence of bands in Shanghai and Beijing, Chinese military officials began to reform China’s own military music. Believing that Western marches would help motivate and stimulate Chinese soldiers better than Chinese music, several of China’s top generals began to put this idea into practice.

This gradual integration of Western music and instruments into Chinese culture was given a big boost by the school-song movement that began around 1903. The movement was initiated by young Chinese who had gone to Japan to study and had been

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6 Ibid., 83.
7 Ibid., 84.
impressed by the important role that songs, generally set to Western music, played in the Japanese school system. These returned students began to spread the school-song practice in China, again increasing the role of Western music in the country. The Qing dynasty also led the reform by introducing a series of legislation in 1904 that happily adopted the school-song concept, as well as inviting many Japanese educators to China to manage or advise Chinese school systems. This helped to further spread the practice of school-song as students began to form choral groups, learn instruments, and study more about Western music.8

The Qing dynasty was overthrown in the 1911 Revolution, marking the end of 5,000 years of imperial rule. Young Chinese began to travel to Western countries to study music. This new period in China opened up doors for an increasing number of Chinese youth to listen to Western music, play Western instruments, and even explore ways that both could be adapted to Chinese culture. It was this new culture that allowed Cai Yuanpei, the president of Peking University, to begin the Institute for the Promotion and Practice of Music at Peking University in 1921 and hired the German trained composer and musicologist Xiao Youmei to manage it. Unfortunately, Beijing did not prove to be fertile grounds for music education as it was still under the control of the warlords. So Xiao instead moved to Shanghai and founded the nation’s first conservatory in 1927, the National Conservatory of Music (later renamed the Shanghai Conservatory of Music). Many of the professors he hired were members of the all-foreign Shanghai Municipal Orchestra, led by the talented Italian conductor Mario Paci. Xiao began to

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8 Ibid., 87.
introduce Western music history and theory to Chinese students, as well as composing about one hundred works and writing several teaching manuals.\(^9\)

Shanghai, with a conservatory and a professional orchestra, soon became the classical music center of China, attracting aspiring musicians from around the country. Among them were Xian Xinghai, who Chairman Mao would later call “the people’s composer,” Nie Er, the composer of *The March of the Volunteers*, later chosen as China’s national anthem, and Li Delun, the future conductor of China’s Central Philharmonic Society. With so many talented musicians in Shanghai, it gained its reputation as a “musical Paris of the East.”

Boris Zakharoff, a Russian pianist who studied with Godowsky and was previously on the faculty of the St. Petersburg Conservatory, became the first piano instructor at the National Conservatory, teaching piano from 1928 until his death in 1943.\(^10\) For this reason he is considered the founder of modern Chinese piano playing.

Chinese piano composition at this time, however, was virtually nonexistent. Chinese compositions of this period were mostly written for voice and piano, since Western music in China was still in its infancy and there were no orchestras available to perform large instrumental works. Also, composers regarded vocal music as more capable of expressing the melodic gestures in Chinese folk music.

The most influential figure on Chinese composers of this time was Alexander Tcherepnin, who was in China between 1934 and 1937. Tcherepnin organized a piano composition competition in which each work was required to exhibit a Chinese national character. The winning composition, He Luting’s *The Buffalo Boy’s Flute*, has a A B A’

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structure, with the $A$ section in two-part free counterpoint utilizing Chinese pentatonic modes, and the $B$ section marked by a small-ranged melody imitating a Chinese bamboo flute accompanied with Western harmony.\(^{11}\) Tcherepnin, also a performing pianist who had so far only played his own works in concerts, now would include the top two compositions from the competition in his performances around Europe and the United States.

The spread of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937 made Chinese composers shift their attention to be more politically relevant. Xian Xinghai’s compositions combined Western and Chinese elements for the purpose of political statement. The best known of his works is *The Yellow River Cantata*, a work in eight parts for soloists and chorus.

When the Communist Party took over China in 1949, the new government adopted the Soviet model for structuring China’s music education system. More conservatories were founded, Russian teachers were invited to teach in China, and Chinese musicians were sent to Moscow and Leningrad for further training. However, when Chairman Mao began a political movement against all “rightists” among China’s intellectuals, compositions became increasingly propagandistic. Then in 1966, with the launch of the Cultural Revolution, all conservatories were shut down, and instruments and teaching materials were destroyed.

It was not until 1976, with the death of Mao, that China gradually returned to normalcy, and a resumption of the study of Western music began to take place. With fewer restrictions from the government, Chinese composers were free to explore modern Western compositional techniques and blend them with Chinese elements.

\(^{11}\) Alexander Tcherepnin, “Music of Modern China,” *Te Musical Quarterly* XXI / 4 (1935), 399.
Today, with modern technologies of global communication, internet, television, radio, and CDs, Western interaction and influence is greater than it has ever been in China. This Western influence, combined with the ever-present nationalism and traditional heritage in Chinese music has created a new, uniquely Chinese musical style.
CHAPTER 3

MODERN CHINESE PIANO COMPOSITION AND HUANG AN-LUN

The piano, a European instrument, is today the most popular instrument in China. In 2004, the *Shenzhen Daily* reported that there are 38 million children studying piano in China. In the mid-1980’s the piano’s popularity reached unprecedented levels. Demand for buying a piano was so high that it became a matter of waiting for years or using bribes to obtain one. Some even bought pianos for investment purposes, thinking that the demand and price would rise so high that it was better than putting money in the bank. Today the availability of pianos is no longer an issue, as China is one of the world’s biggest producers of pianos and violins. Guangzhou’s Pearl River piano factory made 200,000 pianos in 2000. The issue of piano availability has now been replaced by the problem of teacher availability.

So many Chinese students are learning the piano that there is actually a shortage of qualified teachers in the country. For example, in Nanjing, the provincial capital of Jiangsu, there are over 50,000 students learning the piano. In the city there are maybe a dozen top-rate teachers, several hundred average teachers, and many more under qualified, self-trained teachers. This demand for qualified teachers has driven up the cost of learning the piano, but the popularity of Western classical music continues to rise. The music publishing industry, which was almost bankrupt after the Cultural Revolution, is now thriving from the demand for piano method books. With music education on the rise
in China, students are studying both Western and Chinese classical music. Chinese music conservatories such as the Central Conservatory in Beijing and the Shanghai Conservatory are turning out top students who are earning prizes in international Western music competitions in Europe and around the world. There are a total of nine conservatories in China, with the Central Conservatory in Beijing being one of the ten biggest in the world.

Modern Chinese piano composition has come a long way in recent decades. During the Cultural Revolution, much music was written as propaganda, and the intellectual level of composition was purposefully low so that the “commoner” would be able to understand it. Music from this period tends to sound banal and unsophisticated when heard today, and works from this period have done much damage to the recognition of today’s Chinese music. Following the Cultural Revolution, everything in China began to change. Composers were no longer restricted as they had been under Mao, and they were free to compose and expand the Chinese musical language. Many composers have begun to fuse the sounds of China and Western classical music, creating a new style that blends Chinese melody and modality with Western form, harmony, and instrumentation. One of the leading composers in this new style is Huang An-lun.

Huang An-lun is one of China’s preeminent modern composers, and his style is symbolic of modern Chinese piano music. He was born into a musical family in 1949. His father, Huang Feili, was a famous conductor in China and studied composition at Yale with Hindemith in the 1940’s. Huang An-lun began his piano lessons at age five, then later studied at primary and secondary schools associated with the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing.
The Cultural Revolution cut off Huang’s chances of going to college to study music as he was sent to farm outside of Beijing. Huang states that during this period he met and became acquainted with common Chinese people, including farmers and other workers from the countryside. He regards his understanding of this culture as the treasure of his compositional life. It helped him become intimate with the deep culture in China, and this experience greatly influenced his future compositions. At first, Huang was miserable, losing all hope and faith in life. He was cut off from what he loved most: the music of Beethoven, Chopin, and Schubert. However, one day Huang found a school with a pipe organ and asked if he could practice on it. It was decided that he would be allowed to practice on it as long as he was finished by 8am when the school began its sessions, and it did not interfere with his work. Every day for more than a year, Huang endured the long walk to the school early in the morning, arriving at 5am. One of the school’s teachers, amazed at Huang’s determination, was always there early to open up the school for him. Then at 8am, Huang had to endure the long walk back and begin his work for the day. It was through this self-study every morning that Huang taught himself counterpoint, orchestration, instrumentation, harmony, and analysis.

In 1971, Huang began to take private composition lessons with Chen Zi, a well-known composer in China. Chen Zi taught Huang to study the spirit of Western art. Huang was told to listen to Western music, read Western literature, and view Western art. Chen Zi believed that for Chinese music to have a successful future, it must be combined with Western music. Then in 1976, Huang became a composer-in-residence in the Central Opera House in Beijing. A few years later in 1980, as one of the first composers to be allowed to travel since the Cultural Revolution, Huang went to study abroad at the
University of Toronto, Trinity College of Music in London, the University of Pittsburgh, and Yale University, where he completed his master’s degree. He has become one of China’s most prolific and prominent modern composers, achieving international recognition on a wide scale.

Huang’s compositions include two grand operas, three ballets, one musical, two large oratorios, more than twenty symphonic compositions, and numerous vocal, piano, instrumental, chamber, choral, and film scores. His symphonic poem *The Sword* was commissioned by the Fort Worth Symphony and premiered in 1984 with John Giordano conducting. Huang’s piano work, *Poem for Dance No 3, Op. 40*, was premiered in Carnegie Hall by Xu Feiping in 1987. Other notable performances include *Chinese Rhapsody, No 2b, Op. 18b*, by the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra in 1982, *Two Pieces in Sabei Folk Style, Op. 15* and *Op. 21*, by the National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico in 1987, and the symphonic poem *Bayanhar, Op. 50*, by the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra in 1992. His ballet *Dream of Dunhuang, Op. 29*, is considered a masterpiece of Chinese 20th century composition and was collected in *The Master Works of Twentieth Century Chinese Composition* in 1992 and performed by the Taiwan Symphony Orchestra together with the Russian State Ballet of Moscow in 1994. Huang’s orchestral suite *Dream of Dunhuang* (music selected from the same-named ballet) has been performed by the Berkeley Symphony, the Canberra Symphony, the Schweiling Symphony, the Luxembourg National Radio Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony, and the State Symphony of the U.S.S.R. In December 1996, the Symphony Orchestra of the Bolshoi Theater, The Russian Philharmonic of Moscow, and the National Choir of Russia recorded a total of seven CDs of Huang’s compositions, including two complete ballets,
the violin concerto, the First Piano Concerto, three choral pieces, and eight more symphonic works. On December 9, 1996, a special concert of Huang’s music was given in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory. This was the first time that a world-famous concert hall held a concert entirely devoted to a Chinese composer. Huang’s Piano Concerto No. 2 was premiered on June 12, 1999, at the Shanghai Music Hall. The Shanghai Symphony Orchestra was conducted by Huang himself, with Hsu Fei-ping as the piano soloist.
CHAPTER 4

HUANG AN-LUN’S PIANO CONCERTO NO. 2 IN C MINOR, OP. 57

Taking many Western compositional techniques and merging them with Chinese elements, Huang’s style is both innovative and traditional at the same time. His Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor, Op. 57, demonstrates this mutual influence of styles. The work was composed during the period between 1998 and 1999 and is dedicated to Huang’s close friend, American-Chinese pianist Hsu Fei-ping. At the premiere in 1999, the performance lasted fifty minutes. Believing the length to be excessive, the record company asked Huang to shorten his composition. “It was a difficult process,” says Huang, “deciding what to cut out and what to leave in.”12 He conversed with Hsu Fei-ping, who begged Huang not to make any massive cuts in the composition. Huang eventually finalized his concerto to the satisfaction of the record company, and the one existing recording is of this finalized version. The recording features Hsu Fei-ping as the piano soloist with the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Konstantin D.Krimets, and it consists of a little more than forty-seven minutes of music. It was not a drastic cut, but still significant as the final piano score is nine pages shorter than the original version. No recording exists of the original composition since the record company would not record it; however, the original score still exists to be compared to the final version. “The significant cuts,” says Huang, “are in the first and third

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12 Huang An-lun, interview, 6/11/06.
movements.” In those movements, several sections are shortened or cut out completely from the final score.

The concerto is organized in the traditional Western arrangement of three movements: fast-slow-fast. The instrumentation is Western, scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 French horns, 4 trumpets, 2 trombones, violin I and II, viola, cello, bass, timpani, and piano solo. The concerto’s harmony is founded on Western traditions, including twentieth-century Western compositional techniques. “Chinese music,” says Huang, “has no harmony. It consists solely of melody.” The forms are also Western: the first and third movements are composed in sonata form, and the second movement is in ABA form. However, the major melodic themes are uniquely Chinese in their pentatonic qualities, and Chinese modality plays an important role in the composition’s mood and harmony.

“The opening of the concerto is like a sigh,” says Huang. “There is a sadness there that I want the listener to feel.” Huang’s compositions are inspired by the world around him. He says that when he composes, he asks the question, “Why is the world the way that it is? Why is there so much sadness and chaos in the world?” Though despite this grief, there is still a hope present, and it is this hope in the face of a world filled with sorrow that Huang wants to express in his concerto. This initial sigh at the beginning of the movement is played by the orchestra, $p$, and although melodically it is very pronounced, it begins to dramatically die away in the sixth measure. Quarter-note triplets play a large role in this opening phrase, as they also do for much of the first movement. This rhythm does not drive or push the music. Instead, it lets the melody float and gives

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13 Ibid.  
14 Ibid.  
15 Ibid.
a meditative quality to the mood. Huang uses his themes to interplay between the piano and the orchestra. By following the themes it is clear which of the two has the melody and which is in an accompaniment role. Also, the lengths of phrases vary throughout the concerto. Phrases transition so smoothly that it can be hard to say exactly where one ends and the next begins.

The opening phrase, which also introduces theme I (Ex. 1), can be understood as a nine measure phrase or a five plus four construction. The first five measures contain the strong melodic material of the theme, however, this material still continues as it dies away through measure nine. Notice that whether it is looked at as five or nine, the standard four or eight measure phrases are nowhere to be found for much of the concerto. Huang’s phrasing is very much twentieth century Western in that melodies are extended for unusual lengths but still manage to flow seamlessly. When theme I returns, it is $ff$ and seventeen measures in length. This significant difference in length and dynamic shows how Huang uses his principal melodic material in infinite variation of different phrase lengths. It is the main melodic idea and intervallic relationship that defines each theme, and it can enter in the music for less than a measure or be extended over a much longer phrase than initially introduced. This technique is used with all of his themes throughout the concerto. In addition to unusual phrase lengths, Huang employs unusual time signatures in all three of the movements. Usually the time signature will change just for one or two measures before returning to the original meter. Huang does not define sections by meter, but rather uses different meters within phrases to extend or shorten the melodic and rhythmic resolution.
There are five prominent themes in the first movement, *Allegro assai*, all of which are Chinese-influenced. The concerto opens with the first theme (Ex. 1), Eb pentatonic rooted on C, or C-Yu mode in Chinese modal theory (Yu being equal to the Western “La” in solmization).

Ex. 1: First Movement, Theme I

This movement is in sonata form, and this opening melody is the main theme in the tonic key of C minor in the exposition. In measure 12, theme II enters (Ex. 2), based on a quarter-note triplet rhythm and an angular melody. The theme is fairly chromatic as it is initially presented, but later in the piece it will have several pentatonic variations.

Ex. 2: First Movement, Theme II

This theme repeats until a sixteenth-note figure comes in measure 35, a passage which is prevalent in the movement. It is not a theme, but rather a tension building device to lead
into the next section. It features five notes, four chromatically descending sixteenth notes followed by an ascending final note. This figure sequences and repeats to build up to a *ff* statement of theme I in measure 52. This restatement is seventeen measures, containing additional material compared to its opening statement. This then leads into the introduction of Theme III in measure 69 (Ex. 3), almost exclusively in F pentatonic, or F-Gong mode in Chinese theory.

Ex. 3: First Movement, Theme III

After this, the orchestra builds with the first four notes of theme I, sequenced through several keys at *ff* in measure 114. The chromatic sixteenth patterns return in measure 124, building up to the entrance of the piano. The orchestra drops out in measure 136, and the piano enters at *p* with theme IV (Ex. 4). This lyrical melody is in G-Yu mode, or Bb major pentatonic rooted on G.

Ex. 4: First Movement, Theme IV
The piano then continues with its own variations of the thematic material presented thus far. Theme I can be heard in measures 134, 159, 178, and 202. Theme II can be heard in measures 155 and 168. Theme III can be heard in measures 151 and 162. Then the piano drops out in measure 212 as the orchestra re-enters with theme I, \textit{ff}. When the piano returns in measure 248, it is again heard \textit{p}, introducing theme V marked \textit{meno mosso} (Ex. 5).

\textbf{Ex. 5: First Movement, Theme V}

![Image of sheet music](image)

This melody is the theme of the secondary key area in the exposition. The new key is Eb major, the relative major of the tonic C minor. The theme, in Eb-Gong mode, is repeated in variation as the orchestra slowly and quietly re-enters in measure 262. A new section begins in measure 275, one characterized by soft, flowing triplet rhythms, evoking a dreamlike quality. In the orchestra, theme III is heard in measure 283, and theme V is heard in measures 296 and 314. The piano continues the triplets, stopping once to prominently play a combination of themes III and V in measure 308, \textit{f}. This section ends in measure 317 when the triplets stop and a new figure is given by the piano, featuring
sixteenths and triplets. This figure is repeated as the chromatic sixteenths return in the orchestra, building up to measure 349, ff, where the orchestra plays an angular, Chinese-like melody featuring Bb pentatonic and E pentatonic (Ex. 6). The right hand plays an E pentatonic melody while the left hand plays a Bb pentatonic melody. When put together it creates a dissonant sound, however, if the hands are played separately, two Chinese-influenced pentatonic melodies can be heard.

Ex. 6: Modern usage of the pentatonic scale

The chromatic sixteenths return again in the orchestra to build to measure 380, which is the beginning of the development section. A variation of theme I enters in the piano, which takes the first four notes of theme I, played rhythmically in different key areas. Measures 382 and 394 contain a melody that foreshadows theme I of the third movement, to be discussed later. This section leads into the return of theme III in the orchestra in measure 404, marked p, accompanied by the piano. The previous theme I variation returns again in the piano in measure 421, followed by the orchestra playing its own variation on the first four notes of theme I in measure 442. This variation sequences and builds, then the chromatic sixteenth-note passage returns, this time in the piano in measure 455. The build-up continues to a climax in measure 465, where theme I is played by the orchestra, ff. This marks the beginning of the recapitulation section, as the
theme continues to measure 486, where the orchestra picks up theme II, played first in a pentatonic fashion and then followed by a more chromatic version. The orchestra drops out and the piano enters again, softly, in measure 497. The key signature changes for the first time, from C minor to C major, as theme V is lyrically given by the piano. The piano continues with variations on this theme as the orchestra re-enters in measure 511, also playing theme V. In measure 524, the dreamlike triplets return in the piano, and the orchestra plays theme III in measure 532. The triplets then continue as the orchestra plays theme V in measure 545. Then in measure 557, the piano continues the triplets in the left hand while playing themes III and V in a connected phrase in the right hand. The C minor key signature returns in measure 566 as previous sixteenth-note figures in the piano, combined with the chromatic sixteenths in the orchestra, return. This section builds to its climax in measure 598 with theme I, ff, in the orchestra. Then comes the piano cadenza, featuring double thirds and rapid chromatic passages. This passage was written specifically for Hsu Fei-ping, as his thirds were said to be brilliant (when he was only eleven years old he impressed an audience with a performance of Chopin’s Etude Op. 25 No. 6 in G-sharp minor, the thirds study). The orchestra then re-enters in measure 661 with a theme I variation, continuing with the chromatic sixteenths to build up to the end of the movement.

The second movement, Andante, shows much Chinese character. It has a pentatonic sound and mellow mood. The strongest dynamic marking is mf, and there are no staccato markings present. The movement opens with the marking legato sempre, and this phrasing will continue throughout. The form is ABA, and the A section is characterized by a flowing sixteenth-note pentatonic melody in the piano. Just as in the
first movement, the second movement employs unusual phrase lengths and meters. The piano begins the movement solo and continues for eleven measures before the orchestra enters with a melody that will continue for nine measures. Phrases flow into each other in such a way that the feeling of the bar line is almost erased. The movement’s meter is mostly 4/4, but there is also 5/4 and 3/4. The 5/4 and 3/4 meters are both found only in the B section, as the 5/4 meter is present in the B section in four different places, never for longer than two measures at a time. The 3/4 meter is used twice in the B section, first for six measures and then for five measures. The themes in this movement are heavily pentatonic and help define the tranquil, meditative mood.

The second movement has three main themes. Theme I (Ex. 7) is the opening sixteenth-note Ab pentatonic melody in the piano (Ab-Gong mode).

Ex. 7: Second Movement, Theme I

This melody continues as the orchestra enters in measure 12 with theme II, also in Ab pentatonic (Ex. 8).
The sixteenth-notes in the piano continue until measure 26, where theme III is introduced (Ex. 9). This theme feature three notes: the first two rising up a second or a third, and the last note usually descending an octave, sometimes a seventh.
Theme III repeats again in measure 33, with the two statements being interrupted briefly by theme I in measure 30. The B section begins in measure 38 as the orchestra plays the first movement’s theme IV, the one theme that is present in all three movements. The B section is marked by more chromaticism than the pentatonic A section. A chromatic passage enters in the piano in measure 42, continuing for five measures. The orchestra re-enters for another variation of the first movement’s theme IV, followed by another chromatic passage in the piano in measure 51. A variation of theme II is played by the orchestra in measure 57, as well as by the piano in measure 71, and again by the orchestra in measure 96. Theme I then returns in the piano in measure 100, marking the return of the A section, *a tempo*. The orchestra joins in with theme II in measure 101, then continuing into the first movement’s theme IV once again in measure 111, all the time the piano continuing the sixteenth notes of theme I. The piano brings theme III in once again in measure 126, leading into the final return of theme I in measure 134, continuing in fragmented phrases, marked *pp*, as the movement slowly fades away.

The third movement, *Allegro assai*, is the most rhythmic and chromatic of the three movements. In contrast to the first two movements which use common time as the primary meter, the third movement uses 3/4 time as its basis. However, the meter will
change more often than in the other movements, and it is not uncommon in this movement to find five or more measures in a row with the meter changing every measure. This creates a rhythmic complexity not present in the other movements. Also, the rhythm of this third movement creates a driving momentum. Although marked slightly slower than the first movement, the third movement feels faster in that the pulse is much more pronounced and the rhythmic division is much more strongly articulated. The first movement is mostly felt in cut time as quarter-note triplets often help the melody to float over the pulse and disguise the quick tempo. In the third movement, melodies push forward in anxious anticipation. Triplets and sixteenth-notes become the main rhythm that propels the music forward. In addition, the third movement contains chromaticism and dissonance not present in the other movements. Accidental are much more prevalent, as are awkward interval leaps and angular melody lines. Huang still uses pentatonic themes, but in this movement they become more rhythmic and driving, making them sound more Western than Chinese. Themes are varied in chromatic forms as well as different rhythmic forms.

The third movement has only two prominent themes but will recall several themes from the first movement in many variations. Like the first movement, it is in sonata form, and the themes are introduced in the exposition. The movement opens with a variation of the first movement’s theme I. Then in measure 5 this phrase leads into this movement’s theme I (Ex. 10), which is the theme of the primary key center of C minor in the exposition. Only two measures in length, the theme contains notes from Bb major pentatonic (rooted on C is C-Shang mode).
Ex. 10: Third Movement, Theme I

The piano first enters in measure 16 with its own statement of theme I, repeating it several times. The piano then builds with ascending triplet chords leading up to a ff restatement of theme I in the orchestra in measure 43. Then in measure 76, the key signature changes from C minor to G major with theme II, fifteen measures in length in its opening statement in the orchestra. It is a lyrical theme, all in G major (Ex. 11).

Ex. 11: Third Movement, Theme II

This melody is the theme of the secondary key center in the exposition. It is interesting to note that the expositions of both the first and third movements begin in C minor, with the first movement using the relative Eb major as the secondary key while the third movement uses the dominant G major as the secondary key. Following the introduction of theme II is the piano’s re-entrance with its own statement of theme II. This theme carries the poetic mood until measure 134, where there is a sudden shift in character to a forceful, percussive section. Theme II re-enters in the orchestra in measure 178, a lyrical contrast to the rhythmic piano part.
In measure 202, the development section begins. The opening variation of the first movement’s theme I re-enters, building up to the return of theme I in measure 211 with the key signature changing back to C minor. In measure 229, the orchestra features the lyrical theme II while the piano plays ascending chromatic runs. This passage eventually builds to another statement of theme I in the orchestra in measure 246 as the piano momentarily drops out. In measure 263, theme II returns in the orchestra, with more rapid passages in the piano acting as its contrast. This leads to the return of an earlier variation of the first movement’s theme I in measure 281, building to a climax in measure 303 with bombastic sixteenth-note chords in the piano. Afterwards, the orchestra takes over with a variation of theme I in measure 307. Then theme II returns again in measure 334 in the orchestra, followed by the piano re-entering in measure 352, as the thematic material is interplayed between the pianist and orchestra. Another rhythmic section of rapid chromatic passages and full chords in quick motion follows. A reference to theme II in the orchestra briefly interrupts this section in measure 438, and then the piano continues with more rapid passages. In measure 453, the recapitulation section begins. The key signature changes to C major, mirroring the key change in the first movement’s recapitulation. The third movement’s opening variation returns, along with theme I in measure 456, in varied versions. This section builds to the piano cadenza in measure 479. In the cadenza, the piano makes reference to a sixteenth-note figure of the first movement and builds through a virtuoso section up to a variation of the first movement’s theme III in measure 521, ff. The cadenza concludes with a restatement of the first movement’s theme IV in measure 541, a theme that has appeared in all three
movements. The orchestra returns for the bombastic finale, building through $fff$ piano runs and massive chords to its conclusion.

The concerto’s themes are used as the primary melodic material in the piano and orchestra. Most of the themes are Chinese in their pentatonic qualities. One of these pentatonic themes, theme IV from the first movement, is found in all three movements. Huang states that he did not do this purposefully to united the movements; rather, it was something that happened naturally in the composition process.¹⁶ This Chinese melodic foundation combined with a Western approach to harmony and orchestration, creates a fusion of two cultures in a synthesis of sounds and styles.

¹⁶ Ibid.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Chinese music resisted Western influence for most of its history. The synthesis of styles came about slowly and did not become a conscious objective of composers until after the Cultural Revolution. Huang An-lun, a composer born in China and currently residing in Canada, states that he does not set out to purposefully combine Chinese and Western styles in his compositions. The resulting fusion of styles heard in his music is the product of his mixed background. He was raised in China, but he was exposed to Western music including Beethoven, Chopin, and Schubert. His teachers taught him the importance of learning Western styles and forms, and his experiences in the Cultural Revolution gave him a deep understanding of Chinese culture and heritage. With this experience and knowledge from two different musical cultures, Huang’s compositions combine those two worlds in a very natural way. He states that even though he lives in Toronto and has become immersed in Western style, he still considers himself Chinese.\(^{17}\) Likewise, his compositions are uniquely Chinese in how they are rooted in Chinese melody and modality. Tradition and nationalism, two strong characteristics of Chinese music and culture, can be seen in Huang’s compositional style.

Now that Western and Chinese styles have merged to create a new Chinese sound, it is yet to be seen how this style will be accepted into the Western world. It will be

\(^{17}\text{Ibid.}\)
interesting to observe if Chinese music will become an integrated part of Western concert repertoire and education. Certainly in Western education today, the role of Chinese music is virtually nonexistent. It is extremely rare for a teacher to pick a modern Chinese composition over a Western one to teach to a student. In concert halls, more and more Chinese music is being heard, but it is mostly for special concerts rather than integrated into Western programs. For the piano in particular, part of this may be due to the small quantity of Chinese piano music compared with that of the massive classical repertoire. Another reason may be leftover impressions of the Cultural Revolution where music was propaganda instead of art. Time will tell how this will change as today’s Chinese music exerts increasingly more influence in the Western classical world.
WORKS CONSULTED

Books


Articles and Dissertations


**Recordings**


Interviews

Banowetz, Joseph, April 28th, 2006, conducted in person.

Huang, An-lun, June 11th, 2006, conducted via telephone.

Web Sites
