



Enlightenment of Chinese Traditional Music Structure to Professional Creation: A Case Study of Piano Arrangement *House of Flying Daggers*

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Abstract

This article takes the traditional Chinese music structure on professional creative inspiration for the study of vision, to piano transcriptions the creation of *House of Flying Daggers* for research problems, on the basis of collecting, organizing, and reading literature. In order to promote their own understanding of the structure of Traditional Chinese music and lay a theoretical foundation for the study of this subject, carries out a macroscopic and dynamic theory on the structure of traditional Chinese music.

Subject Areas

Art, Music

Keywords

Chinese Traditional Music Structure, Professional Creation, Piano Arrangement, *House of Flying Daggers*, Yin Chengzong

1. Introduction

In the structure of Chinese traditional music, the artistic works are required to have the beginning and end, balance and symmetry as well as the integration of the beginning and end, which are the main manifestations and habits of Chinese folk music culture [1]. The works created by Chinese composers under the background of such folk music culture all embody these characteristics. China began to create professional music in the early 20th century, and with the development of The Times, many composers emerged, who created many epoch-making works.

This paper takes Yin Chengzong's piano arrangement *House of Flying Daggers* as an example to find the enlightenment of Chinese traditional music structure to professional creation.

2. Development and Classification of Chinese Piano Arrangement

In the early 20th century, China was invaded by foreign invaders and forced to open its door. As a result, Chinese and Western cultures began to blend at a deeper level, and China was also oppressed by western invaders and gradually declined. In order to save China from decline, a group of people with lofty ideals began to look for ways to save the country, among which the new Culture Movement was the most important. During the New Culture Movement, it was advocated that people boldly pursue "new ideas, new culture and new knowledge". During this period, China's music also began to enter a new stage of development. During this period, our government sent many overseas students to Study in Europe, the United States, Japan and other countries. Among these students, we are familiar with Zhao Yuanren, Xiao Youmei, Li Rongshou and so on. They not only brought western music composition and performance techniques, but also applied western music education system in Chinese schools. This period is the embryonic period of the development of Piano works in China, and the compositions created are based on the melody of folk songs, plus simple harmonic texture as an accompaniment, the overall length is small. Such as Xiao Youmei's *Lament cited*, Li Rongshou's *Saw the VAT* [2]. From the 1930s to the 1950s, piano works in China were initially prosperous. The social background of this period was that China was in the period of ten-year civil war, Anti-Japanese War and liberation War. During this period, because of the long war, China's national strength was much worse than before and living conditions were very difficult, so there were not many piano creations. At that time, China's political pioneers advocated learning from the Soviet Union how to govern the country, and composers also turned their attention to the Soviet Union's composition techniques and applied them to Chinese piano works, which played a certain role in promoting its development. Second, from the 1950s to the 1980s, this period is the golden age of the development of Piano works in China, and also the golden age of the development of piano arrangement. Although China was experiencing the Cultural Revolution, it also ushered in the reform and opening up [3]. Under this background, composers are more advanced in the creation techniques, so the creation of piano works is more national, the music content of the works is also more rich, and they have created many fine piano works [4]. Such as Wang Jianzhong's *Birds Pay homage to the Phoenix*, Li Yinghai's *Flute and Drum Melody of the Setting Sun* and so on. Finally, from the 1980s to the present, because of the open policy, cultural diversity and diversity of art forms in this period, composers turned their attention to the creation of art songs, concertos and other musical works. The author gives a brief presentation of the four stages of the development of Chinese piano adaptation (**Figure 1**).

In the process of composing and forming piano arrangement of *Thes in China*, composers have added various “non-piano” timbre to the piano timbre, such as string music, wind music, percussion, folk instruments, voice and so on, which have enriched the piano timbre, the expressive force of music style and performance technology to a certain extent. For example, in *Flute and Drum Melody of the Setting Sun* by Li Yinghai (Figure 2), the technique of sweeping the lute is applied.

All kinds of difficult and challenging playing techniques in piano arrangement also improve the performance requirements for students’ finger training. There are many piano works in China, which can be classified according to different themes. Based on Chinese folk songs, such as Zhao Yuanren’s *Peace March*, Sang Tong’s *In That Distant Place*, Wang Lishan’s *Orchid Flower*, etc. Some works are based on ancient songs, such as Wang Jianzhong’s *Three Rounds of Plum Blossom*, Li Yinghai’s *Setting Sun Xiao Drums* and Yin Chengzong’s *House of Flying Daggers*, etc. Some were based on patriotic songs, such as *The Day in the Liberated Area* by Chu Wanghua and *The Fantasia of Honghu Red Guards* by Qu Wei. There are also works based on song and dance dramas, such as

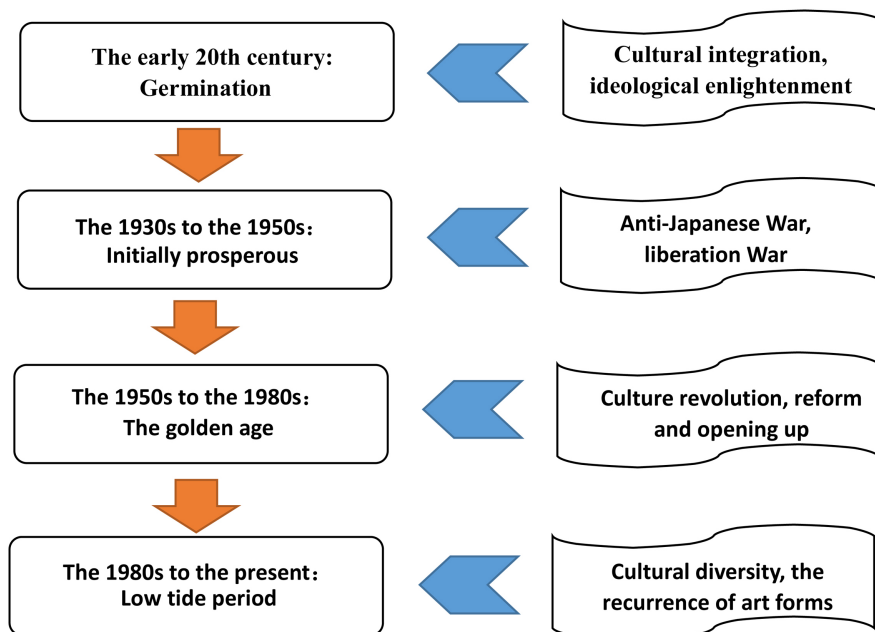


Figure 1. Four stages of the development of Chinese piano adaptation.



Figure 2. The technique of sweeping the lute applied in *flute and drum melody of the setting sun*.

Fish and Beauty Jointly created by Wu Zuqiang and Du Mingxin. These piano works with different themes contain many national elements in China.

3. Analysis of Piano Arrangement of *House of Flying Daggers*

The piano arrangement of *House of Flying Daggers* was adapted by Mr. Yin Chengzong from the ancient Pipa song *House of Flying Daggers*. It boldly borrowed the sound color of pipa, the national instrumental music. The whole piece was not approved by the Ministry of Culture at that time because it completely followed the fingerings of pipa, so it was “hidden”. It was not seen until ten years later.

The piano arrangement of *House of Flying Daggers* consists of 15 segments, including battalion, battalion, snare drum, blow, general, platoon, marching, ambush, jiming Mountain battle, Jiuli Mountain battle, flute sound, the sound of eight thousand children scattered, Shouting, King Xiang’s defeat, wujiang suicide, etc. It refers to the lute arpeggio *House of Flying Daggers* in the structure section, but there are great differences in creation background, sound effect and so on. The background of piano adaptation is based on the ancient pipa music, while the background of pipa is based on the famous historical battle “Gaixia Battle” in China. At the same time, the sound effect of piano arrangement is influenced by the piano, and the sound is more magnificent. When playing the pipa, the sound effect is slightly inferior to that of the piano. Although the piano arrangement of *The House of Flying Daggers* was published after a long time, its music style, ancient music elements and playing techniques are also worth studying. This just shows that the structure of traditional music in China has a great influence on professional creation.

The version of the piano arrangement of *House of Flying Daggers* is mainly published by the People’s Music Publishing House, and it is included in *The Selected Piano Works of Yin Chengzong* [5] and *50 Famous Piano Songs of China* [6] by Weiting. When composing this piece, Mr. Yin Chengzong visited Yang Yinliu, Cao Anhe and other pipa players and traditional Chinese music veterans, focusing on creating piano works with Chinese flavor. At that time, Mr. Yin Chengzong and several composers of the creative group were working together to make adaptations of ancient Chinese songs and folk songs. The piano adaptation of *House of Flying Daggers* is also a product of this period.

4. Chinese Traditional Music Structure Reflects the Inspiration to Professional Creation

This paper mainly discusses the main performance and habit of Chinese folk music culture, namely, the beginning and the end, the balance and symmetry of the artistic works required in the structure of Chinese traditional music. Take the piano arrangement of *House of Flying Daggers* as an example to analyze.

It can be seen that Yin Chengzong fully borrowed from the piano arrangement of *House of Flying Daggers* from the paragraph allocation and the use of playing

techniques. It uses a large number of chords, treads, arpeggio and other playing techniques to fully reflect the performance style of the pipa instrument [7]. In the creation of each paragraph, it has done the beginning and the end, the beginning and the end, balanced symmetry. It can be seen from the three sections of lying, dividing and military drum that Mr. Yin Chengzong adopted the rhythm pattern of loose board in his adaptation without using bar lines, which is a relatively common way of notation in traditional Chinese music [8]. Yin Chengzong mainly imitates the “sweep” and “hook” in the pipa playing technique in the use of the rhythm pattern of the loose plate.

The piano arrangement of *House of Flying Daggers*, on the basis of absorbing and drawing lessons from the traditional Chinese classical music, makes full use of the piano playing technology and forms its own unique characteristics, which makes the Chinese and Western Musical Instruments skillfully fused together. The background of this song is the “Gaixia War” in Chinese traditional history. The melody of this song is very strong, and the changes of music color are also very rich. The adaptation of ancient music reflects Mr. Yin Chengzong’s inheritance and development of China’s excellent traditional folk music culture. The music contains not only a lot of technical difficulties, but also rich Chinese cultural connotations and emotions. Therefore, it is important not only to grasp the technical difficulties but also to understand the musicality of notes, phrases and passages. By practicing and studying the playing techniques of this piece, it is not only conducive to the improvement of their piano playing level, but also conducive to increasing the accumulation of Chinese folk music knowledge and enhancing national consciousness. Of course, there are many excellent Chinese piano works, if the above ideas can be applied in the practice of these pieces, then they can also glow with artistic brilliance over time.

5. Conclusions

It is not difficult to see from the paragraphs and creative techniques of piano arrangement of *House of Flying Daggers* that the structure of Chinese traditional music reflects the inspiration of our professional music creation. Chinese composers have created works by drawing lessons from Chinese traditional music, which all reflects the improvement of our professional creation technology. The main expression and habit of Chinese folk music culture are that the artistic works in the structure of Chinese traditional music should be complete from beginning to end, balanced and symmetrical as well as the integration of beginning and end. Not only in that era of awakening at that time, but also in the creation of contemporary Chinese composers, there are many manifestations. The inheritance of Chinese excellent traditional music structure needs the efforts of our youth in the new era. With the continuous development of modern information technology, it is believed that the research on the inspiration of Chinese traditional music structure to professional creation will be more colorful.

The author has only made a relatively superficial review here, without further

analysis of the spectral surface of this piece and the score examples of ancient Pipa songs. Due to my relatively shallow experience, I am not particularly in-depth in the collation and analysis of the literature, but I will continue to have a deep understanding of it and lay a good foundation for my future study. At the same time, the author thinks that on the basis of the composition background, musical structure and other basic content of the composition, we should also analyze the music style and playing technology of the composition more specifically, and dig into the value of piano teaching and cultural value that the composition can embody. So it can be said that the piano adaptation of *House of Flying Daggers* still has a lot to discover.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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