



The Historical Development and Evolution Path of Piano Music in Modern China and the New Century: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

This article summarizes the historical traces of the development of Chinese piano culture through the study of historical materials of Chinese piano culture and studies the phased characteristics of Chinese piano culture in different periods. It explores the changes in the development of Chinese piano culture in modern times, mainly including the early stages of its formation. The analysis of the prosperity, innovative development, and exploration stages experienced in the early stages of the development of Chinese piano culture, as well as the expression of folk songs in traditional ethnic culture, showcases the integration process of piano and folk songs. This article takes Sang Tong as an example to analyze the characteristics of his piano works in different periods, reflecting the historical path of the nationalization development of piano music.

Keywords: History; Piano; Evolution; Folklorization.

INTRODUCTION

As is well known, the piano originated in the West and was only introduced to China nearly two hundred years after its birth. Europe once had an absolute say in piano manufacturing (Mou, 2014; X. Y. Wang, 2010; Yan, 2017; Yuan, 2008; W. W. Zhang, 2019). However, since the reform and opening up, the Chinese piano industry has achieved a comeback in just 40 years, transforming from a piano-importing country to the world's largest piano-producing and exporting country. One country alone accounts for nearly 80% of the world's piano production and sales, significantly impacting the world piano industry. This has condensed the hard work and sweat of several generations of Chinese pianists, as shown in [Figure 1](#). China's piano production has remained stable at over 300000 units in recent years, and demand has remained stable at over 400000 units. It is a major global piano manufacturing country and a primary international piano consumption market, as shown in [Figure 2](#). The development history of piano culture is crucial for the influence of China's piano industry.

With the development of the New Culture Movement in China, Chinese new music has begun to rise to the historical stage. As a result, a large number of Western music represented by piano music began to enter the music and cultural life of Chinese people, and piano concert activities also began to enter the Chinese music stage, especially in major cities with early cultural development in modern and modern China such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Fujian. The 20th century was a critical period for developing new Chinese music, and various schools of thought began to flow into the music culture of the cities mentioned above. During this period, Chinese piano art was influenced and impacted by Western classical and traditional Chinese music, which also underwent fundamental changes. Traditional music, especially traditional opera, was no longer the main body of the Chinese music stage. The piano performance has profoundly impacted the development of Chinese music culture as a whole (B. S. Dai, 2013; J. F. Dai, 2010; Y. D. Zhang, 2011). Scholars have researched the development of piano

culture.

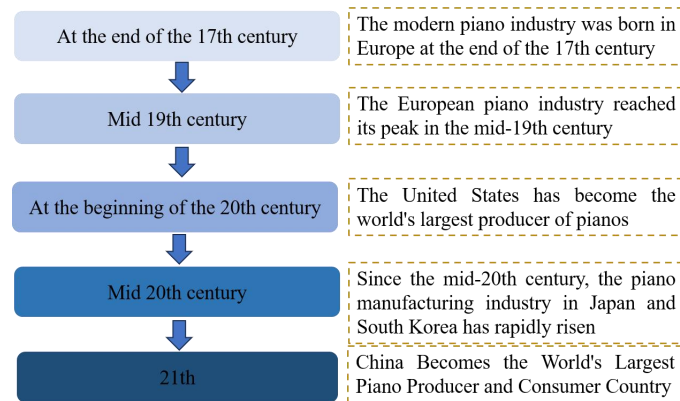


Figure 1. Development Stage of the Piano Industry

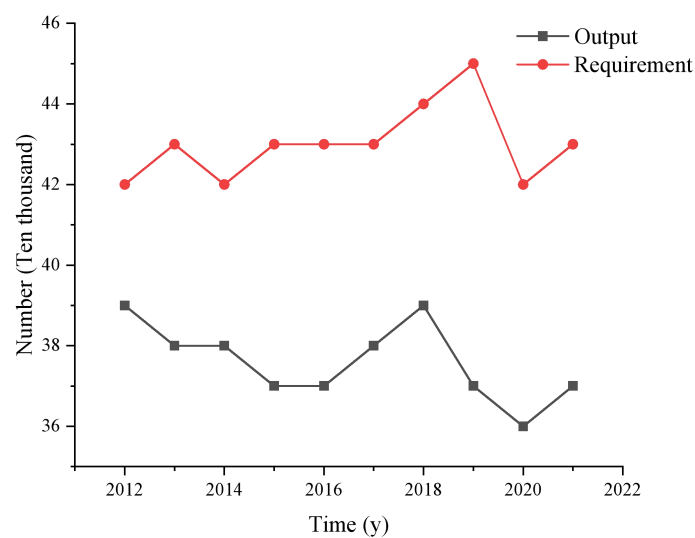


Figure 2. Changes in China's Piano Industry

Liu (2011) conducted preliminary research and analysis on Chinese piano works in the 21st century, focusing on analyzing creative characteristics and the current situation. He summarized the eight significant characteristics of creative characteristics. He analyzed the current situation of Chinese piano music creation in the 21st century from four aspects: creative group, creative concept, creative thinking, and creative stage. Unfortunately, this article lacks examples and analysis of specific works. X. G. Feng (2007) provides a detailed explanation of Chinese piano music creation, performance, and teaching in the chronological order of the development of modern Chinese music history, including a detailed review of the performance activities and information on Chinese and foreign pianists, with rich historical materials. Liao (2010) recorded the development of piano music in Fujian from the perspectives of piano education, dissemination and exchange of piano music, and piano music creation in chronological order and conducted research from the perspective of the relationship between history, geography, culture, education, and piano music development. The analysis of ethnic characteristics in Qu Ge (Jin, 2013) is based on the theme, divided into three categories: folk song adaptation, instrumental music adaptation, and modern technique creation. Although the analysis of these three categories mentions their respective development paths, there is no detailed discussion on the ethnic characteristics expressed by the same theme in different periods.

This article mainly summarizes and analyzes the development of Chinese piano culture, reflecting its development process. At the same time, in developing Chinese piano culture, folk theme piano music is an indispensable part of Chinese piano adaptations. It is a music genre that extracts the tonal and melodic elements of excellent folk songs in China, combines harmony, texture, and other factors, and uses the piano's timbre to showcase artistic charm. In studying folk piano music, Mr. Sang Tong has made remarkable achievements in this field, cultivating many excellent musicians. Even more precious is that he combined his musical ideas with creative practice and created many excellent musical works. Among them, a large part of his creative field is occupied by adapting and creating folk piano music themes.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE STYLE PIANO MUSIC

The Early Stage of Chinese Piano Culture

The Germination of Chinese Piano Music

As a foreign musical instrument, the piano was introduced to China after the Opium War with a large-scale influx of Western culture. Although there were precedents for introducing the piano as early as the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, it was widely used in society. It began in the 20th century. Integrating Western and traditional Chinese culture has promoted the popularization and development of piano music culture in China. Piano performance activities have also gradually emerged in China with the development of piano music culture, forming the embryonic stage of Chinese piano music history, as shown in Figure 3. From the above, it can be seen that the introduction of early pianos was the seed planted by Western piano art in China, reflecting the recognition and acceptance of Western music art by Chinese culture. However, this dissemination could have been more fruitful in feudal society, where ideas were confined (B. S. Dai, 2013; C. C. Feng, 2005; Wu, 2003). However, this kind of dissemination and teaching enlightened China's piano education and developed China's piano education ideas on a small scale. It can be said that the early introduction and development of the piano laid the foundation for the development of piano culture in the 20th century.



Figure 3. The Emergence of Piano Culture

Preliminary Development of Chinese Piano Music

Since the 1920s, modern Chinese piano art has had a specific space for piano performances in the cultural life of foreign expatriates in Beijing, Shanghai, and other places. In such a relaxed social context, a large number of immigrant musicians came to China in order to survive. They established music schools, conducted music education, held professional concerts, and various music activities, especially piano performance activities, which impacted their music forms. At the same time, their piano teaching also trained many piano performing talents in China. Meanwhile, with the promotion of music exchange between China and the West, piano music culture has gradually become an essential component of China's music culture. Early piano performances appeared in professional music education institutions' concerts and gradually appeared in social activities. These activities were roughly organized into two types of groups: school groups and social groups, among which the Shanghai Ministry of Work Bureau band is more famous.

The Shanghai Bureau of Industry Orchestra is the earliest professional Western-style orchestra founded by Westerners in China. It once enjoyed the reputation of being the "First Symphony Orchestra in the Far East" and the "Only Treasure of Shanghai." During the performance of the local band. According to relevant data statistics, between 1919 and 1927, piano performances in the Ministry of Works band concerts were more active (Chen, 1995; L. Zhang, 2013). The band of the Ministry of Works has participated in approximately 50 piano performances, mainly in four forms: piano concerto, piano ensemble, piano solo, and piano accompaniment, as shown in Figure 4. During this period, the piano performance activities of the Gongbu Bureau Band were relatively active, and the

performance forms and genres were also relatively diverse. The performances of the Gongbu Bureau Band comprehensively demonstrated the diverse performance forms and important artistic status of the piano in Western music on the Chinese stage. These all reflect that the performances of the band of the Ministry of Works had a broader impact on Chinese society at that time (Qian, 2003; Luan, 2016, Chaffin, Imreh, & Crawford, 2005).

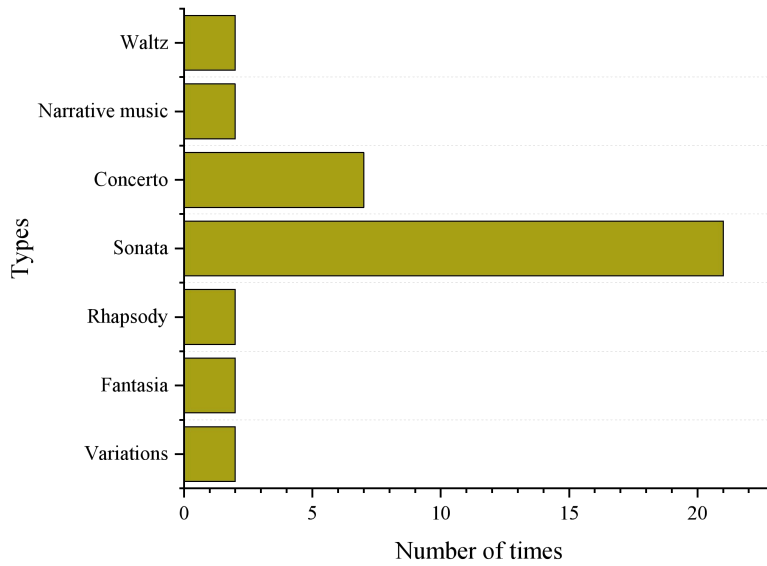


Figure 4. The Genres of Works Related to Piano Performances by the Band of the Ministry of Works from 1919 to 1927

The Innovated Development of Chinese Piano Music

The Lugouqiao Incident led to the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War, with many areas falling and Shanghai becoming an isolated island. Although China was in a difficult period of comprehensive resistance, the art of piano performance struggled through twists and turns and gradually formed a particular scale. At this time, the number of piano solo concerts gradually increased, and the level of piano performers also improved significantly due to the role of education and artistic practice. The first group of Chinese pianists who grew up began to be active in more piano performance fields, promoting the development of piano art in New China through practical performance. From 1937 to 1949, piano music in China continued to be conducted in various groups. It showed a trend of professional development, manifested in the widespread occurrence of performance activities such as concerts, music concerts, and piano concerts in social activities. This can indicate that the professionalization of piano music performance in China at this stage has been widely accepted and continuously developed in society, as shown in Figure 5.

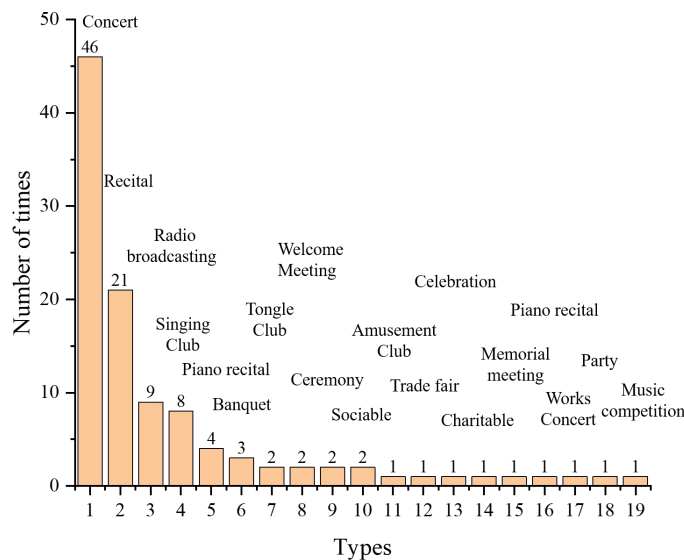


Figure 5. Frequency of Piano Performance Information in Social Activities from 1937 to 1949

It can be seen that although the proportion of piano concerts held is not as high as that of concerts, music concerts, and other forms of activities, specialized concerts using the piano as a solo instrument were popularized in society, indicating an increase in the number of people engaged in piano learning and performance in Chinese society at that time, and an increase in participation and popularity. The performance repertoire and skills also showed a certain level of professionalism. Overall, during the tumultuous historical environment of the Anti-Japanese War, although piano performance did not become the most common form of artistic activity in society then, all piano performance activities related to music content appeared more frequently during this stage. It can be said that the formal form of music concerts is gradually being accepted in society. With it, the professionalization of piano performances has further deepened and gradually matured.

The Nationalization Process of Chinese Piano Culture

Initial Prosperity Stage

During the period of socialist transformation, the feudal ideology of thousands of years and the poison of the remnants of the Kuomintang made everything in a state of abandonment and prosperity. Furthermore, music has exerted tremendous appeal and appeal, igniting people's hope and longing for the future. At the beginning of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the principle of music serving workers, peasants, and politics continued in music creation. Therefore, to conform to the purpose of music creation, the materials used in piano music creation at this stage were all popular among the people. It was not until 1956, when leaders proposed the literary and artistic policy of "letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend" to stimulate people's creative enthusiasm, musicians' thoughts became active. The main creative subjects of Chinese piano works are mainly concentrated in the teaching staff of music schools, with the "academic school" as the primary focus. Their piano music creations express personal thoughts and emotions and meet the needs of students' daily learning and practice. It has played an indelible role in the inheritance and development of nationalization for the next generation of composers and pianists.

The themes selected during this period mostly had an optimistic spirit and a lively and straightforward style. It can be close to people's lives and express the truth, goodness, and beauty of ordinary things. During this period, composers' creative enthusiasm was high, with rich themes and ethnic characteristics. Piano works can be divided into three categories based on their creative themes: piano pieces with ethnic minority customs, piano pieces depicting folk culture, and piano pieces praising the Party and the new society, as shown in Figure 6.

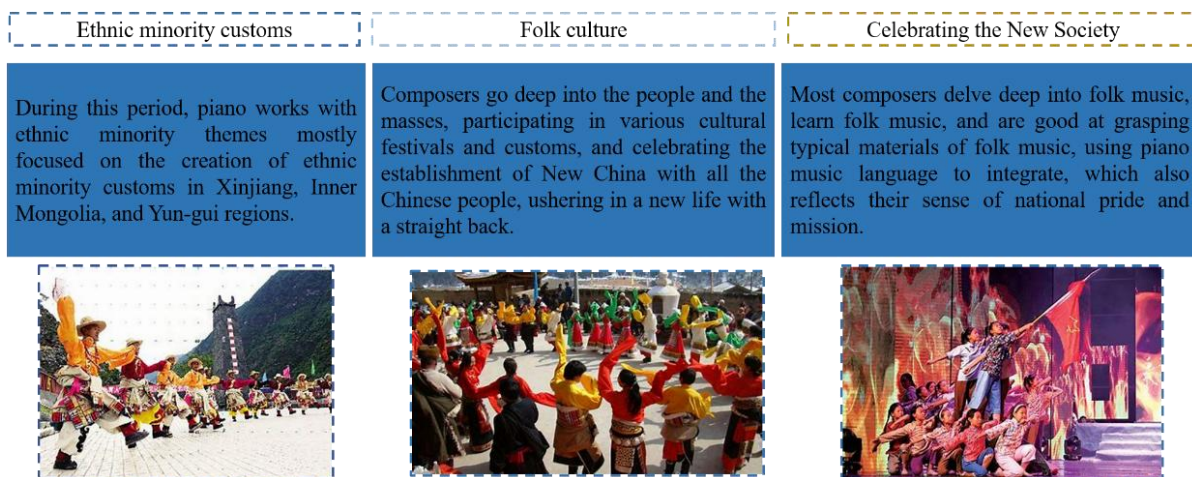


Figure 6. Preliminary Prosperity Stage

Stages of Innovated Development

The Ten-Year Cultural Revolution is a cultural desert and a spiritual wasteland. In fact, since the early 1960s, there has been a frenzy in the literary and artistic world. It was not until 1966 that there was an outbreak, and piano art encountered an unprecedented and devastating crisis.

At that time, piano art was wholly overthrown, seals were affixed to pianos in various performance venues or universities, and piano scores were also burned. Teachers and students engaged in piano art were sent to rural areas for transformation, and their hands gradually deformed in the heavy labor. Some pianists even suffered persecution and lost their lives. In that era, as adaptation was the only way out for piano creation, composers racked their brains and spent much time selecting music materials and researching adaptation methods. This has promoted the birth of many high-quality adaptations, fully showcasing traditional Chinese tunes and classical

humanistic spirit in multi-tone textured piano music.

Compared to the political requirements of the "three modernizations" in literature and art during the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the conditions for music creation during the Cultural Revolution were more stringent, requiring a focus on highlighting the revolutionary construction of music based on regulations. In an environment where music can only serve politics, piano works gradually tend to be unified; that is, the content must reflect revolutionary (Chaffin & Imreh, 2002; Shaffer, 1980). The piano accompaniment "Red Lantern" and piano concerto "Yellow River" not only survived adversity but also received great praise, confirming this point. Since then, piano music created during the Cultural Revolution has formed an inherent rule: piano works can only be adaptations, and the original piece of the piano adaptation must be a "model play" or revolutionary music that can withstand scrutiny. Therefore, the themes of piano adaptations can be divided into three categories: first, piano music adapted from "model plays"; second, piano music adapted from revolutionary songs; The third, a piano piece adapted from traditional instrumental music, as shown in Figure 7.

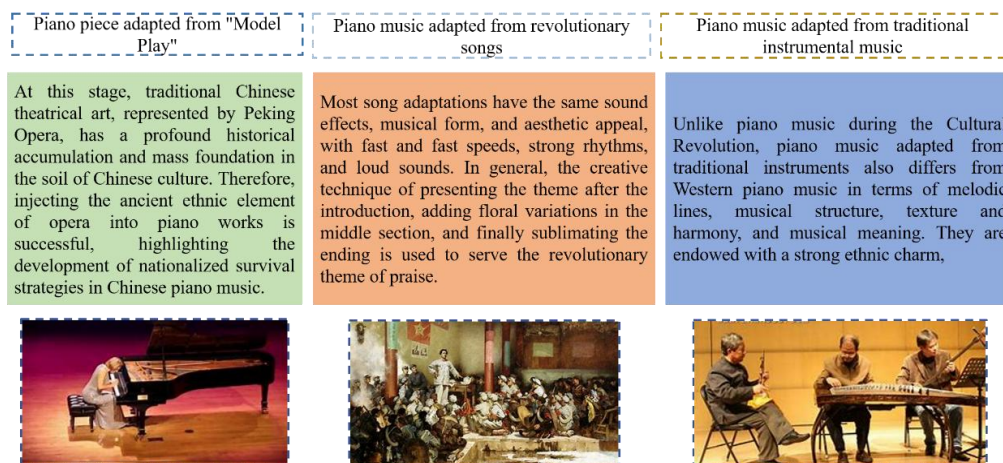


Figure 7. Stages of Innovated Development

Exploration Phase

After the Cultural Revolution's end, composers' creative enthusiasm for piano music gradually resumed. In addition, implementing the reform and opening-up policy in 1978 brought about economic prosperity and the introduction of heterogeneous cultures (Sloboda & Lehmann, 2001). Chinese piano art has also broken free from the shackles of many years and ushered in an excellent opportunity for the prosperity of Chinese piano music creation. Chinese musicians have also recognized the works and theories of foreign modern music masters, and they began to purposefully explore the creative techniques of these modern music genres in their creations, creating piano works differently from the previous two periods (Dahlhaus, 1989). Since founding of the People's Republic of China, nationalization has always been an active exploration and research object for Chinese piano composers. In the wave of reform and opening up, Chinese piano music creation faced the influence of Western modern music and how to balance and choose between the nationalization of Chinese piano music and Western modern composition techniques. During this period, composers provided three practical exploration paths, as shown in Figure 8.

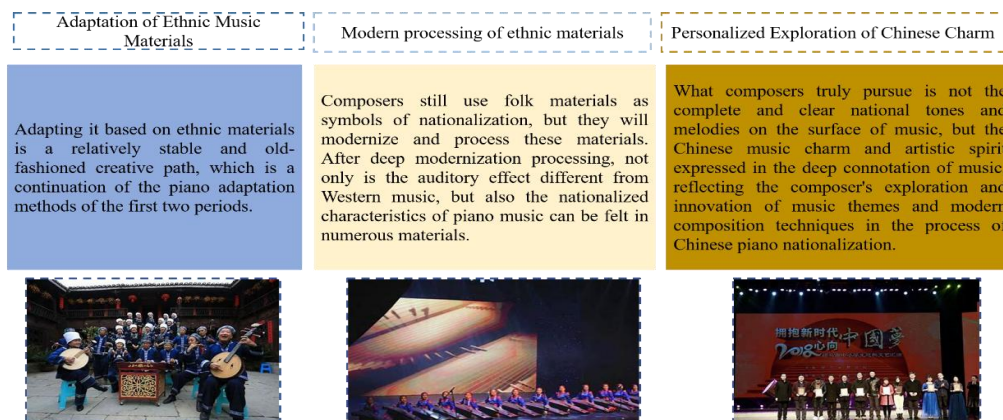


Figure 8. Exploration and Development Stage of Chinese Piano

From the analysis of the three creative exploration paths mentioned above, it can be seen that composers still focus on "nationalization" as the central theme, combined with unremitting exploration of new techniques and sound effects, in order to pursue a different Chinese music style from previous periods, reflecting the conscious identification of the cultural identity of the new generation of composers. The differences in these four creative explorations stem from composers' varying degrees of inclination and creative concepts between ethnic and modern cultures. In addition to nationalization, piano works after the reform and opening up also have the characteristics of commission, storytelling, and nonregional characteristics of the times, which make the creation of piano works more diversified based on nationalization (Newman, 1991; Atlas, 1990).

The Development Course of the 21st Century

The Development of Chinese Piano

Since the reform and opening up, China has gradually integrated with the world, and its economy, politics, and culture have developed rapidly. This rapid trend is also rare in world history. The 21st century, this form has continued, increasing instead of decreasing. The storm of globalization has brought new inspiration to the creative career of Chinese piano art. The diversification of Chinese piano music art has been prominent since the end of the last century, and in the 21st century, it tends to be more "globalized" and "integrated." Diversified cultural concepts have also penetrated Chinese piano art creation. However, there are also significant risks involved. After all, the career of piano art creation in China has been short, and its development in the 20th century could have been smoother sailing. There is still a long way to go in the future. Therefore, innovation at the current stage is crucial, as too rapid development and too much integration of new things can lead to a situation where things turn around when they reach the extreme. Therefore, in the process of diversified artistic integration, how to maintain the essence of traditional culture while fully absorbing advanced world culture has become the core issue of Chinese piano music art creation in the early 21st century.

Creative Concept

Originality

With the increasing emphasis on original piano works in China, many original piano competitions have been held in the past decade, further promoting music originality. Piano creation has reached an urgent moment. Creating music works with Chinese style has become the primary goal of developing piano music in China in the 21st century. In fact, "Chinese style" is the nation's profound cultural heritage and spiritual pursuit, just like the standard requirements for entries in the three major competitions: originality, reflecting Chinese style, and possessing strong ethnic music charm. In developing modern original pianos in China, highlighting national identity, creativity, and sense of the times has always been the original concept of piano artists. In today's rapidly developing economy of the Chinese nation, an increasing number of Chinese musicians worldwide have a sense of identity with the Chinese nation, as well as an awakening of consciousness in creating and performing piano works that embody the spirit and emotions of the Chinese nation. This has shown us the hope and strength of the future development of Chinese piano art. The development of contemporary art requires more valuable creative forms and spiritual connotations so that Chinese original piano works can gain more trust and recognition on the international stage.

Root-seeking

Among the root-seeking Chinese piano works created in the new era, Zhang Chao's "Pi Huang," Wang Xiaohan's "Lost Diary," and Wang Amao's "Sheng Dan Jing Mo Chou" all use elements from Chinese Peking Opera to create. Pi Huang "incorporates the plate style characteristics of Beijing Opera as the structure of the music. In addition to referring to traditional plate styles, the work also draws on the performance characteristics of Jinghu, plucked instruments, and gongs and drums in the "rocking board" and combines them with Tokata. The texture of the piano part is clear and concise, expressing simple and complete thoughts using traditional creative techniques. The Lost Diary also combines the twelve equal rhythms of the piano with the board style of Chinese opera music, complementing the rich Chinese cultural charm and the rich sound colors of the piano in the work. While China is rapidly developing its economy, it is learning and absorbing modern Western civilization based on its cultural traditions to develop its modernization. With profound cultural themes and musical philosophy, it endows root-seeking with new significance and value.

Literariness

In the development history of Chinese and Western art, "poetry" is inseparable; that is, literature and music history are closely linked, and combining music and poetry is also one of humanity's oldest comprehensive art forms. The language of poetry is novel and concise, with a fusion of artistic conception and scenery and the

interplay of reality and emptiness, which induces and opens up infinite aesthetic imagination space. Music is the art of sound, and composers rely on the piano's wide range and rich timbre changes to finely express the artistic conception in poetry through musical techniques. Similarly, poetry helps to understand piano music works. For example, Tchaikovsky's "Four Seasons" consists of 12 small pieces based on 12 short poems with the theme of the month, each piece of which corresponds to the artistic conception of the poem.

Title

Titled piano works have always been one of the typical characteristics of Chinese piano music creation. It inherits the characteristics of traditional Chinese aesthetics that embody emotions in the scenery and blend emotions with the scenery. Titling refers to using literary-themed descriptions to express specific content or artistic emotions in a work. The realism of boldly capturing inspiration is a prominent feature of today's headlines. For example, Cui Quan created "Orion Caprice" in 2002, a rhapsody based on Western astrological theories. Rather than being an ethereal feeling for the composer, it can be seen as an authentic experience of creating one's own space. In addition, Chen Wenjia's double piano work "Empty Hell," created in 2003, also provided another interpretation of the title. The term 'ming' in the title refers to 'thought.' The author intends to express a specific unintentional thought through rational conception in work. The size of a person's imagination determines the breadth of their creative space, which cannot be interfered with by any external force.

Artistic conception

Unlike Western music, which often portrays struggles and contradictions, Chinese piano music portrays a sense of harmony between nature and humanity, a subtle and distant atmosphere, and an exploration of itself. Gao Ping created "Night Lane" in 2006, and the artistic conception of this piece comes from his own experience. In the dark corridor, he seems to see the figures of Bach and Chopin. The same music brings different inspirations and musical ideas to people in different environments. In 2007, Liu Li created "Autumn Mountain Song," which depicts the psychological state of "contemplation and longing" among people in the deep mountains at the border of Sichuan and Yunnan. From this, one can feel their inner world of love, longing for a better life, and the author's deep cry. The artistic conception belongs to the ideological category of traditional Chinese aesthetics. When applied to the creation of piano music, it reveals a "life rhythm" of the human soul, showcasing the beauty of life itself. With the accumulation of traditional culture, the artistic conception of Chinese piano music creation is more used to praise real life and the unremitting pursuit of life ideals.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOLK SONG PIANO MUSIC

In the development process of Chinese piano music, the nationalization of piano music is an important feature, and the primary manifestation of nationalization is centered around the development and integration of folk songs. The adaptation and creation of folk piano music have always been accompanied by the development of Chinese piano music, producing the most abundant Chinese piano music works and laying the essential characteristics of Chinese-style piano music. The creation of folk piano music or the "pianization" of folk songs is the main form for Chinese composers to explore piano nationalization and the main path to explore Chinese-style piano music. It is a historical choice made by Chinese composers in the face of the localization of Western music culture.

Integration Stage

In the late Qing Dynasty and early Republic of China, the spread of piano was initially limited to missionary schools and churches. 1905 after the Qing government abolished the imperial examination system, new schools were established in various regions. The piano, as a school music accompaniment instrument, has gradually entered the lives of the Chinese people. Nevertheless, before the 1920s, few Chinese musicians created piano works, and the earliest known Chinese composer to attempt piano music creation was Zhao Yuanren. Zhao Yuanren arranged piano accompaniment for folk songs and created piano works using folk music melodies, reflecting his choice and preference for Chinese ethnic music and his specific practice of exploring the concept of "sinicization" harmony (Goertzen, 1996). The development of Chinese piano music began with piano works adapted from folk songs and other ethnic music, which may be accidental. However, it foreshadows the path, style, and value orientation of the development of Chinese piano music. From then on, adapting and creating piano works based on Chinese folk songs and other ethnic music has always been an essential form of Chinese piano music creation and has established the national and Chinese style of Chinese piano music, as shown in [Figure 9](#).

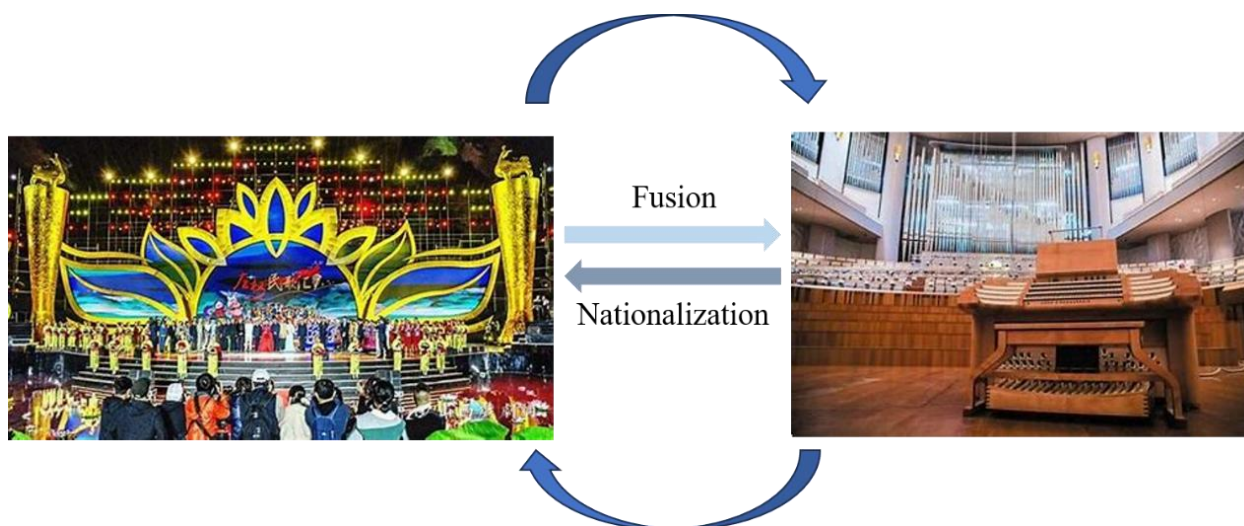


Figure 9. Nationalization of Chinese Piano

The outbreak of the Lugouqiao Incident in 1937 brought new demands for piano music creation due to the turbulence and changes in the current situation, as well as the awakening and rise of national consciousness. It also provided new opportunities for folk piano music creation. With the successive fall of Beiping (Beijing at present), Shanghai, Nanjing, and Wuhan, many music workers came to Yan'an and Chongqing. For example, the atonal piano work "In That Distant Place," created by Sang Tong during his study at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 1947, based on the melody of Kazakh folk songs of the same name, expands and develops the melody and breaks away from the traditional chord structure of triple stacking in harmony. This is a new and historic attempt at Chinese piano works.

Another example is Ding Shande's piano work "Three Preludes," created during his stay in France, influenced by French Impressionist music styles such as Debussy. Ding Shande used new techniques and imagery to express music while retaining the charm of national tones and styles. The work has novel harmonic language, diverse polyphonic techniques, and clear musical texture. Therefore, from a historical and ethnic perspective, Chinese piano music was created based on folk melodies, which initially established and formed the Chinese style of piano music. This was the choice of composers and the choice of the times and the nation, with historical inevitability.

Preliminary Development

The May Fourth Movement broke out in 1919, promoting proper piano development as a "new culture" in China. Xiao Youmei and other musicians and composers who returned from studying abroad have successively established higher professional music education institutions such as the Peking University Music Institute and the Shanghai National Conservatory of Music in Beijing, Shanghai, and other places. They have hired renowned pianists from domestic and foreign countries to teach, and the development of piano music in China has begun to enter the right track. In 1934, Russian pianist Zilpin held a competition at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music to solicit piano pieces with Chinese flavor. He hoped that this competition would produce a piano piece that he could take to perform in various places to have the opportunity to introduce Chinese music to other countries. This competition had epoch-making significance for the development of Chinese-style piano music; it not only greatly stimulated the enthusiasm of Chinese composers for piano music creation but also stimulated people's thinking about Chinese-style piano music, pointing out a new direction for the integration of piano and Chinese national music, injecting new impetus. If Zhao Yuanren's piano music creation had a chance to choose ethnic music and create accompaniment for folk songs, it had an experimental nature. It was only a choice and path for him to explore the establishment of "Chinese style" harmony. The competition held by Qi Erpin was carefully arranged and deliberately chosen, as shown in Figure 10. The motivations and starting points of the two may be different: one is to explore Chinese style harmony, and the other is to explore the Chinese piano language outside of the West, but they both have the same goal, and the result is to promote the creation, formation, and development of Chinese style piano music.

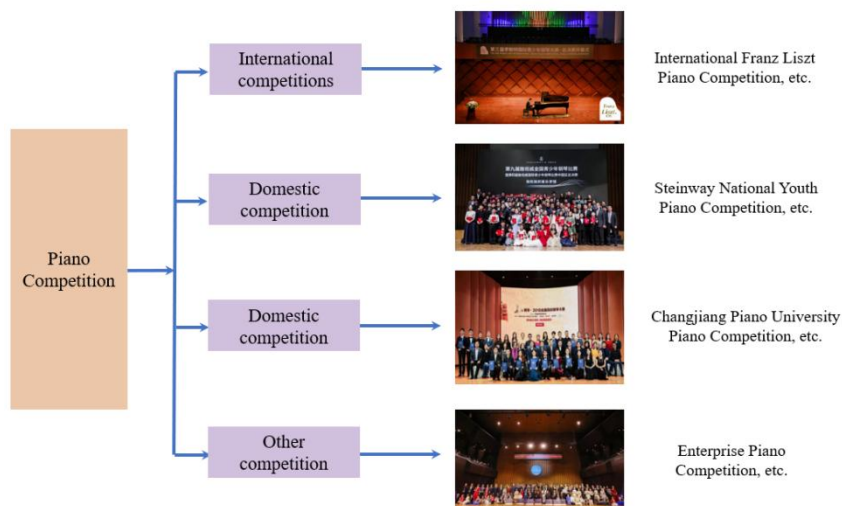


Figure 10. Piano Competition

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Innovated Development

During the Cultural Revolution, there was a gap in the development of piano music. During this period, model plays and the creation of the Yellow River Cantata provided an opportunity for piano music creation. In 1968, Yin Chengzong created piano accompaniment for the model play "Red Lantern." In 1970, several composers, such as Chu Wanghua, created the piano concerto "Yellow River" based on Xi Xinghai's "Yellow River Cantata." Afterward, adaptation and creation became an essential form of piano music development in China, as shown in Figure 11 (Taruskin, 2006; Melvin & Cai, 2004). The elements of adaptation mainly come from traditional folk songs and instrumental music. In terms of piano music created through folk song adaptation, both the number of composers involved in creating piano music and the number of works have significantly decreased compared to the "Seventeen Years" period. During this period, the creation of Chinese folk piano music was influenced. However, pianists persisted in creating with their love for the piano and their lofty aspirations for the development of Chinese piano music, allowing Chinese piano music to continue to move forward.

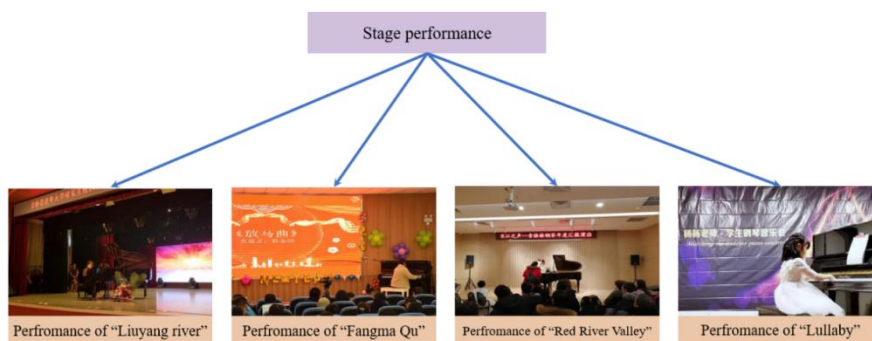


Figure 11. Piano Music Adapted from Folk Songs

Diversified Development

The reform and opening have stimulated innovative and modern development in various aspects of society. Chinese composers actively learn new creative techniques and styles such as Western modern harmony, atonality, and twelve-tone composition through external exchanges, constantly pursuing new sound and timbre. Meanwhile, on the one hand, many composers are familiar with folk music and have a deeper understanding of folk music culture; on the other hand, the changes in literature in the 1980s significantly impacted composers, inspiring them to return to tradition. Therefore, many young composers actively explore integrating modern Western composition techniques with traditional Chinese culture. Against this historical background, folk songs have once again entered the field of piano music creation, and Chinese folk song piano music creation has entered a period of diversified development.

It is worth noting that after the reform and opening up, many composers chose the same folk song and used different techniques to create piano music. In 1947, Sang Tong adapted the atonal piano work "In That Distant Place" from a folk song of the same name. In 1999, Chu Wanghua also combined this folk song with the piano, using a highly dynamic accompaniment style to make this soft and graceful song extremely passionate. In 2011, Zhang Chao again used this folk song as the material for creation, using rich piano-like textures to give the work a brilliant technical flair. The piano works of the same name created by different composers at different times using the same folk song as the material reflect the different creative concepts of the composers, presenting different individual styles and reflecting the diversified characteristics of Chinese style piano music.

The Development of Folk Song Piano in the 21st Century

Creative Group

The creative group of Chinese piano works in the 21st century is increasingly showing a trend of youthfulness. This creative group has a more open creative philosophy and a youthful mindset, making it easier to accept new things in terms of creation and adopt more fresh exploration techniques. Based on the exploration of Chinese piano music with national style by predecessors, the new generation of composers is no longer just exploring but constantly trying to create new creative methods and produce innovative sound effects; At the same time, they consciously base themselves on Chinese musical elements in their works, attempting to better integrate the characteristics of Chinese national music with modern Western creative methods, in order better to showcase the cultural spirit of the Chinese nation.

Creative Thinking

Globalization has positively and creatively impacted the creation of Chinese piano works in the 21st century. Firstly, globalization has led to the transformation and development of social culture, accelerating the dissemination of piano culture and expanding the exchange of piano music between China and the West. The fierce collision between traditional national culture and modern thinking concepts has created a broader space and broadened horizons. Globalization has provided favorable conditions and technical means for creating and developing Chinese piano works. Therefore, in the process of globalization and diversification, the creation of piano works in our country can only be rooted in the cultural characteristics and spiritual connotations of our nation, and can we use modern technology to participate in extensive music exchanges around the world, to bring new opportunities to the creation of piano art.

Creative Stage

The inheritance, development, and innovation of Chinese piano works have gone through various historical periods of change and transformation and a difficult path of exploration. Composers have created a large number of piano works. From early imitations of the embryonic works of European Romanticism to the creation of China's first truly mature piano polyphonic work with a national style, from the early exploration stage to the creative stage, from highly political creations that pursued "Chinese flavor" and works adapted from traditional ethnic instrumental music to the later prosperous stage of "a hundred flowers blooming," a batch of works with new concepts, Showing a new direction in piano music creation. The creation of Chinese piano music has also gone through the stage of imitation and learning, digestion and absorption, and now has reached the stage of integration and innovation. In addition to being able to utilize modern and innovative composition techniques from the West, it is more important to integrate ethnic music into it and actively participate in the exchange of Western and world music. This has led to the emergence of Chinese piano works on an increasing number of international stages, which have had an enormous impact.

RESEARCH ON PIANO CULTURE

By studying Sang Tong's piano works from different historical periods, the process of piano nationalization development is studied, demonstrating the characteristics of piano under the influence of nationalization.

During the Chinese Civil War

During this period, Sang Tong created "In That Far Place." In the design of the entire piece, different variations were made according to the emotional requirements of each segment when the theme melody appeared. In terms of tonality, the author ensures the atonal effect of the entire piece through compositional techniques such as full scale and half tone of the voice. The first four segments are atonal, and the last is tonal, but it ends in atonal harmony, echoing from beginning to end, with a beginning and an end, as shown in Figure 12. The creative thinking of the entire piece has played an essential role in integrating traditional Chinese music themes with atonal harmony, better exerting the expressive power of music, and deepening the connotation of the music. Sang Tong's piano music creation did not follow the previous Western classical harmony but combined with the original Chinese folk music after accepting new creative techniques, forming his new creative concept.

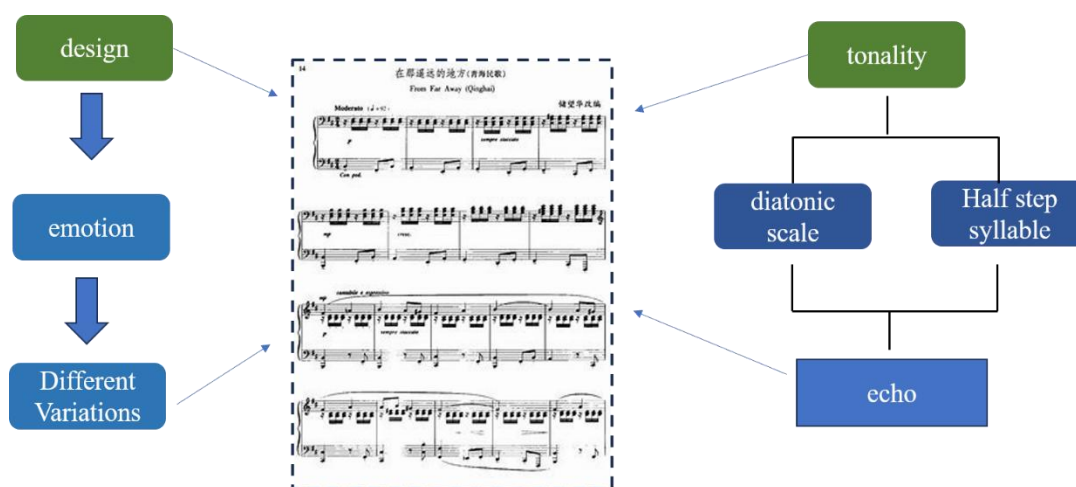


Figure 12. Piano Music Creation

During this period, Sang Tong was a young man with an ideological personality, originality, and exploratory spirit. This ideology laid the foundation for his later creation of piano music in China and also formed the source of his creative philosophy. In his subsequent music works, this creative concept runs.

In the Early Days of the Founding of the People's Republic of China

Sang Tong's piano creation during this period was the peak and mature period of his piano creation. At this stage, Sang Tong began exploring his creative path and successfully integrated this idea into his piano works. Through their unique thinking, true musicians engage in highly personalized music creation practices to express their subjective considerations and intuitive and subjective artistic feelings after comparing reality. Sang Tong also sought the future development and innovation path of Chinese piano music through his passionate passion in the early days of founding the People's Republic of China and through many creations. This was also the peak and mature period of Sang Tong's piano creation. His creations followed tradition but were not constrained by it. He attempted to apply various genres with unique, innovative techniques. This style of composition also influenced many composers in the future.

The "Capriccio" is a representative work of Sang Tong's piano creation during this period, and it is also a symbol of reaching a new height. The creation of this piece is no longer an imitation of previous innovation but a beginning of one's creation; the music is more grand and broad, and the artistic conception is profound. Both creative techniques, structural and harmonic arrangements, are more mature, as shown in Figure 13. Sang Tong's previous piano works were all titled music, with directional artistic conception and image creation. In "Caprice," the musical image carries a sense of ambiguity and directionality. His creations began to break free from the constraints of the original framework and move towards deeper exploration. In terms of musical expression, fully express the free artistic consciousness one wants to express in the music. The "Capriccio" adopts a sonata form with interludes.

Furthermore, in the insertion of his work, Mr. Sang Tong also adopted the style of reproducing a single trilogy, breaking the original musical structure, which is a powerful manifestation of his composition style not tending

towards tradition but daring to innovate. In this work, Mr. Sang Tong alternates the middle ancient mode and the Chinese pentatonic national mode, allowing the music to have both the characteristics of traditional Chinese music and the shadow of Western classical music. Finally, he returns to the middle ancient mode and ends the piece. The dual mode opposition, unified contradiction, structurally robust rhythmic forms, and the application of various beats together shape the characteristics of Sang Tong's "Capriccio" creation: the coexistence of modernity, nationality, and tradition.

Figure 13. Capriccio Score

Piano Works From the 1980s Onwards

Due to political persecution and physical factors during the Cultural Revolution, Sang Tong rarely created musical works for over a decade after the 1960s. Until the reform and opening in the 1980s, only one piano work, "Nine Folk Song Theme Piano Songs," was released.

The Nine Folk Song Theme Piano Songs "is a mature work carefully organized, designed, and conceived by Sang Tong after creating the "Random Thoughts "in the early days of founding the People's Republic of China. It is more mature and complete than the "Seven Inner Mongolia Folk Song Theme Songs "and is a new exploration of the nationalization of Chinese piano creation. However, the creative techniques and ideas continue the style of his early creation, so the innovation points of the work need to be more prominent. This period was also the formative period for Sang Tong's piano creation.

After the 1980s, Mr. Sang Tong left his post at home, but he devoted his entire life to creating Chinese music culture and actively explored and studied the field of harmony. During the 25 years from his retirement to his death, he published many articles and works on harmony theory. He laid an excellent theoretical foundation for future Chinese musicians through these articles, theoretical knowledge, and the proposal of new arguments. It enriches and supplements the research on Chinese harmony theory.

CONCLUSION

The development of Chinese music culture is like the growth process of absorbing the essence of various music cultures from a tiny seedling and finally becoming a towering tree. Whether the pipa and erhu were introduced in ancient times or the piano and violin were introduced in modern times, traditional Chinese music can gradually assimilate them, making them increasingly nationalized. The development of nationalization of Chinese piano works reflects the collision between composers' creative concepts and the characteristics of the times. Composers of various eras constantly try to present "Chinese style and national charm" in piano works. There is still significant room for development in the nationalization of piano works, and composers need to pursue the characteristics of the times while retaining the soul of Chinese piano works - nationalization. Although most of Sang Tong's piano music creations are very short, he has given a new perspective, perspective, and nutrition to the branch of Chinese piano music culture, giving the tree a new green color. On the development path of Chinese piano music creation, we should pay more attention to the piano music culture of our nation. We should not only learn from the achievements of previous composers but also recognize the shortcomings and drawbacks. The experience demonstrated in developing Chinese piano culture is a precious historical experience for us to learn.

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