The Significance of Shui-Long Ma's Composition in the Evolution of Taiwanese Piano Music

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SHUI-LONG MA’S COMPOSITION IN THE EVOLUTION
OF TAIWANESE PIANO MUSIC

By

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ABSTRACT

Even though the church introduced western music to the Taiwanese people, professional musicians did not appear until the following colonial years of Japan, known as the Japanese colonial period (1895-1945). During those fifty years, any Taiwanese who aspired to be a professional musician had to go to Japan for his or her education.

After WWII, Taiwan was returned to China and subsequently entered the period of fifty-year Nationalist’s ruling. Like many developing countries in Asia, Taiwan enjoyed a fast-growing economy. It resulted in drastic changes in many aspects, both politically and socially. The value of traditional art was also challenged by the westernization of its society. As one of the most prominent Taiwanese composers, Shui-long Ma strongly promotes the traditional spirit of Taiwan in contemporary musical composition.

The musical works Shui-long Ma has written for piano span his entire career. The solo pieces he has written for western instruments are also mostly for keyboard instruments. Through an examination of his piano works, this study shows: 1) how Ma incorporated and transformed elements of traditional art and folk music into his works; and 2) how mainstream piano composition in Taiwan developed during the decades in the second half of the 20th century. All discussions then lead to the conclusion of the significance of Shui-long Ma’s compositions in the evolution of Taiwanese piano music.
CHAPTER I
Historical Background and The Development of Western Music in Taiwan

1. The Japanese Colonial Period (1895-1945)

“Even though Taiwan first encountered western culture as early as 1624, it was the period of Japanese Colonization (1895-1945) that had the greatest impact on her development of western music.”¹

Japan had long been immersed in western culture since their total westernization movement initiated in 1868. After losing the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, the Qing government of China ceded Taiwan to Japan by the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Soon after colonizing Taiwan, the Japanese government set up an educational system modeled after the West. Music education was mainly conducted in two school systems: public schools and teachers’ institutes, in which ‘singing’ was one of the mandatory courses.² The singing classes served the purpose of establishing Japanese-speaking culture through learning Japanese and western-style songs; therefore, the all-western music system was finally introduced and accepted by the majority of Taiwanese people.

Despite the availability of general music courses, there was no professional music institute in Taiwan during the fifty years of Japanese rule. The best students were offered scholarships and encouraged to study music formally in Japan. It was during this time that

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the first group of native Taiwanese art musicians arose. They mostly studied voice and piano, some chose other instruments, while only four students—Si-zhi Chen, Quan-sheng Lu, Zhi-yuan Guo and Wen-ye Jiang majored in composition. These Japanese-trained musicians then became major contributors to the development of western music in Taiwan. The first concert featuring western music took place in 1932, and after years of promotion, this kind of musical activity gradually became part of the social life of the Taiwanese people.

2. After WWII (1945-1987)

“Following its defeat in World War II, Japan ceded Taiwan to the Nationalist government of the Republic of China. Politically authoritarian and sensitive, Chinese and Russian communist elements were completely banned, whereas Western culture was allowed. It was safer to approach Western culture, which was novel at the time, so modernism and cosmopolitanism became the norm in the 1950s and 60s.”

After WWII, Japan relinquished its hold over Taiwan amid an ongoing civil war in mainland China. The fight for China between the Nationalist Party and the Chinese Communist Party, which began in 1930, was about to reach its climax. In 1949, the Chinese Communist Party gained complete control of the mainland, while the defeated Nationalist government and remnants of its army sought refuge in Taiwan. The Chinese Communists attempted to invade Taiwan and their attacks did not cease until 1959, when the United States reasserted its determination to defend the island. As a result, within about 10 years Taiwanese society underwent a chaotic period from wars brought by Japan in its last years of colonial rule through the early stage of the Nationalist government’s settlement.

In order to suppress the native resentment against the ruling Nationalist Party and to comfort the new immigrants escaping from the mainland, the Nationalist government set up a

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5 Han, 9.
cultural policy that strongly favored Chinese traditional music. For example the Beijing Opera was viewed as national opera. In addition, under the policy of anti-communism, patriotic songs were included in music textbooks, and Chinese became the mandatory language taught in schools. Musicians coming from the mainland were highly regarded because of the cultural and political identities they represented. On the other hand, the Taiwanese traditional arts (using the Taiwanese dialect) were neglected, or were viewed as low-class arts.\(^7\)

Playing dominant roles in Taiwan’s musical development, the mainland musicians helped set up the first-ever music division in higher education in the Provincial Normal College (now National Taiwan Normal University) in 1946. Through the combined efforts of native musicians and those from the mainland, Taiwan’s musical scene gradually emerged. Between 1945 and 1960, more music divisions were established in schools. There were five government-sponsored orchestras and several music organizations, including the instrument factory of Yamaha, as well as the establishment of music competitions in Taiwan.

Musical compositions written during this period were mostly short vocal pieces. Stylistically, most composers of this generation favored 19th-century Romanticism with Chinese melodies— in other words, pentatonic-Romanticism.\(^8\) Under the influence of immigrating mainland composers, the style resembles one that was popular among Chinese composers during the 1920s. These composers were mostly trained in the earliest established conservatories in Beijing, Shanghai and Fujien. They usually received strict training in the traditional tonal system (their attitude, especially towards teaching, tended to be more conservative) and did not pay much attention to the new trend of 20th century music rising in the West. In 1952, the Taiwanese Provincial Education Association published the first issue of a monthly magazine “Newly Selected Songs,” which continued for eight years. From the nearly 450 newly composed songs, one can see the style of composers in Taiwan during that period. Since these songs were also largely selected as teaching material in the standard music textbooks, they exerted a powerful influence in the music environment of Taiwan.\(^9\)

The music department of the Provincial Normal College produced the first post-war

\(^8\) Han, 9.
\(^9\) You, 39.
generation of composers. Among them, Chang-huei Xu, Wei-liang Shi, De-yi Liu and Yan Lu are the most distinguished ones. Unlike past generations of Japanese-trained musicians, they usually chose to go to Europe or America for advanced study. Upon returning to Taiwan, some of them taught in the music department of National Taiwan Junior College of the Arts (now National Taiwan University of the Arts).

Newly established in 1957, the Department of Music in National Taiwan Junior College of the Arts distinguished itself from the one in the education-based Provincial Normal College. It aimed at producing professional musicians instead of teachers and was also the first school to set up a department of composition and theory for training professional composers. Some of its early graduates, including Shui-long Ma, Jin-tang Shen, Tai-xiang Li, and Long-xin Wen, have remained active and even assumed leadership roles in the field of music composition in Taiwan. For decades, these two music departments cultivated performers and composers who strongly influenced the music environment in Taiwan.

- The “Modernist Literary Movement” and The Birth of Taiwanese Contemporary Music

Between 1950 and 1960, Taiwan experienced an impressive economic growth, thanks to the economic aid program of the United States. It reached an average growth rate of 10%, and gradually its affluence resulted in drastic social changes. Within the next two decades, there were two literary movements that greatly impacted the society on both political and social aspects, and directly influenced the circle of art.

Just like the music circle in Taiwan, the mainland writers, who enjoyed strong support by the Nationalist government for their merits of promoting Mandarin-speaking culture and writing anti-communist, anti-Japanese articles, dominated the literary scene. Despite the artistic merit of these literary works, the rise of a young generation of modernists challenged the realism they presented, as well as their ideological control over writers.\(^{10}\)

This new generation of Taiwanese intellectuals embraced western philosophies and rejected the traditional social values based on Confucianism established a thousand years ago. Influenced by Freudian psychoanalysis and western existentialism, writings of these

\(^{10}\) http://www.roc-taiwan.org/taiwan/5-gp/yearbook/chpt19.htm
Taiwanese modernists presented strong emphasis on rationalism, human behavior and iconoclasm. This is the famous “Modernist Literary Movement” in the 1960s, so overwhelming that it quickly spread to almost every field of art, from painting, theater to music. It was during this time, when composer Chang-huei Xu gave his first composition recital in 1960, and took Taiwan’s music development into a new era.

When Xu returned to Taiwan after completing study in Paris in 1959, the majority of composers in Taiwan were still applying the traditional, tonal compositional techniques taught by professors from the mainland. Thus Xu’s recital, which featured 20th century compositional techniques, was viewed as a bold and innovative experiment. Xu recollected: “… the value of my musical works in that recital is not a primary concern, I myself cannot represent contemporary music. But, the recital was absolutely the first-ever concrete presentation of the language of contemporary music in Taiwan… Back then, even though the history of contemporary music movement in the world had been going through more than half a century… In Taiwan, it was still unknown…” After his recital, more than ten critiques appeared in newspapers and magazines within half a month.11 These intense discussions truly reflected its impact and influence on future composers.

Even though most of the reviews reported negatively on Xu’s recital, the enthusiastic discussions surely attracted many composers’ attention towards contemporary music. Xu invited three other composers and organized the Music Making Workshop. This group published local musical works and presented a total of eight new music concerts between 1961-72. Other composers’ groups also emerged, including New Music Premiere, Jiang-lang (river wave) Music Workshop, Wu-ren (five men) Music Workshop and Sunflower Music Workshop.

The composition techniques commonly used during this period were influenced by the music of Debussy, Bartók, and other early 20th century composers. It is fair to say that Taiwan’s western music development was about half a century behind. The earlier style of mixing the classical tonal system with pentatonic melodies was seldom found, if not totally abandoned. Instead, composers were searching for more approaches within the scope of various 20th century compositional techniques to better incorporate with the Chinese modal system. Some composers preferred to adopt the Chinese modal system and music materials

11 You, 43-44.
as the basic theoretical underpinning of their works, while mixing it with western musical elements.

It is interesting to note that what differentiated the contemporary musical scene from other fields of art during this period of westernization and modernization was that composers tended to be more involved in the technical, rather than the ideological aspect of it. In order to express personal feelings and cultural identity, composers continued to employ Chinese music, literature and paintings as their inspiration. In later years, Xu described the mainstream compositional styles of this period as “Chinese music modernization,” which actually meant an imitation of styles and techniques. Nevertheless, the trend of modernization in the 1960s was an important turning point in the development of western music in Taiwan. At the same time, the modernists’ movement fervently supported by the majority of artist and intelligentsia, as well as the influence of capitalism through rapid economic growth, inevitably caused the decline of traditional Taiwanese arts.

- The “Modern Poetry Debate” and The “Return to Native Roots” Trend

In the late 1960s, some writers, scholars and artists began to resist the current dominance of the all-western modernism and wanted something that was more in touch with their own environment and culture. The arguments between the two parties resulted in igniting the “Modern Poetry Debate” in 1972 and the fire lasted until the end of the decade. In fact, this phenomenon generally reflected the growing awareness of cultural identity among artists and intellectuals throughout the 70s and was later known as the “Return to Native Roots” trend.

Between 1966 and 1967, Chang-huei Xu and Wei-liang Shi initiated a “Taiwanese Folksong Collecting Project,” the largest folksong collecting activity ever undertaken in Taiwan. Their collections included folksongs from both aboriginal tribes and the Han Chinese. According to Shi, this project had three important meanings: 1) to preserve, research and understand folksongs and customs for the Han Chinese of different provinces; 2) to preserve the history of Taiwanese music culture from the rapid changes of society due to industrialization and modernization; and 3) to further find our soul and create music of our

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12 Zhang, 392.

own. This project had a direct impact on composers’ aesthetical views towards musical composition, and the collections remained until now one of the most important resources for local composers.\textsuperscript{14}

After several music groups established earlier were disbanded, Xu recruited eleven young composers, including Shui-long Ma, to establish a formal organization called China Modern Music Research Association in 1969. The association sought better intercommunication between Taiwanese composers. It later became the Republic of China’s branch of the international organization – the Asian Composers’ League in 1973, and has, until recent years, been the center for Taiwanese composers.

One important organization that strongly contributed to the “Return to Native Roots” trend was the Cloud Gate Dance Theater, founded by Huai-min Lin in 1973. Over the years, Lin commissioned numerous native composers to write dance music to promote the spirit of Taiwanese art. It was an ideal situation for both the composers, whose music received performance opportunities, as well as the larger course of integrating native materials into new Taiwanese compositions.\textsuperscript{15}

The ideological sense of “Return to Native Roots” among composers waned in the late 1970s when, like many developing countries, the Taiwanese social life began to be dominated by the rise of pop culture. After the abandonment of Martial Law in 1987, Taiwan’s society enjoyed a much freer and more democratic environment. As observed by musicologist Ji-ren Zhang: “by and large the “return to native roots” did not achieve further progress in the effort of combining nativity, reality and tradition. Many people found that some attempts of employing traditional materials in fact were only superficial combinations of traditional and modern forms, thus losing the organic energy.”\textsuperscript{16}

More young composers also returned to Taiwan after the 80s, having studied in western countries. In general, Taiwanese composers found more maturity in their compositional techniques, and were able to establish personal styles through years of self-searching experiments. They tried to look through the myth of nationalism in order to better accommodate the ever-changing society. Hence, Taiwanese contemporary music after the

\textsuperscript{14} You, 104-111.

\textsuperscript{15} Zhang, 393-94.

\textsuperscript{16} Zhang, 396-97.
80s generally demonstrated more cosmopolitan styles.
CHAPTER II
The Environment and Development of Taiwanese Piano Music

1. Education for Professional Pianists in Taiwan

Education for professional pianists in Taiwan before 1945 was limited. Those interested in pursuing careers as professional pianists would eventually have to go to Japan, as did musicians in other disciplines. Even though music departments were gradually being set up in colleges and universities since 1946, these programs were all associated with higher education and sometimes secondary school. Talented children who wished to study the piano had to find private teachers individually. This situation finally changed in 1963, when Guang-ren Catholic Elementary School established the first-ever professional music program for children in Taiwan. A continuation program was established in Guang-ren’s junior high and high schools within the next ten years. The entire system of professional music training in Taiwan then entered a new era.

After Guang-ren initiated its music program that offered instruction to students from elementary to high school levels, some public schools launched similar programs of their own. To date, there have been more than forty professional music programs set up in public schools from elementary to high school level. One common feature among these programs is the requirement for all non-piano majors to take piano as the secondary instrument. Thus, one can only imagine the size of the piano student population in Taiwan.

Another common yet unfortunate feature among piano departments across the country was the neglect of music by native composers. Through examining the teaching materials and the jury programs of these piano departments, one can easily find that they are almost exclusively from the western piano repertoire. Only in extremely few cases was Taiwanese piano music being chosen as part of jury or competition programs.

In order to promote Taiwanese piano music, the annual government-sponsored Taiwan Piano Competition started in 1978 with the requirement that all participants play one
Taiwanese piano piece in each division. The annual Kawai young artist competition, begun five years later, also adopted this requirement. In recent years, some piano departments in higher education even began requiring a Taiwanese piano work to be included in all piano students’ graduation recital programs. Such efforts eventually made Taiwanese piano music noticeable to local pianists, as well as some recording companies. CD recordings of native piano compositions were encouraged mainly for educational purposes, which in turn made the music even more popular.

2. The Development of Taiwanese Piano Music

In the master’s thesis *The Development and Research of Taiwanese Piano Music*, 17 National Taiwan Normal University’s Yi-qing Huang collected a total of 142 Taiwanese piano works. The dates of these compositions ranged from 1938 to 1993.

Huang divided the piano works into three historical time frames (before 1960, 1960-1974, and since 1975), and then further categorized them according to various musical forms. This research showed that there were only twelve Taiwanese piano works composed before 1960, but, as a result of the modernization movement and the government’s continuous efforts to ameliorate professional music education, repertoire has increased dramatically since then. A total of fifty-six pieces were added to the repertoire within the fifteen years. There was even more piano music created in the last period, for which Huang gathered a total of seventy-four piano compositions.

As for the musical forms adopted in these piano works, single pieces, sonatas and suites represent the majority of the repertoire. Yet of particular interest to Taiwanese composers was the large amount of transcriptions from folksongs—there were at least fifteen collections of folksongs transcribed in the 1970s and the 1980s. Concerning the level of piano technique, the majority of these transcriptions are within the technical proficiency of elementary and intermediate levels, which strongly indicates that the purpose of the compositions was educational. Other than solo pieces there were only a few concertos, two-piano or four-hand pieces. Most of these piano concertos, including the larger-scale piano

17 Yi-qing Huang, “The Development and Research of Taiwanese Piano Music” (M.M. thesis, National Taiwan Normal University, 1993), 44.
compositions, were composed after 1980.

Despite the personal styles of individual composers, compositional techniques uniformly reflect Taiwan’s development of western-style musical compositions through its piano works, which represent a significant portion of Taiwanese contemporary repertoire. Therefore, musical examples of Taiwanese compositions before and after 1960 will be presented in reference to compositional styles.

As mentioned in the earlier chapter, the Taiwanese western-style musical works written before 1960 feature traditional western tonal harmony. Some of them reflect the strong influences of certain European composers of the Romantic period, while others exhibit Taiwanese composers’ early attempts of infusing oriental flavors into their musical works. Most of the piano music is made up of programmatic, nostalgic, and lyric pieces. For example, the opening eight measures of Si-zhi Chen’s *Breezes through the Banana Leaves* clearly demonstrated the traditional harmonic progressions I-IV-V-I in a broken chord style. Notice the resemblance of the lyrical nature of this piece and that of some lyric pieces of Robert Schumann. (Fig. 2.2.1)

1)  

![Musical notation](image1)

2)  

![Musical notation](image2)

Fig. 2.2.1: 1) *Breezes through the Banana Leaves* from *Sketch of Taiwan* by Si-zhi Chen.  
Taiwanese composers in the 1960s and the 1970s gradually turned their attention away from the major/minor system as the primary foundation of their musical compositions. They focused more on various uses of modal and pentatonic systems, since in most cases the modal system coordinates better than the major/minor system and often sounds more natural with the pentatonic system. Under the influences of leading early 20th century composers like Debussy, Bartók, Stravinsky and Schoenberg, new compositional techniques such as polytonality and even atonality were gradually introduced into Taiwanese piano music.

The opening measures of *The Moon Sets in the West* show the great influence of Bartók. Composer Zhi-yuan Guo creates an effect of bitonality by mixing different pentatonic scales in a canon-like style of writing. (Fig. 2.2.2)

![Fig. 2.2.2: The Moon Sets in the West from Four Chinese Szechuan Folk Songs by Zhi-yuan Guo.](image)

Another example employing 20th century techniques is *A Tender Cabbage* by composer Chang-hui Xu, where he also applies bitonality into this arrangement of Chinese folksong. The G♭ and F♭ in the right hand part of the opening two measures not only weaken the tonic-dominant function but also adds an interesting color to the music. Additionally, by employing the acoustic effect of the tone cluster, the composer successfully furnishes this folksong with a contemporary touch. (Fig. 2.2.3)

![Fig. 2.2.3: A Tender Cabbage from Chinese Folk Songs For Piano, Book II by Chang-hui Xu.](image)

Other than mixing 20th century western and Chinese musical elements, some composers prefer the sole use of 20th century compositional elements and approaches (such as octatonic scale and twelve-tone music). Yet another common compositional approach...
employed among composers was the exclusive adoption of the pentatonic system as the fundamental theory of music. Music composed using this kind of approach usually has a strong Chinese folksong-like flavor.
CHAPTER III
The Composer

"The little things in life has become part of my flesh and blood, which I was able to convey through my music." -- Shui-long Ma

Taiwanese composer Ma Shui-Long was born in 1939 in the city of Ji-long, one of the major ports in Taiwan. His father was a local traditional Chinese medicine doctor. Since his early childhood days, Ma began showing particular interest in the area of arts, especially in painting and music. The images of the statues in local temples and Taiwanese folk music, especially the traditional theater music played constantly around temple areas, inspired the young Ma very much and became deeply rooted in his heart. Not being able to afford a private teacher and aspiring to learn music, he started teaching himself, using a harmony textbook bought in the local bookstore.

Even though he spent much time studying music and painting as extra-curricular activities during high school years, Ma did not receive formal musical training until the age of seventeen. Three years later, Shui-long Ma entered the National Taiwan Junior College of the Arts, where he majored in composition and minored in piano and cello. His major teachers included Er-hua Xiao, Yan Lu and Chang-huei Xu.

Er-hua Xiao, who greatly influenced the young composer, graduated from Shanghai College of Music (now Shanghai Conservatory of Music) and had further studies in Japan. Xiao’s books on harmony and counterpoint showed his broad knowledge of the classical tonal system. His meticulous teaching attitude was famous and highly respected in Taiwan. Under his guidance, Ma received complete and strict training in the traditional tonal system.

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On the other hand, Chang-huei Xu, who had just returned from Paris, played a leading role in promoting 20th century compositional techniques, and encouraged Ma to search for a new musical language.

Perhaps influenced by his childhood experiences in traditional music, Ma paid particular attention to the courses related to Chinese music in college, when most of his peers were mainly interested in western music. He won his first composition award at the age of twenty-four with his work for solo piano – *Rondo*, a work featuring a pentatonic flavor.

After graduating with the top prize, Ma began teaching music classes in public schools in Ji-long. In order to promote musical culture, he also helped organize a new orchestra and directed several school choirs. In 1967, he co-founded the Sunflower Music Workshop, one of the composers’ groups that were popular during the 1960’s. Through compositional activities organized by Sunflower, Ma was able to explore new techniques while working with his fellow composers. Upon receiving a full scholarship from the Regensburg Kirchenmusik Hochschule, in 1971, Ma traveled to Germany where he studied composition with Dr. Oskar Sigmund and graduated with highest honors. When he returned, Ma began teaching composition at Soochow University. Since then, Ma has won many awards and received commissions from many organizations, including the National Culture and Arts Foundation, as well as several leading private foundations.

Since 1981, Ma has been the coordinator of the music department aimed at cultivating professional artists- The National Institute of the Arts (now Taipei National University of the Arts.) The major difference distinguishing this institute from other existing schools was not only the higher performing standard for students, but also the focus on traditional culture and art. For thirteen years, he devoted himself whole-heartedly to the educational and administrative works of the Institute, which resulted in very limited time left for composing. However, the new pieces Shui-long Ma produced during this period showed individual characteristics in the aspects of instrumental combination, musical forms and styles.

Ma’s reputation as a composer was also internationally recognized. In 1986, he was

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21 Chen, 163.
invited to Columbia University and the University of Pennsylvania as a Fulbright scholar. After the great success of being the first-ever Chinese composer presenting a full recital at New York’s Lincoln Center, Ma received invitations from many organizations and presented programs in other major U.S. cities, including Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Los Angeles. In Taiwan, his Bamboo Flute Concerto was also selected and performed in Taipei by America’s National Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Mstislav Rostropovich.

The musical compositions of Shui-long Ma consist of many genres, including works for ballet, theater, orchestra, chamber ensemble, solo piano, voice, and also for traditional Chinese instruments. Of his entire compositional output, the piano compositions are the most numerous among his instrumental solo music.
CHAPTER IV  
Shui-long Ma’s Piano Music

1. Solo Pieces

- *Rondo, For Piano Solo*

*Rondo, For Piano Solo* was written in 1963, during Shui-long Ma’s senior year in college. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this piece won Ma his first-ever prize in composition. It was premiered in the same year by pianist Zi-zhen Xu, who eventually became the composer’s wife.

*Rondo* has a cheerful, pentatonic, almost dance-like character. According to musicologist Han-jin Chen, it is among the representative works of Ma’s college years. The contrapuntal treatment and the overall non-western style in this composition are greatly influenced by Er-hua Xiao’s choral arrangement of a collection of Chinese folksongs.\(^\text{22}\)

Although *Rondo, For Piano Solo* has a strong pentatonic flavor, it has the basic structure of a rondo: A-B-A-C-A. Within each section, the main theme is first played with one hand, and subsequently played with some variation by the other hand in the second half of the section. Also, this piece basically follows classical compositional techniques in terms of modulation and transition. For example, the sequential passage bridging the end of section C to the return to section A is a standard transitional technique used in classical compositions. (Fig. 4.1.1)

\(^{22}\) Chen, 75-6.
Pianistically, the style of accompaniment in the left hand part in ‘lento’ resembles the style of Chopin. (Fig. 4.1.2)

To complete the Rondo in pentatonic style, major elements such as the pentatonic melodic lines, frequent use of the intervals of seconds and fifths, are employed. But aside from these popular methods, Ma wrote the majority of this piece in two-part style, in order to avoid too much harmonic resemblance to western classical music.

It is interesting to note that this Rondo was only published in 1999, more than three decades after its completion. But even though it was not available to the public until then, this light-hearted, audience-friendly piano piece will serve as a nice addition to the piano repertoire, as well as the teaching materials in Taiwan.

- Suite Taiwan

Shui-long Ma’s compositional period between the years of 1968 and 1971 is commonly recognized as his Sunflower period. During that period, he presented a total of five musical works, two of which are for solo piano.

Suite Taiwan was premiered in Sunflower’s first annual concert. Written in 1966, it
shared a similar musical language with the abovementioned *Rondo*—both are based on the classical formal structure with a strong pentatonic style. However, due to the programmatic nature of *Suite Taiwan*, Ma was able to portray the images more freely, using sources derived from his musical upbringing, i.e., the traditional Taiwanese music.

*Suite Taiwan* contains four individually titled pieces: *The Temple, Religious Procession, Lion Dance, and Lantern Festival.* All these titles are strongly related to the social customs of Taiwan, where local temples and traditional festivals are important to people’s lifestyles. Traditional festivals are celebrated by people gathering together on the street or around the local temple, where theater (such as a puppet show), dance (such as a lion dance) and music (such as Beiguan\(^{23}\) music) are performed to create a bustling atmosphere. Since Ma has been so attached with the Taiwanese culture, his music is naturally influenced by these factors.

From the titles of the first two pieces—*The Temple* and *Religious Procession*, one can already imagine the tranquil nature of the music. In the beginning of the first piece, Ma portrays the temple atmosphere by mimicking the sounds of Chinese blocks\(^{24}\) and Qing\(^{25}\), used by the monks in their daily prayers. The quarter-note staccatos indicate the Chinese blocks, whereas the interval of the major seventh implies the Qing. Similar effects can also be found in the final section of the second piece, where eighth-note staccatos appear in every measure, evoking the serenity in the temple with the faraway sound of the Chinese blocks. (Fig. 4.1.3)

\(^{23}\)“Beiguan is a complicated term. For most Taiwan people today, beiguan means the loud, noisy double-reed *suona*, played with percussion instruments. Even today in Taipei, one can still often hear the wailing sound of the *suona* in parades for temple festivals and funerals” (Ying-fen Wang, “*Music and Chinese Society: Contemporary Taiwan,*” in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Vol. 7, 423).

\(^{24}\)“Chinese block: A percussion instrument consisting of a partially hollowed rectangular block of wood that is struck with wooden drumsticks or other beaters” (*The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*).

\(^{25}\)“Ch'ing (Qing): A Chinese sounding stone used in Confucian temple rituals” (*The New Harvard Dictionary of Music*).
Both Lion Dance and Lantern Festival are very joyful, entertaining, and possess strong rhythmic qualities. The percussive influence is especially noticeable in the Lion Dance, in which Ma borrows the rhythmic patterns commonly used by the traditional percussion ensembles. (Fig. 4.1.4)

To close the suite, Ma adds glissandi, grace notes, trills, big leaps and syncopated rhythms in Lantern Festival to make the music more colorful and exciting. These features also increase the degree of technical difficulty of the piece. (Fig. 4.1.5)
One common feature found in all four pieces is the folksong-like quality. In almost every piece there is at least one section featuring a folksong-like melodic theme, and a Chinese flavor permeates the entire piano suite. After the premiere, its strong native musical language soon simulated discussion among composers, some of whom categorized this piece as being in the style of Nationalistic music.²⁶

- A Sketch of The Rainy Harbor

A Sketch of the Rainy Harbor was written in 1969, three years after the completion of Suite Taiwan. It was originally named Four Piano Pieces but was later changed to the more descriptive title. The four individually-titled pieces are: Rain, Harbor Views in Rainy Nights, The Girl Who Picks Seashells, and At the Temple Gate.

Following his previous piano work- Suite Taiwan, Ma once again expressed through A Sketch of The Rainy Harbor his deep concern and love towards Taiwan’s traditional music and his hometown of Ji-long. This time, however, the strong flavor of the Taiwanese folk music previously featured in Suite Taiwan is replaced by four picturesque poems. Elements of Taiwanese music in this suite are mainly incorporated for their decorative purposes.

As the title implies, A Sketch of the Rainy Harbor depicts the nostalgic mood of the composer: his hometown Ji-long, the sea, the rain, and the marketplace. Since the premiere, it has become one of the most important and popular solo piano works in Taiwan. Since this piece still belongs to Ma’s early period, it shows the composer’s young yet bold attempts in combining some of the early 20th century musical ideas with Taiwanese musical traits.

As a student of Chang-huei Xu, the “godfather” of Taiwanese contemporary music, Ma was inevitably influenced by music of the leading 20th century composers. In the case of A Sketch of The Rainy Harbor, the influence of Debussy is especially obvious. Not only did Ma incorporate the compositional techniques, but he was also inspired by the extra-musical ideas such as visual experiences and nature, as we have seen in this particular piece.

A northeast harbor of Taiwan, Ji-long has always been famous for its amount of annual precipitation, hence its nickname- the rainy harbor. According to the composer’s recollection of his early childhood, he was very fond of watching the rain, and it has evoked

²⁶ Chen, 103-4.
within him various images and inspirations ever since. In the first piece *Rain*, Ma creates an image of the seemingly endless drizzle in Ji-long. It begins with the two open fifths ostinato in the left hand, which produces the light gray-scale color in the rainy day, whereas the uneven 16th notes and the dotted rhythms portray the dance of the raindrops. (Fig. 4.1.6)

![Fig. 4.1.6: Rain, mm.1-6.](image)

Other examples showing the influences of visual experiences can be found in *The Girl Who Picks Seashells* and *At The Temple Gate*. The former depicts the scenery along the beach, in which its opening left hand ascending pattern imitates the light waves pushing up against the shore. Whereas the fast-running 16th note figures in the latter is Ma’s attempt in creating the bustling, crowded image of the marketplace around Ji-long’s famous “Temple Gate.” (Fig. 4.1.7)

1) ![Fig. 4.1.7: 1) The Girl Who Picks Seashells, mm.1-4.](image)

2) ![Fig. 4.1.7: 2) At The Temple Gate, mm.1-2.](image)

Adhering to the trends in 20th century music, most of the musical forms in this piano suite demonstrate free simple binary or ternary styles, where the musical structures

follow the strong melodic sense presented in each piece.

In *A Sketch of The Rainy Harbor*, Ma also reaches for the tone color of traditional instruments and folk music as his source of inspiration. For example, *Harbor Views in Rainy Nights* features imitation of the tone color of the Chinese musical instrument ‘Zheng.’ Ma imitates the glissando style commonly used in Zheng by using figurations of free-running 32nd notes. (Fig. 4.1.8)

![Fig. 4.1.8: Harbor View in Rainy Nights, mm.1-8.](image)

Another example of incorporating traditional music can be found in the second section of the last piece *At the Temple Gate*, where a melodic fragment from Taiwan’s most popular folk music “Beiguan” interrupts the rowdiness created in the previous section. (Fig. 4.1.9)

![Fig. 4.1.9: At The Temple Gate, mm.19-20.](image)

According to Han-jin Chen, *Suite Taiwan* and *A Sketch of The Rainy Harbor* are the most representative works of Ma’s Sunflower period. They demonstrate for the first time Ma’s broad and systematic use of his inherited ‘musical resource,’ one that is deeply rooted in traditional Taiwanese music. They also reveal the composer’s emotional attachment to the

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28 “Cheng (Zheng): A Chinese zither with 10 to 17 silk strings, each with its own movable bridge. The modern version has 16 metal strings tuned to three pentatonic octaves. Its playing technique is similar to that of the Japanese koto” (*The new Harvard Dictionary of Music*).
familiar and beloved scenery of his hometown.²⁹

- **Piano Sonata**

Prior to his studies in Germany, Ma’s early musical works were mostly short pieces or suites. Thus, his piano sonata, written in Germany, is considered one of his earliest musical works with a lengthy formal design. *Piano Sonata* consists of three movements, and its structure follows the traditional design of the sonata: fast- slow- fast, with the first movement written in sonata form and the last one in rondo.

As opposed to his earlier works, which emphasize his cultural background, this sonata manifests Ma’s changes in musical style under the influence of late Romantic music. The drama and intensity in this piece are not created by different exotic tone colors, but rather through a more careful and modern tonal design. Among these techniques, free key changes and a highly chromatic style are the two major elements dominating the piece’s overall musical syntax.

For example, even though the sonata is based on the key of E♭, Ma intentionally opened the theme in the first movement on its dominant, B♭, in an open-fifth form to reduce tonal certainty. As for the tonic E♭, he carefully stresses it twice at the end of the phrase and on the weak beat. Just when the full E♭ major chord is finally established in mm. 4, a surprising augmented sixth chord suddenly takes over, and the theme then ends on a G minor-like chord. Thus far, by frequently changing tonics, the opening theme successfully creates a tonal obscurity within the span of only seven measures. (Fig. 4.1.10)

![Fig. 4.1.10: Piano Sonata, 1st mvt., mm.1-7.](image)

Since the city of Regensburg is a well-known center for sacred music, it was quite natural for Ma to write an organ piece during his stay.³⁰ Perhaps under this same influence,
the measures immediately following the opening theme feature a Bach-like chromatic keyboard style. (Fig. 4.1.11)

![Fig. 4.1.11: Piano Sonata, 1st mvt., mm.8-9.](image)

In fact, various examples of chromatic style can be found everywhere in this piece. For instance, in the second theme of the first movement, the long, linear right-hand melody and the flowing left-hand melodic pattern together create a lyrical, almost melancholic atmosphere. (Fig. 4.1.12)

![Fig. 4.1.12: Piano Sonata, 1st mvt., mm.33-37.](image)

Also, the passage featuring consecutively descending chords in the second movement demonstrates Ma’s ability to create an entirely different tonal effect. (Fig. 4.1.13)

![Fig. 4.1.13: Piano Sonata, 2nd mvt., mm.13-16.](image)

As with many post-romantic compositions, this piece contains many meter changes, except for the slow movement. These changes, however, are more a result of asymmetrical phrasings, rather than accenting the changes of rhythmic pulse. In addition, the subdivisions of the beats and the rhythmic feel are gentle as well.

Even though his music largely reflects the influence of Taiwanese music and local culture, this piano sonata belongs to its own category. It has very little to do with Taiwanese music, although one intonation feature that is often heard in Taiwanese opera was employed
at the end of the first phrase in the second movement. This was found repeated in many places, and discussed in many Taiwanese scholastic writings. (Fig. 4.1.14)

\[ \text{Fig. 4.1.14: Piano Sonata, 2}^\text{nd} \text{ mvt., mm.1-4.} \]

The intonation feature here only serves as a musical motive. By employing this motive, Ma creates a very subtle and melancholic atmosphere without any oriental flavor. Furthermore, when the piece proceeds to the last movement, Scherzo Allegro Vivace, the music demonstrates a style reminiscent of Bartók, with extremely fast and short phrasings, staccatos, and massive use of major and minor seconds. (Fig. 4.1.15)

\[ \text{Fig. 4.1.15: Piano Sonata, 3}^\text{rd} \text{ mvt., mm.1-4.} \]

According to Shui-long Ma, his musical works written in Germany are mostly designed with the view of western musical style in mind.\(^{31}\) There is no doubt that this is the key stage for his stylistic change, which is especially reflected in his extensive use of chromaticism and free key changes. Later in the chapter, we will continue to find these compositional features in his most recent piano work, Capriccio of Kuando.

**2. Pedagogical Works**

- *Piano Pieces On Chinese Folk Tunes For Children*

  From 1976 to 1981, Shui-long Ma was on the faculty of Soochow University in Taipei. Beyond his regular teaching duty, Ma spent most of his time engaged in

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\(^{31}\) Chen, 124.
compositional activities, and his musical output during this six-year period was the most fruitful in his compositional life.\(^\text{32}\)

Ma’s career as teacher and composer also inspired him to write pedagogical works. In the summer of 1980, he compiled thirty-two popular Chinese and Taiwanese folksongs, arranged them for piano and entitled the collection *Piano Pieces on Chinese Folk Tunes For Children*.

In his preface, Ma emphasized the value of folksongs, as they are vital to the musical development in every culture. But when commenting on the subject of music education in Taiwan, he says:

“Looking back, the teaching materials (for either general or professional purposes) we have chosen for our children over more than sixty years in music education programs have been exclusively western… Under the circumstances, we unknowingly cultivated in our children a sense of music appreciation that leaned towards the western music, without noticing their gradual indifferences towards our own musical languages as a result…

… I hope this collection will provide as a supplement to the teaching materials of our piano music education, so the students will be more familiar with our own musical language from early childhood. As they acquire more knowledge and theories from the western music system in the future, they will be able to develop the music culture of our own. That is the main purpose of this production.”

This book is edited by the composer’s wife, Zi-zhen Xu. Not only does Xu offer suggestions on fingerings, she also contributes ideas on teaching and interpretation for each piece. Also, because the tunes adopted in this collection are all Chinese folksongs, the original lyrics are included to help the students better understand the nature of each song and the impression each one conveys.

Another thoughtful consideration was made during the time Ma arranged these folksongs for piano. He originally made several different versions for each tune. His two sons, who were young piano students then, would first try all of them and then decide the final

\[32\] Chen, 128.
version. From Ma’s point of view, it is more important to make these pieces children-friendly, rather than imposing an adult’s ideas onto their young minds. His point was well supported by the collection’s sales records, which is in its seventeenth reprint since its first publication in 1980. It has even become one of the major piano teaching books for Chinese students living outside the country.  

According to the preface, this book can be divided into three groups, by the level of difficulty. The first twelve pieces are for elementary level, whereas pieces between no. 13 and 22 are intermediate. Pieces after no. 23 require higher piano skills and musicianship and are intended for students who at least have the ability to play an easy sonatina.

Different types of rhythm are introduced in the first six pieces:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Piece Title</th>
<th>Rhythm Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Purple Bamboo Flute</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>A Ride in the Ferry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Song of The Fisherman</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Wheat Harvest</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Little Golden Oriole</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Counting The Frog Catch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 4.2.1: Different types of rhythm

As we can see, different groups of rhythms are very nicely organized in each lesson. From the introduction of simple note value in No. 1 The Purple Bamboo Flute to the sixteenth notes with rests in No. 6 Counting The Frog Catch, it gradually builds a sense of rhythm in the students. Similar to Bartók’s Mikrokosmos, one may also notice that the lesson number actually coordinates with the development of student’s finger dexterity. For example, it is not until No. 5 Little Golden Oriole has the student started to build the skill for fast, repeated note figurations through the learning of sixteenth notes in one full beat. (Fig. 4.2.2)

Fig. 4.2.2: Little Golden Oriole, mm. 9-12.

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33 Chen, 128.
Another important feature is to assist the student in managing different melodic lines simultaneously. Therefore, contrapuntal writings are widely employed throughout this collection. Even from the beginning, three out of the first six pieces are in two-part style. One of the technical difficulties involved in playing contrapuntal pieces is the need for each hand to manage different phrasing. In No. 11 *The Jasmine Flower*, while the right hand plays the smooth, two-bar phrase, the left hand plays the irregular, offbeat counterpart melodies: (Fig. 4.2.3)

![Fig. 4.2.3: The Jasmine Flower, mm. 4-9.](image)

Technically, the first twelve pieces concisely cover the basics of elementary-level piano playing such as staccato, grace notes, intervals, roll, hand crossing, changing registers, as well as being able to carry longer phrases. Musically, the pentatonic style helps beginners with their first steps towards learning and appreciating the style of Chinese music.

Pieces between Nos. 13 and 22 are naturally more complicated, both technically and musically. They not only introduce more difficult rhythms but also require higher techniques such as repeated notes and consecutive intervals. Musically, this is the level for students to begin understanding musical style, and to develop various finger touches towards different musical expressions. For example, the last chord in No. 18 *The Sorrows of The Shepherdess* requires students to create an “echo” effect with decrescendo, tied-notes, grace notes and fermata to end the piece: (Fig. 4.2.4)

![Fig. 4.2.4: The Sorrows of The Shepherdess, mm. 29-32.](image)
Also, No. 21 *The Embroidered Purse* offers a perfect example for students to study Chinese musical language, especially through the grace notes placed at the end of the phrases: (Fig. 4.2.5)

![Fig. 4.2.5: The Embroidered Purse, mm. 1-9.](image)

Most of the pieces after No. 24 are written in ‘showpiece’ style. They are technically more demanding, and the pieces are longer. Trills, tremolos, glissandi and tone clusters are incorporated to make the music more colorful. Harmonically, some of the pieces gradually depart from the pure pentatonic feel by incorporating chromatic writings borrowed from the western harmonic system: (Fig. 4.2.6)

![Fig. 4.2.6: The Swallow, mm. 5-9.](image)

Since all the pieces are programmatic, it helps students relate their own playing to the images or sounds each piece depicts. Some examples include the sound of a flowing river presented by a series of arpeggiated figuration in No. 30, *The Little Brook*; and in No. 31, *The Northwest Rains Pouring Down*, where the beginning tremolos imply the arrival of a heavy thunderstorm.

The folksongs adopted in this book are well-known in Chinese society. Through learning these piano arrangements, young students will not only benefit from the book’s practical study goals, but will also gain much enjoyable experience by the natural beauty of each song.
3. Piano Concerto

- Capriccio of Kuando, For Piano and Orchestra

For almost twenty years after his return from Germany, Ma turned his focus towards composing large scale musical compositions such as music for orchestra, ballet, theater, as well as chamber music. Even so, the inspiration which he drew upon for most of the music he composed during this period was still the rich Chinese culture. For instance, his 1977 orchestral poem Peacock Flies Southeast, was inspired by a Chinese love story during the Han Dynasty; and Liao Tian Ding, initially composed for ballet and later revised for orchestral suite in 1988, was based on a popular Taiwanese epic. Like many 20th century composers, Ma wrote chamber music for various combinations. The most noticeable features were the bold attempts of incorporating Chinese musical instruments, and the experiments of bringing out musical characteristics of Chinese music using western musical instruments. He even composed solo and ensemble music for Chinese musical instruments.

It was not until the year 2000 that Ma composed music for piano again, through the commissioning project of the Chew’s Cultural Foundation in Taiwan. A year earlier, Ma moved from his previous residence to the town of Kuando, a hilly suburban area of Taipei. The beautiful scenery of Kuando inspired him to write Capriccio of Kuando, a single movement piano concerto, over twenty minutes in length.

As the title Capriccio suggests, it was written in free form structure with an introduction and a huge closing section. The entire piece can be divided into: Intro- A- B- C- D- Intro’ - B’ - C’- G. But even with its many divided sections, the musical materials employed in most of the sections are very closely related to each other.

Tonally, the Capriccio was composed based on a Chinese mode, a hexachord:

\[ E^b - F - G^b - A^b - B^b - D^b - E^b \]

The note \( E^b \) not only serves as the tonic of the scale, but also as the tonal center of the whole piece. Naturally, the note \( B^b \) is also crucial by its traditional tonic-dominant relationship. The main theme begins on the dominant \( B^b \): (Fig. 4.3.1)
The beginning eight-bar theme includes the full six notes of the hexachord with a transposition starting on the dominant B♭ (B♭ – C – D♭ – E♭ – F – A♭ – B♭.) Since the original hexachord has a very similar structure with the minor scales, it gives composers more versatility when switching between pentatonic and western tonal systems. (Fig. 4.3.2)

The pentatonic scale highlights the intervals of the perfect fourth/fifth and the major second to create musically balanced melodies that lack tension. Ma takes the three notes (B♭, A♭, F) from the main theme as the major material to emphasize the pentatonic characteristics of the piece. The intervallic relation in this case is a perfect 4th plus a major 2nd. One can find traces of it in different shapes in many sections. (Fig. 4.3.3)

1) 

2)
Although the main melodic structure produces and supports the pentatonic style, atonality provides a strong and interesting contrast. For example, in the very beginning of the piece the strings establish and hold an E\textsubscript{b} minor 7\textsuperscript{th} chord, while the woodwinds create an almost atonal atmosphere. This harmonic uncertainty lasts for thirteen measures and finally settles down in mm. 14, when the main theme is introduced by the piano. (Fig. 4.3.4: Capriccio of Kuando, 1) mm. 1-4; 2) 13-15.)
Section C, starting from mm. 88, introduces yet another contemporary element to contrast the previous lyrical and pentatonic-like sections. Here, the composer employs similar techniques one finds in serial music.

In mms. 93 and 94, the piano part first presents two original lines of melody played by each hand. Melody (A) played by the right hand part is immediately picked up by the cello and the double-bass but in its inversion (mm. 95), whereas melody (B), played by the left hand part, is continued by the viola in its retrograde. (Fig. 4.3.5)
This series of imitation (although sometimes the interval degrees are not precisely copied) dominates and forms the basic musical style of the whole section. A similar type of imitation also takes place in section C’, but this time with different melodic materials.

It is notable that even in sections featuring a highly chromatic style of writing, Ma still places the main theme (in variant forms) as the root to hold the music together. (Fig. 4.3.6)

Pianistically, technique and stamina needed to perform this capriccio far surpass those in Ma’s previous piano works. Firstly, it is a very lengthy piece, and is complicated in
terms of the musical texture, making it a great challenge to memorize. Secondly, the technical difficulties require absolute concentration and tremendous energy to execute from start to finish.

As in many virtuoso piano works, certain techniques are inevitably employed for their effects. For example, tremolos (one for each hand or two-handed tremolos), big leaps and “swings” are constantly seen in the piano part. It also has three-stave writing that requires frequent crossing of hands.

The example of Ma bringing Chinese instruments into the orchestration can be found in the beginning of section C, from mm. 89 to mm. 92, where he creates a bright contrast and a dialogue between the Chinese blocks and the piano’s tritone staccato: (Fig. 4.3.7)

![Fig. 4.3.7: Capriccio of Kuando, mm. 89-92.](image)

This is a perfect use of the tritone effect to match the undefined pitches of the traditional Chinese blocks. The piano, which can truly sound like a percussive instrument, plays the staccato in the low register. It not only responds to the rhythm but also contrasts the tone color of the wood blocks - a clever design of balancing and contrasting musical instruments coming from two different worlds.

A piano concerto of such magnitude as the Capriccio of Kuando, for Piano and Orchestra, is rarely seen in the entire repertoire of Taiwanese piano music. The musicianship required to play this work is a challenge for pianists. From the aesthetical view of music, the way in which composer Shui-long Ma infuses the spirit of his native culture into this western musical form far exceeds that seen in his previous piano works.
CHAPTER V
Conclusion

The amount of new Taiwanese piano music increased remarkably, and reached its climax towards the end of the 20th century. As Taiwan finally established its complete piano education system, it consequently encouraged the compositions and performances of music for piano.

As one of the leading composers in Taiwan, Shui-long Ma’s piano music is significant in several aspects:

1. Character pieces occupy the majority of the Taiwanese piano repertoire. This phenomenon is especially evident before 1975, when professional music training in Taiwan was evolving from its infant stage. Being a member of the first generation of domestically-trained composers, Ma’s early piano works—such as Suite Taiwan and A Sketch of The Rainy Harbor, are representative of this stage. The musical language revealed in these pieces reflect the spirit and compositional styles of early Taiwanese contemporary music, during which young Taiwanese composers began abandoning the pentatonic-romantic style of writing. They searched for and experimented with new musical ideas, commonly mixing pentatonic elements with the compositional styles of Debussy and Bartók, or by the sole use of pentatonic languages in western musical forms.

2. Ma’s piano compositions represent a large portion of his entire musical output. Not only do his works cover a wide variety of musical interests from rondos, character pieces, sonatas, concertos, to pedagogical works, but they also range from elementary to virtuoso level. This musical and technical breadth shows Ma’s extensive knowledge about piano playing as well as the composer’s experience writing for the instrument. Perhaps this explains why many of Ma’s piano pieces remain popular. Although only a fraction of the more than 115 Taiwanese piano works, they are constantly heard in competitions and on the concert stage. Even as recent as 1996, pianist Cai-xiu Cai released her CD album featuring the music of A Sketch of The Rainy Harbor.
3. The popularity of Ma’s piano music also shows how the Taiwanese musical world holds the native spirit of his music in high regard. After decades of cultural transitions, the search for the true spirit and voice of Taiwan has remained a major concern even in modern society. Most of Ma’s piano music is influenced by the people and the land he loves. His lifetime pursuit clearly reflects this.

4. Among all the contributions Ma made to Taiwanese piano music, his pedagogical work *Piano Pieces on Chinese Folk Tunes for Children* may be the most noteworthy. Over the years, it has become one of the most influential and treasured collections for piano education. But above all, it serves to preserve the Chinese musical heritage for future generations of Taiwanese musicians.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Described by New York Concert Review's Darrell Rosenbluth as "a fluid and expressive and colorful pianist," Pi-Lin Ni’s performances have been heard in New York’s Carnegie Hall and numerous prestigious venues across Asia and the United States. A native of Taiwan, Ms. Ni received her Bachelor of Fine Arts from the National Institute of the Arts in Taipei, and Master of Music from the New England Conservatory in Boston. She received her Doctor of Music in Piano Performance, as well as the Certificate in Piano Pedagogy at Florida State University. Currently, Ms. Ni is Music Director of the Chinese Choral Society of Rochester in New York, where she also resides with her husband, saxophonist Chien-Kwan Lin.