Eastern and Western Aesthetics and Influences in the Twenty-First Century Flute Concerti of Chinese-Born American Composers

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EASTERN AND WESTERN AESTHETICS AND INFLUENCES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY FLUTE CONCERTI OF CHINESE-BORN AMERICAN COMPOSERS

By

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ABSTRACT

Raised and educated in China during the Cultural Revolution, Zhou Long, Chen Yi, and Bright Sheng each immigrated to the United States in the 1980s to pursue additional study. Now American citizens, each composer continues to reside in the US, composing in a unique voice that speaks to both Eastern and Western aesthetics and influences. Guided by personal correspondence with these three living composers, this treatise will highlight the operation of select Chinese aesthetics, as well as folk music traditions, within each composer's concerto for flute and Western orchestra.

Western and East Asian music have long acted as sources of mutual inspiration and influence. This investigation addresses the presence of Western music in China through the late twentieth century, as well as the influence of Chinese music within the United States. Recognition of the relationship existing between the United States and China offers greater appreciation of these works within the context of past and present composition.

Following a brief survey of salient philosophical influences, this treatise explores relevant aesthetic concepts, including connection to nature, silence and simplicity, balance, change, and the symbiotic relationship existing between art and language. The majority of this project strives to elucidate the presence of Eastern and Western aesthetics and influence within Chen Yi’s The Golden Flute, Zhou Long’s Five Elements, and Bright Sheng’s Flute Moon.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Of course, the easiest way of a fusion is to compromise a little of both and to produce a style that is *Chinoiserie*. But that is like mixing *maotai* (the best Chinese liquor) with the best California red wine. The result is usually unsatisfactory and superficial. The opposite of that, a true fusion, must come from the deepest roots of both cultures. When these two seeming opposites meet at their most original end, a true transformation occurs; and the outcome is not only natural but enriches both. –Bright Sheng¹

Numerous works inspired by the styles, aesthetics, and techniques of Eastern musical traditions now pepper the canon of contemporary flute repertoire. The concerti of Chinese-born American composers Zhou Long, Chen Yi, and Bright Sheng clearly illustrate this assimilation of Eastern and Western musical characteristics. Raised and educated in China during the Cultural Revolution, these three composers immigrated to the United States in the 1980s to pursue additional study. Now American citizens, they continue to compose and teach in the United States today. As a result of their intimate knowledge of both countries, the combination of Eastern and Western elements represents a natural byproduct of individual interests and experiences, rather than a deliberate attempt of integration. For the flutist, an appreciation of the cultural underpinnings and aesthetics guiding these works invites the possibility for more meaningful performances.

Non-Western aesthetics first piqued my interest during my study of the *shakuhachi* (Japanese traditional flute). I was intrigued by the extent to which these concepts, such as *ma*, nature, and *Jo-Ha-Kyū*, infiltrate *shakuhachi* performance, as well as the compositions of many Japanese composers. Inspired to explore this topic further, I discovered numerous publications illustrating fusion within flute works by Korean and Japanese composers, yet relatively few scholarly discussions addressing the same topic in the context of Chinese compositions. Further, while many analyses highlight imitative references to non-Western cultures, a smaller number of flute related publications address the cultural background that infuse works with Eastern and

Western values and significance. Ignoring the extent to which aesthetics and culture inform compositions overlooks a valuable resource for informed interpretation.

This treatise seeks, not to make generalizations on behalf of all Chinese-American composers, but rather, to explore the specific means by which each of these three composers integrate aspects of their dual heritage. Guided by personal correspondence with all three living composers, this investigation will highlight the operation of specific Chinese aesthetics, as well as folk music traditions, within each composer’s concerto for flute and Western orchestra. Because a full tonal and structural analysis exceeds the scope of this project, this study represents not a means to an end, but rather a point of departure for further appreciating the ways national performance. Heightened awareness of the historical relationship existing between music in the United States and China will provide a greater understanding of the placement of these works within the context of music history. This background will provide a foundation for further exploration of aesthetics applicable to the works at hand in chapter two. Chapter three, four, and five will analyze Chen Yi’s *The Golden Flute*, Zhou Long’s *Five Elements*, and Bright Sheng’s *Flute Moon*, highlighting the presence of select Eastern and Western musical features within each.

**A Brief History of Western Musical Influence in China**

**The Growth of Western Music within China**

More than fifty-five minority groups comprise China, imbuing both Chinese music and language with diversity. A history defined by assimilation and adaptation of foreign influences, Chinese music history has nurtured numerous musical transformations as a result of the conflicting and complementary nature of national (*esoteric*) and regional (*exoteric*) attributes.\(^2\) China’s acclimatization of Western music began in the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.\(^3\) Though Catholic missionaries provided the earliest exposure to Western traditions, Protestant missionaries of the nineteenth century elevated the prominence of Western arts and culture.\(^4\)

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\(^2\) Ibid.


Youth also played a role in the rising visibility of Western music; Chinese students increasingly attended schools in Japan and Europe, bringing back European ideas and training upon their return home. While Christian hymns and military band music were initially most prevalent, non-Eastern music continued to spread within China until the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

The increasing popularity of international music within China during the early twentieth century raised concern among traditionalists. Attracted to the standardization Western music offered, Chinese musicians incorporated European elements into traditional forms. The growing homogeneity of scores and tuning, the changing social and cultural function of music, and the heightened prevalence of the concert hall reflected the emergent prominence of Western practices. Though no word for “modern” existed in the Chinese language until the twentieth century, the concept developed in the early to mid-1900s to meet rising enthusiasm for foreign attitudes towards education, arts, and sciences. Music increasingly combined Chinese melodies with Western elements, such as harmony and instrumentation. This trend culminated in a period of “pentatonic romanticism” beginning at the turn of the twentieth century and continuing through the 1950s.

The Chinese Cultural Revolution and Western Music

Beginning in 1966, the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) provoked immense social and musical change within China. A socialist movement that strove to empower the proletarian, the

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5 Ibid.


7 Lau, Music in China, 92-93.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid, 93.

10 Ibid, 98. Created in the twentieth century, the Chinese equivalent to “modern” (modang) is defined as “up-to-date, new, unconventional, and Westernized.”


12 For the sake of brevity, this exploration will limit background information pertaining to the Cultural Revolution to specific restrictions and repercussions related to the arts.
Cultural Revolution sought to eradicate Western influence and ancient elitist traditions while instilling Chinese national pride. Chinese leader Mao Zedong believed that the arts should serve the common good, emphasizing that music should be “accessible to the masses, realistic, and optimistic.”\textsuperscript{14} Mao’s wife, Jiang Qing, also fundamentally impacted the arts through her involvement with the \textit{Gang of Four}. Jiang strove to create a new art—an art representative of the triumphant proletarian voice—while banning artistic genres reflecting Western origins and Chinese elitist traditions.\textsuperscript{15} The government even went so far as to destroy historical Chinese instruments and artifacts.\textsuperscript{16} Chinese citizens associated with either upper class domestic traditions or Western music were scorned and punished, frequently being stripped of their worldly possessions and sent to perform manual labor in the countryside. Zhou, Chen, and Sheng, and their respective families, were among such unfortunate individuals.\textsuperscript{17} Each of the three composers participated in condoned \textit{Revolutionary} ensembles during this time period, including folk song troupes (Sheng and Zhou) and \textit{Revolutionary Operas} (Chen). \textit{Revolutionary Operas} prevalent during this period speak to the priorities of the Maoist regime. These operas expressed support for the government in performances that combined traditional and Western instruments.

\textbf{The “New Wave” within Chinese Composition}

The dissolution of the Cultural Revolution’s \textit{Gang of Four} in the late 1970s invited the development of modernism in China. Beginning in the 1980s, a group of young composers from the Central Conservatory explored experimental composition. Subsequently nicknamed the “New Wave” or “New Tide,” these composers discarded the hackneyed “pentatonic romantic” methods of the past in lieu of more subtle homages to Chinese traditions. Expressing greater

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\textsuperscript{13} Andrew Langley, \textit{The Cultural Revolution: Years of Chaos in China} (Minneapolis: Compass Point Book, 2008), 8-15.
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\textsuperscript{16} DeWoskin, “Chinese Philosophy and Aesthetics,” 102.
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\textsuperscript{17} Lao, \textit{Music in China}, 102.
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concern for Chinese culture, philosophies, and aesthetics, “New Wave” composers investigated altered approaches to rhythm, texture, and timbre. Ethnomusicologist Frederick Lau observed this altered tendency, elaborating:

Such a move may be interpreted as a deliberate transcendence both of an age-old practice that is Orientalist in tone, and of a desire to focus on issues of aesthetics. Chinese elements in most of the Chinese avant-garde compositions are no longer reflected in the production of soft, gentle qualities or recognizably Chinese sonic qualities. Rather, emphasis is put on a philosophical approach to aesthetics, sound, musical gestures, melodic construction, and haunting effects that defies old stereotypes and is part of these new music sentiments. What is being employed, contrary to what most critics would call a more philosophical and abstract approach to music, is in actuality an element that belies the core aesthetics of contemporary Western art music.

This group of composers, which included Tan Dun, Chen Yi, Zhou Long, Bright Sheng, and Ge Ganru, strove to break barriers and conventions. Aggravating the conservative taste of traditionalists, these young musicians inspired heated debate among opponents. While numerous contemporary composers shaped the development of this ensemble of composers—such as Alexander Goehr and George Crumb—Chou Wen-Chung (b. 1923) represented perhaps the most significant force. As the former teacher of many “New Wave” composers, including Chen, Zhou, and Sheng, Chou both inspired generations of burgeoning young Asian composers and proved that Eastern and Western musical characteristics could be integrated in a manner that showed due respect to both cultures. Numerous published and unpublished writings articulate Chou’s attitude towards cross-cultural integration. Chou frequently philosophized on the mission of the composer, urging artists to forge new paths and surpass national associations, writing: “I strongly believe that artists of our time must develop an acute awareness of disciplinary and cultural boundaries and a commitment to crossing them.” Each of the three composers continues to write with a sense of creativity and conviction reminiscent of their mentor.

19 Ibid.
20 Lau, “Fusion or Fission,” 28.
A Brief History of Chinese Musical Influence in the United States

Increased availability of travel, growing educational and financial resources, and advances in technology continued to foster musical transculturation within the United States throughout the twentieth century.¹³ Now in the twenty-first century, the plethora of concerts featuring “fusion” works exemplify the ongoing interest in combining aspects of Eastern and Western traditions. Historically, the interest in Asian cultures stemmed in part from the increasing number of Chinese American citizens in the US. Drawn to the US for a variety of reasons, Chinese immigrants benefitted from the abolishment of the National Origins Quota System in 1965. This change in US policy discarded a structure that favored Europeans and encouraged a more equal influx of immigrants from Asia, Europe, and South America.²⁴

Twentieth century fusion works by American composers frequently adopted one or more aspect of Chinese music, including but not limited to traditional instruments, philosophies, scales, aesthetics, timbres, and use of texture. While some musicians embraced the growing prominence of global perspective within Western music, others responded less favorably to attempts of integration. Chinese American composer Chou Wen-Chung viewed some Western appropriations of East Asian musical elements as superficial exoticism, dubbing select works by composers such as John Cage and Lou Harrison as “neo-Chinoiserie.”²⁵ Reacting to Western appropriations of Japanese musical characteristics, Chou articulated that these composers ignored “subtle modifications in pitch, rhythm, and timbre, the emphasis on the production and control of times, the value placed on the expressive and structural functions of single tones,” further concluding that this style of assimilation is “not different from the nineteenth century practice of forcing an oriental melody into tonal harmony.”²⁶ Conversely, Arnold Schoenberg (1874-1951) condemned the use of folk music within Western composition, vociferously

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²⁶ Ibid.
attacking composers who referenced traditional Eastern elements within Western concert works.²⁷

Among supporters of cross-cultural integration, Henry Cowell (1897-1965) and Henry Eichheim (1870-1942) were especially influential.²⁸ Encouraging composers to explore the sonic resources of the world, Cowell stated that cross-cultural borrowing represented “not an attempt to imitate…but rather to draw on those materials common to the music of all the peoples of the world, to build a new music particularly relating to our own century.”²⁹ He furthered this idea, writing in *The Preservation of Traditional Forms*: “It seems natural for an American to stretch his mind beyond the limitations of European traditions and to welcome the infinite variety and vitality of the human imagination as it has expressed itself in the music of the world.”³⁰

**Conclusion**

Exposure to both Western and Chinese music from a very young age rendered the merger of influences a natural result of enculturation for Chen, Zhou, and Sheng. Further, the Cultural Revolution, as well as relocation to the United States, deeply impacted each composer. The following chapter will provide a brief background of select aesthetic concepts applicable to these concerti, as well as relevant philosophical doctrines.

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CHAPTER TWO

PHILOSOPHICAL CONCEPTS AND AESTHETICS APPLICABLE TO THE WORKS OF CHEN YI, ZHOU LONG, AND BRIGHT SHENG

Contrary to Western practice, Chinese traditional arts theory does not limit itself to the investigation of materials and structure of any particular art form. It is concerned with concept and perception, how philosophy and aesthetics interpret nature, and the human response to nature; and then how such concerns are expressed in each of the art forms.”—Chou Wen-Chung

Abstract yet omnipresent, aesthetic preferences subtly shape numerous aspects of composition, from the minute to the monumental. A subset of philosophy, aesthetics in its simplest form is the recognition of the attributes considered desirable and pleasing in art. Specifically tied to individual cultures, aesthetics run counter to judgment. While judgment finds roots in criticism, aesthetics speak to the sensory experience and often operates at a subconscious level as a result of individual enculturation. The function of music within its respective social environment, as well as the accompanying attitudes and connotations, also represents an important source of insight for aesthetic cultural theory. While allusive in nature, these concepts hold immense ramifications for concrete aspects of composition such as pitch, rhythm, and structure. Though some aesthetic preferences extend cultural and geographic boundaries, universally conceived aesthetics represent the exception, not the norm. Culture, armed with its history, religions, and philosophies, shapes our aesthetic predilections.

Many Chinese aesthetics are based in ancient works and Chinese philosophies. Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism represent three religious/philosophical practices that

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inform the aesthetic principles discussed within this treatise. The beliefs presented by these philosophical practices organically intertwine and mutually influence, creating a blurred mosaic of overlapping ideologies that convey the same quintessential message: philosophies shape aesthetics and aesthetics affect musical composition. Therefore, a brief overview of relevant philosophical principles and practices will lay the foundation for a discussion of Eastern philosophical approaches to the arts in the second part of this chapter. Recognizing the depth of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, this exploration will merely provide an overview of these belief systems, highlighting the philosophies that find resonance within Chinese aesthetics applicable to this discussion. The final section will examine Chinese aesthetics applicable to the flute concerti of Zhou, Chen, and Sheng, including the principles of nature, silence, allusiveness, change, balance, and the symbiotic relationship between the arts and language.

**Philosophical Influences**

**Ancient Origins**

Ancient Chinese society believed that no single God created all of life, celebrating instead a close connection to nature frequently defined as “nature worship.” Further, Chinese culture viewed the universe as comprised of two oppositional yet interconnected parts: heaven and earth. The prevalence of expressions such as “the will of Heaven” illustrates this association. As a result, society often interpreted natural occurrences (hurricanes, rain, earthquakes) as signs from heaven. Ancient Chinese wisdom encouraged individuals to seek harmony with the cyclical state of the natural world, emphasizing that only this cosmic coordination could yield enlightenment and true knowledge.

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36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.
I Ching

Dating back to 1122-256 BCE, the I Ching or Book of Changes grew out of these ancient traditions and shapes Chinese scholarship, cosmology, and philosophy. While some confusion surrounds the exact date of composition, this text is generally regarded as the oldest philosophical text still in existence. Though Fu-Hsi is considered the “Revealer” of the I Ching’s eight trigrams, three additional sages—King Wen, the Duke of Chou, and Confucius—also contributed to this revered treatise. Of the importance of the I Ching, historian Chang Chi-Yun reflects that the text “embodies the accumulated political experiences of the leaders of China since the days of remote antiquity...The ideas underlying the interrelated hexagrams are interwoven and correspond to one another, thus symbolizing an infinite variety of natural phenomena and social situations.”

The book contains a divination system of eight trigrams composed of sixty-four hexagrams and 384 individual lines which are all organically connected (Figure 2.2). All eight trigrams are formed from differing combinations of yin and yang, indicated by a broken and solid line, respectively (Figure 2.2).

Table 2.1 Yin and Yang

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yin (Feminine, passive)</th>
<th>Yang (Masculine, active)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

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39 Ibid.

40 Tat, An Exposition of the I-Ching, xiii.

Table 2.2 The Eight Trigrams of *I Ching*\(^{42}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kun</th>
<th>Ken</th>
<th>Kan</th>
<th>Sun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>Rain</td>
<td>Wind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chen</td>
<td>Li</td>
<td>Tui</td>
<td>Chien</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thunder</td>
<td>Sun</td>
<td>Lake</td>
<td>Heaven</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through the transformation of the simple forces of *yin* and *yang*, the eight trigrams represent the interconnected and balanced state of the natural world.\(^{43}\) Related to these principles inherent within nature, the metaphysical tenants reinforced by the *I Ching* include:

1. Change as constant, natural, and omnipresent
2. Polarity as essential to the creation of balance
3. Periodicity as fundamental to the cyclical ebb and flow of life\(^{44}\)

The *I Ching* additional contends that all challenges in life may be overcome by applying “simple and easy” principles.\(^{45}\)

**Confucianism**

While Confucius (551-479 BC) contributed to later versions of the *I Ching*, the *I Ching* represents only one of many sources of the sage’s teachings. Confucius’ wisdom and ideas inspired the creation of the Chinese philosophical and ethical practice aptly named Confucianism. Humanism represents an important component within this practice, meaning that

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\(^{42}\) Ibid.

\(^{43}\) Liu, *An Introduction to Chinese Philosophy*, 4.


\(^{45}\) Ibid, xiii.
the function of the individual within society constitutes a primary concern. In regards to music, Confucianism fosters a strong affiliation between self and the arts. The importance of heart-mind achievement, as well as the emphasis on self-development as a requirement of artistic accomplishment (discussed in the Chinese Philosophical Approaches to the Arts section of this chapter) highlights this connection. Confucius himself emphasized that human morality is a precursor to music, reflecting: “What can one do about music if one is not ren (humane) oneself?” Confucius further contended that individuals "be stimulated by poetry, established by the rites, and perfected by music," therein underscoring his belief that music and art played a pivotal role in the cultivation of people and society at large. This principle fosters the conceptualization of music within the larger fabric of arts and society within Chinese aesthetics.

**Daoism**

Daoism (or Taoism) has served as a guiding force within Chinese culture and individual lives for over 2,000 years. The teachings of the *Tao Te Ching*, attributed to Lao Tzu, guide all three schools of Daoism, including Religious Daoism, Philosophical Daoism, and a third sect of Daoism so varied and multifaceted that it alludes categorization. While the concept of dao (tao) itself occupies an important place within Chinese culture, as well as Chinese philosophy, dao adopts a heightened function within Daoism.

**Dao (Tao)**

*Dao* rests upon the fundamental belief that universal order originated and continues to guide all changes within life. Bryan Van Norden describes dao as: “the transcendent eternal cosmic way, which exists everywhere, provides harmony and balance in the universe, and is the

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47 Ibid.


generative force of all things. Therefore, everything is perfect in its natural state and should not be disturbed.”

Supporting this broad interpretation of dao, Van Norden translates dao to mean:

1. ‘Way,’ in the sense of ‘path’
2. ‘Way,’ in the sense of ‘the right way to do something’
3. A linguistic account of a way to do something
4. A metaphysical entity responsible for the way things act.

Further, historical documents underscore this admiration for the universal principles exemplified by nature, including Fu His’ observations of the polarity and balance within the earth and sky, writing in the I Ching: “The creative rhythm of yin and yang constitutes what is called dao.”

The principles of dao and Daoism, therefore, guide aesthetics through a continued emphasis on man’s connection to nature and heaven.

Buddhism

Named for its creator, Buddhism originated in northeastern India between the late sixth century and the early fourth century BCE but quickly spread to parts of Asia, Japan, China, and Korea. Chan Buddhism (better known by the Japanese name, Zen) developed in China before spreading to Japan. One of many variations of Buddhism, Chan Buddhism emphasizes the notion of spirituality. In relation to music, Chan practices highlight the innate connection between “beauty and the human affectional ‘heart,’” as well as the correlation between intuition and enlightenment in the arts. Consequently, Chan Buddhism also reinforces the principles of heart-mind operation, oneness of being, spirituality, and connection to universal principles seen within Chinese aesthetics.

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53 Cooper, An Illustrated Introduction to Taoism, ix.

54 Peter D. Hershock, Chan Buddhism, (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 2005), x.

**Qi (ch’i or Chi)**

The concept of *qi* (ch’i or Chi) appears within Chinese society, as well as Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. The presence of *dao* depends upon the cyclical energy of *qi*, which is roughly translated to mean “energy,” ”life force,” “vapor,” or “spirit.”

Comprised of both *yin* and *yang*, *qi* is the predecessor of material possessions. In the philosophical treatise *Qian Fu Lun*, Wang Fu describes *qi* in the following terms:

The function of *dao* and its virtue does not exceed *qi*. *Dao* is the root of *qi*. *Qi* is the beginning of *dao*. It must have root; thus *qi* is born. It must have beginning; thus transformation is accomplished. The *dao* acts on things by reaching the divine to become marvelous. This is its charge to arrive at strength to become great. Heaven uses its movement; the earth uses its stillness. The sun uses its light; the moon uses its brightness. The four seasons and five phases, spirits, gods, and people, the myriad manifestations, the changes of good fortune and misfortune, which of these does not result from *qi*? The inexplicable idea of the virtue of *dao*, still cannot surpass the idea of *qi*. Nevertheless, *dao* is the root of *qi*. *Qi* is the function of *dao*.

Thus, similar to the cyclical flow of nature, in which numerous forces interact simultaneously to create symbiotic balance, *qi* and *dao* together form the basis of the universe.

**Chinese Philosophical Approaches to the Arts**

**Subjectivity**

East Asian society traditionally adopts a more subjective, intuitive, and introspective outlook—a difference that finds origins in the differing philosophical traditions of the East and West. While the West celebrates the product, the East embraces the process. Even the Chinese and English languages themselves illustrate the tendency for more respectively subjective and objective approaches. Philosopher Thomas Munro compares the fundamental differences between typical Eastern and Western outlooks, observing:

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In the West, the training of an artist is often largely restricted to overt, external techniques, the use of materials and instruments. It is commonly felt that aesthetic aims and inner attitudes are personal matters which can be left to each artist; if not regulated, they will take care of themselves. In Oriental aesthetics, as in Plato’s, the emphasis is more the other way around. Techniques and materials are not neglected, but neither are the mental and emotional parts of the artistic process.\(^\text{60}\)

Within Chinese culture, music surpasses the earthly realm of the technical and objective and offers the possibility of spiritual cultivation, inner growth, and oneness of being. These differing attitudes are further exemplified by concepts of the heart-mind, cosmic order, and creativity within Chinese artistic culture.

**Heart-Mind**

The concept of heart-mind fulfillment within Chinese philosophy related to music underscores this subjective orientation. Based on a fundamental emphasis on “life, humanity, and nature,” the artistic experience is frequently divided into three aesthetic levels: perception of beauty, the fulfillment of the mind-heart, and achievement of intuition.\(^\text{61}\) Chinese artists are encouraged to attain the highest level of achievement: to please the heart-mind. The *Yüeh-chi* (“Annotations on Music”) in *Liji* (“Book of Rites")\(^\text{62}\) articulates that: “Music is formed in the heart. Tones are the shape in which music is expressed. Elegance and rhythm are the decorations of the tones. The Superior Man takes the feeling in his heart as basis, he gives them shape in music, and then he gives this music its final form.”\(^\text{63}\) Characterized by peacefulness and quiet of the mind, enjoyment of the “heart-mind” sees reference throughout Chinese historical text, including the teachings of Confucius, who cites “heart-mind” achievement as the quintessential goal of music.\(^\text{64}\)

\(^{60}\) Thomas Munro, *Oriental Aesthetics* (Cleveland: Press of Western Reserve University, 1965), 69.


\(^{64}\) Liang, *Music of the Billions*, 171.
Cosmic Order

Related to the heightened role of spirituality within Chinese aesthetics, music is perceived as extending far beyond entertainment and virtuosity and into realms of broader humanistic and universal application.\(^6^5\) Eastern traditions strive to attain peace, harmony, and oneness with the natural world. Art scholar Harold Osborne discusses this interest, stating: “The Chinese artist was expected to discipline his personality into harmony with the cosmic principle of order and justice, *dao*, so that in expressing himself he was expressing or making manifest the *dao* which operated through him. Only self-expression of a fine personality could guarantee the creation of fine art.”\(^6^6\) Therefore, practice and technique alone guarantees nothing. Only the marriage of mindfulness and oneness of being with artistic training ensures artistic success.

Creativity

The distinction between Eastern and Western conceptions of creativity also bears mentioning. While creativity in the West implies progress and creation, no direct parallel existed within ancient Chinese culture. Chinese composer and musicologist Chou Wen-Chung discusses this variance, writing that the historical text on crafts by Kaogong Ji most closely references the concept of innovation and advancement, illustrated by the text’s observation that “a person with true knowledge initiates things.”\(^6^7\) Interpreted further, this statement reaffirms the close connection existing between *dao* and creativity.

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\(^{6^5}\) Ibid, 39.

\(^{6^6}\) Osborne, "Aesthetics and the Artist Today," 53.

\(^{6^7}\) Munro, *Oriental Aesthetics*, 213.
Aesthetic Principles Applicable to the Works of Chen, Zhou and Sheng

Being and nonbeing produce each other.
Difficulty and easy complete each other.
Long and short contrast each other.
High and low distinguish each other.
Sound and voice harmonize each other.
Front and behind accompany each other. --- Daodejing

As a result of the strong philosophical ties to nature, most Chinese aesthetics stem from the natural world. These larger aesthetic concepts include:

1. Silence, space, and simplicity
2. Symbolism and ambiguity
3. Change
4. Balance
5. The symbiotic relationship between Chinese arts and language

The following survey of the aesthetics mentioned above will highlight the musical manifestations of these ideologies.

Silence and Simplicity

In Daodejing (Daoist doctrine), the sixth century BC sage Lao Tzu philosophizes: “There was something formless yet complete that existed before heaven and earth, without sound, without substance, dependent on nothing, unchanging, all-pervading, unfailing. One thinks of it as the mother of all things under heaven. Its true name we do not know. Dao is the by-name that we give it.” As insinuated in Lao Tzu’s statement, Chinese musicians generally believed that “the sound of heaven is silence.” Conversely, all perceived sounds are created by the earth (ti). Since the silence of heaven gave birth to man and man creates earthly sound, silence represents the origins of sound and is, therefore, the most divine. The belief that “the nature of man is quiet” advocated by the historical Yüeh-chi treatise further supports this philosophical approach. Moreover, emptiness invites the flow of qi within the individual and allows one to

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70 Liang, Music of the Billions, 172-173.
attain *dao*—the meditative state that invites the artist to operate with the heart-mind and with intuition, rather than intellect.\(^1\) The prevalence of timbral variation, single tone, and re-composition within Chinese music stem from this appreciation for simplicity.

**Single Tone and Timbral Variation**

Unsurprisingly, the concept of the single tone and silence occupy an important place within Chinese aesthetics. Numerous historical texts support this tendency. *Daodejing* states “great music has fewer notes” meanwhile philosopher Zhuangzi reflects “Soundless music is the highest.”\(^2\) A notion further developed in Chou’s article, Excerpts from “Asian Concepts and Twentieth Century Composers,” Chou speculates:

This concept [the single tone], often shrouded in poetic and mystic metaphors, is fundamental to many Asian musical cultures. It is manifest in the great emphasis placed on the production and control of tones, which often involves an elaborate vocabulary of articulations, modifications in timbre, inflections in pitch, fluctuations in intensity, vibratos and tremolos (as, for example in the *ch’in* [*qin*] music…). Such concentration on the values of a single tone is the anti-thesis of traditional Western polyphonic concepts, in which the primacy of multilinearity and the acceptance of equal temperament make the application of such values limited and subordinate.\(^3\)

While Western music predominantly creates variety through polyphony and activity, Chinese music more often relies on vibrato, timbre, pitch, and articulation to create interest within a single tone or limited pitch material. The use of percussion within Chinese music exemplifies the heightened position of timbre. While Western percussion sections primarily function rhythmically, Chinese percussion enjoys a timbral significance parallel to wind instruments.\(^4\)

Specification of timbre and vibrato, as illustrated by the more than 60 different kinds of prescribed vibrati in *qin* music, illuminates the greater importance of subtle variation.\(^5\)


**Dizi**

Similarly, tonal inflections characterize the dizi. A transverse bamboo flute with a bright and reedy timbre, the dizi was introduced to Central China during the early Han period and remains prevalent within Chinese traditional music today. Dizis include a total of eight holes (six finger holes, one membrane hole and the tone hole) and may be played to the right or left side. The plant based skin covering the surface of the dizi membrane hole produces its distinct sound. A loud instrument, the dizi is also notable for an angular and forceful style of articulation and phrasing. The ancient dizi appeared in one of two settings: ceremonial military bands and sacrificial court ensembles. The latter of these played yayue, or “elegant music,” which commonly paid homage to the natural world and philosophical ideals. This lyrical style of performance traditionally incorporated a great deal of variation—a method that inspired Chen’s approach to composing *The Golden Flute*.78

Dizi music frequently features glissandi in the attack and release of pitches. Similar to modern Western flute, performers create these pitch bends by venting finger holes (at fast tempi) or changing the angle of the airstream by rolling in and out. Also like the Western flute, the dizi often produces vibrato by manipulating the air column. Additionally, lightly tapping a finger over open holes (similar to flattement in the Baroque era) provides another form of vibrato and often appears in combinations with air vibrato. Flutter tonging is a common characteristic of dizi music.

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77 Zhou Long, Interview with Zhou Long, Phone Interview (Tallahassee, Florida: September 17, 2012).

78 Thrasher, *Chinese Musical Instruments*, 42.


Recomposition/Man’s Connection to Heaven

Additionally, the notion of simplicity also relates to the prevalence of re-composition within Chinese traditional music. As a result of the ancient belief that the function of music was to unite man with heaven (tian-ren-he-yi), early Chinese society generally regarded the emperor as the sole possessor of this power. Consequently, early Chinese composers embraced a style of composition that championed innovation as opposed to invention. Creative means of variation frequently appears in Chinese music. Ornamentation occurs in the form of timbral variation, alteration of the primary melody, and metric or melodic expansion (discussed further in chapter three). This approach exemplifies the notion of simplicity through the continued prevalence of core repertoire pieces from generation to generation.81

Allusiveness & Symbolism

Chinese poetry, art, drama, and music employ imagery and symbolism to a greater degree than Western art forms. While fewer words, brush strokes, and notes exist, each statement embodies deeper meaning.82 Works of art, therefore, invite subjective interpretation. This symbolic approach relates to the aesthetic of ambiguity or elusiveness within Chinese art. Citing celebrated calligrapher Baudeliare, art scholars Yu-Ho Tseng and Youhe Zeng discuss the significance of symbolism in calligraphy, writing: “The aesthetic intention is to go beyond physical objectives and to measure these metaphysically. The pictorial approach may diminish toward ‘non-being’ (wo) or, in modern terms, the ‘non-objective.’ Well-designed calligraphic strokes do not circumscribe recognizable figures but suggest their evocative power and the action stress of ‘becoming,’ that has not yet complete ‘being’ (yu).”83 Similar to the ideogram, qin music frequently incorporates symbolism—not only in the aural result, but also in notation and pedagogy.84

81 Liang, Music of the Billions, 27.
82 Ibid, 26-27.
84 Van Gulik, Lore of the Lute.
Programmatic Associations

Related to this tendency for allusion is the similar inclination towards programmatic associations. Often suggested by the title or subtitles of musical works, common sources of inspiration include nature, legends, history, emotions, and animals.\(^8^5\) These descriptive associations urge the performer to assume the appropriate character and mindset for performance. Zhou Long’s *Su* for flute and *qin*, for example, evokes the ancient and reminiscent connotations of the character *su* (tracing back). Meanwhile, the same composer’s opera, *Madame White Snake* (inspired by the traditional Chinese myth by the same name), immediately implies a darker and more mysterious mood.

Moreover, most instruments are classified in terms of their relationship to natural elements. Delineated into eight categories, East Asian instrument types include: metal (bells, gongs), stone (chimes), silk (lute), bamboo (flute), wood (chu-box), skin (percussion), gourd (mouth organ), and clay (globular flute). This approach to categorization reinforces the notion that all things are a product of earth and heaven.\(^8^6\) Additionally, categories of instruments hold specific associations, such as the correlation between globular clay flutes and the earth.

Change

A concept central to the *I Ching* but further reinforced by Buddhism and Daoism, change manifests itself in various guises throughout Chinese metaphysics. The teachings central to Buddhism emphasize the fluidity of life, bringing into question anything that claims to be permanent, static, or rational.\(^8^7\) Similarly, the quintessence of Daoism rests upon the same sinuously shifting foundation of change.\(^8^8\) Enlightened individuals (*ming*) conceive of these changes as organic transformations (*tzu-jan*), rather than positive and negative events within life.

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\(^8^7\) Inada, "A Theory of Oriental Aesthetics," 118.

\(^8^8\) Ibid.
Perhaps echoing the fluctuations of the natural world, tempo and rhythm within ancient Chinese lyrical music exhibits greater malleability. Even beyond elasticity of tempi, asymmetrical rhythm further obscures a sense of predictable pulse, which affords the melody greater attention. A characteristic of high art music, metric freedom appears in most qin music (discussed further in chapter four). Non-indicated tempos were interpreted as free, unless oral tradition suggested otherwise. Despite the lack of tempo specification, many pieces began slowly and progressively gained speed, (“chui”) particularly in the final section.

**Balance**

Just as nature exhibits equilibrium through the inherent oppositions operating within life, balance plays a primary role within Chinese music. Balance manifests itself in the application of cosmology/numerology, as well as harmonic and rhythmic structures.

**Cosmology/numerology**

The number five, as well as units of two (or units divisible by two) frequently appear within Chinese music. Five is an important number within Chinese numerology, as reflected by the prevalence of historical and mythological references, such as the Five Elements. These elements correspond with various other manifestations of five, such as the five primary notes, organs, locations, flavors, odors, and colors. Moreover, the pentatonic scale and the Golden Ratio (2:3)—both of which commonly appear in Chinese traditional music—further exemplify this concept. First defined by Euclid (325-265 BCE), the Golden Ratio occupies an important place within music, art, mathematics, and the natural world. The Golden Ratio is frequently described mathematically as \( \phi = \frac{\sqrt{5} + 1}{2} \), which reduces to 1.618… Within music, the prevalence

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of climactic moments at 2/3 through works attests to this sense of proportion. Additionally, the Fibonacci series closely relates to the Golden Ratio because the relationship between the numbers of the series (0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, 89, 144, etc) produces \( \phi \), or the Golden Ratio. David Mingyue Liang discusses these symbolisms, writing: “The 3:2 ratio in music refers to the cyclic theory and first five tones resulting there from symbolize not only the unity of heaven and earth, but also harmony as culturally defined in the intervallic relationship of the perfect fifth.”

Similarly, duple meter holds a prominent place within Chinese music as a result of its implications for the balance offered by yin and yang. The liao and banyan metric systems (similar to duple meter: 2/4, 4/4, 8/4) occupy a central position with Chinese music.

**Symbiotic Nature of the Arts & Language**

**Influence within the Arts**

Artistic traditions and the Chinese spoken language deeply influence music. Counter to the Western classical tradition, ancient Chinese musicians rarely practiced music exclusively. Instead, historical documents attest to the close affiliation between literature, philosophy, and the arts. Numerous philosophers were also musicians, including Confucius, Sima Xiangru, and Cai Yong, among others. The high status of the wenren vividly illustrates this positive perception of amateur performance. As Chinese philosophers, musicians, calligraphers, and scholars, wenren were also social and political leaders. Though the occupation of “musician” was considered a low status, the amateur philosopher-musician benefited from the lofty spiritual associations of music. This history sheds light on the lingering connections between the arts and philosophy.

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96 Ibid, 25.
97 Ibid, 171.
Language

Language and music reveal numerous resemblances. While some debate surrounds the extent to which music shaped language vs. the degree to which language influenced music, recent studies continue to explore the parallels between the two.99 Of this organically intertwined relationship, Francesca R. Sborgi Lawson writes: “Tonal language is inherently melodic and where poetry is not meant merely to be read silently but to be vocalized in chant and in song. Language and music are therefore inseparably connected in poetry, music, opera, and narratives, and the written language plays a vital role in the process of performances.”100 Differing pitches bear extreme importance within the Chinese language. The same word spoken with rising or falling vocalizations can adopt drastically different meanings. The word bao, for example, can mean “bag or purse” (bāo; 包), “thing or slight” (báo; 薄), “full” (bǎo; 飽), or “to explode” (bào 爆). Ambiguity within the language may encourage the presence of elusiveness as an aesthetic value. Further, composer Chen Yi highlights the connection between pitch variation in the Chinese language and similar treatment of tonal material in Chinese music, emphasizing the importance of this concept within many of her works (not including The Golden Flute).101 Katheryn Hay takes this notion further in her 1980 dissertation, comparing the rising and falling intonations of the Chinese spoken language to the positive and negative associations of yin and yang.102


100 Sborgi Lawson, The Narrative Arts of Tiānjīn, 53.

101 Chen Yi, Interview with Chen Yi, Phone Interview (Tallahassee, Florida: September 17, 2012).

Liveliness

The concept of liveliness articulates itself within all Chinese art forms and speaks to the aesthetic of *Chi-yun Sheng-yung*, which roughly translates to mean “life-spirit-resonance.” The concept of liveliness correlates with the unceasing flow of *qi* that constantly transforms to comprise all of life and nature. *Xi* (joyful) or *renao* (bustling) also relate to this aesthetic. Though most visible in outdoor ceremonial music, liveliness appears in numerous types of traditional music and, like *yin* and *yang*, is frequently juxtaposed against contrasting characters.

Conclusion

Numerous historical, cultural, and philosophical influences combine to shape aesthetics. Ultimately, these aesthetic features guide the creation of even seemingly superficial attributes of Chinese music, ranging from the tendency towards pentatonic scales and programmatic titles to a heightened emphasis on timbre and rhythmic fluidity. Because these ideologies operate on various levels, all of these larger aesthetic concepts see reference within the flute concerti of Chen, Zhou, and Sheng. Chapter three, four, and five analyze select Chinese aesthetics and attributes within each concerto.

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CHAPTER THREE
CHEN YI, THE GOLDEN FLUTE

Biographical Information

Born in Guangzhou, China on April 4, 1953, Chen Yi began studying violin at the age of three, though her musical education was interrupted as a result of the Cultural Revolution. The child of two medical doctors, Chen and her family were sent to opposite ends of the country for “re-education.” Chen performed manual labor for two years on a farm in rural China. Because of the strict limitations imposed by this socialist movement, Chen could only practice Western music in secret. Meanwhile, she entertained the farmers and engaged her creativity by embellishing Revolutionary folk tunes with elaborate Western figuration. Reflecting on this experience in an interview with John de Piñeiro, Chen remembered:

I used my spare time to play my violin to poor country kids, to farmers, to soldiers, but only revolutionary songs were allowed to be sung and played, so I made up double stops and fast passages that I learned from Paganini, when I played the popular tunes from revolutionary songs. It may have been a small triumph, but I felt a big release in being able to exercise some of my creativity in making something out of these circumstances.

At the age of 17, Chen was summoned to work as concertmaster of the Beijing opera troupe in Gangzhou. Over the course of her eight year tenure, Chen performed, composed, and learned to play traditional Chinese instruments. One of numerous Revolutionary Opera troupes in existence during the Cultural Revolution, the development of this genre evolved at the hands of Mao Zedong’s third wife, Jiang Qing, who advocated the combination of traditional and Western instruments within this context (discussed further in chapter one).

109 Wedemeyer, “A Chinese-Born Composer and Her Own Long March.”
110 Ibid.
Chen attended the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing when it reopened in 1977, becoming the first woman to receive a masters degree in composition in China (1986), an event documented by a nationally televised concert of her works.\textsuperscript{111} She completed her DMA from Columbia University in 1993 under the tutelage of Chou Wen-Chung and Mario Davidovsky. Since that time, she has received recognitions from around the world. Most notably, Chen was the second ever recipient of the Charles Ives Living Composer Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the ASCAP Concert Music Award in 2001.\textsuperscript{112} Her works have received performances by the National Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, the Austrian Radio Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, the Halle Orchestra, the NHK Symphony, the Singapore Symphony and the China National Symphony, among others.\textsuperscript{113} Formerly on the faculty of the Peabody Conservatory (1996-1998), Chen now teaches at the University of Missouri, Kansas City.

**Musical Style**

While recognizing the many challenges and negative effects resulting from the Cultural Revolution, Chen reveals that her exposure to the rural communities of China profoundly influenced her compositional style, stating:

In the countryside, I also found my own language when I realized that my mother tongue really is the same as what the farmers speak! I also found that when I translated it into music, it's not the same as what I was practicing every day! For this reason, I believe that I really need to study more deeply and extensively, and find a way to express myself in a way of real fusion of Eastern and Western musics in my music. The result should be a natural hybrid, and not an artificial or superficial combination. All these have contributed to one degree or another to nurture my later musical creation.\textsuperscript{114}

Though Chen’s musical training is predominantly Western, she views her style as an organic product of her combined influences and experiences. Ruminating that the importance of music

\begin{footnotes}
\item[111] Ibid.
\item[112] Lee, “Chen Yi.”
\item[113] Piñeiro, “An Interview with Chen Yi.”
\item[114] Piñeiro, “An Interview with Chen Yi”; Wedemeyer, "A Chinese-Born Composer and Her Own Long March."
\end{footnotes}
ultimately “depends on its ability to reflect and enrich culture,” she continues to gain inspiration from the diversity present within the United States.115

While her expansive canon of large scale Western works might suggest a preference for Western form and instrumentation, the sound of traditional Chinese instruments, folk music, and language strongly influences her compositions.116 Of this tendency, Chen explains: “Whenever I write a piece for Western instruments, my first thought is to find the similarities. The *erhu*, for example, is just a vertical violin. Once you establish this [understanding of similarities], you create techniques where one instrument can imitate another.”117

Further, Chen emphasizes the parallels between musics of the world and the languages that characterize those regions. She frequently uses the vocalizations of the Chinese language for melodic guidance, reflecting in a personal interview: “I studied Chinese music later because I found out the musical language is closely related to speaking language, like your daily mother tongue. I found out this kind of style later combined into my voice. It became my own composition style.”

**The Golden Flute: Genesis and Analysis**

**Genesis**

Chen Yi’s *The Golden Flute* was premiered on November 8, 1997 by the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra and flutist Donna Orbovich under the baton of Yong-yan Hu.118 The name of the concerto itself, however, was inspired by the golden flute belonging to well-known Irish flutist, James Galway. This discrepancy speaks to the complex web of evolving circumstances and heightened interest surrounding this work’s premiere. After hearing Chen’s viola concerto, *Xian Shi*, Galway expressed interest in performing the composer’s work. Maestro Chen Zuo-Huang, then music director of the Wichita Symphony and the China National Symphony

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116 Frederick Lau, “Fusion or Fission,” 31.

117 Smith, “Focus on Chen Yi”; Chen Yi, Interview with Chen Yi.

Orchestra in Beijing, invited Chen to compose a concerto.\textsuperscript{119} As a result, she applied for the National Endowment for the Arts Composer Fellowship program, winning a 1994 composer fellowship to support \textit{The Golden Flute}.\textsuperscript{120} At the same time, JoAnn Falletta, Music Director of the Virginia Symphony, also requested the work for the ensemble’s concert with Galway at Carnegie Hall. The Virginia Symphony performance, however, was considerably earlier than previously planned and Chen was unable to move up the deadline. Meanwhile, Maestro Hu heard of the work and immediately programmed and premiered \textit{The Golden Flute}. Of the work’s debut, Leslie Sheills of \textit{Pan} magazine, wrote: "A truly delightful and substantial flute concerto…Although the idiom of the concerto is firmly rooted in the present, the inspirations are the sounds of ancient Chinese wind instruments, and the piece grows organically from the rootstock of pure Chinese folk music…It is a pleasure to welcome this important new work to the flute repertoire."\textsuperscript{121}

Since the premiere, two recordings continue to feature this concerto. The first, released by Koch International Classics in September of 2004, highlights flutist Alexa Still, performing with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra under the direction of James Sedares. More recently, Sharon Bezaly recorded \textit{The Golden Flute} with the Singapore Symphony on BIS, conducted by Lan Shui, in July 2008. Bezaly’s recording introduces the 2008 revised version of the concerto, which includes an elaborate cadenza between the first and second movements. Composed for and dedicated to Bezaly, this fluid and athletic cadenza showcases the Israeli flutist’s propensity for circular breathing.\textsuperscript{122}

\textsuperscript{119} Chen Yi, Interview with Chen Yi.

\textsuperscript{120} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{121} “Chen Yi,” \textit{Theodore Presser Company}.

\textsuperscript{122} Chen Yi, Interview with Chen Yi; Chen Yi, “Program Note,” \textit{The Golden Flute} (Pennsylvania: Theodore Presser, 1999).
Analysis

Written in three movements: I. *Andante, lyrically and vividly*; II. *Larghetto, mystically*; and III. *Allegro, energetically*, this work is composed for solo flute, two C flutes/piccolos, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four French horns, two trumpets, three trombones, three percussionists, harp, and strings. Both the original (1997) and the revised edition (2008) are published by the Theodore Presser Company. Based on the ancient Chinese melody, *Old Eight Beats (Lao Ba Ban)*, the concept of variation—an aesthetic that finds origins within Chinese history—permeates *The Golden Flute*.\(^{123}\) Chen admires the variation techniques featured within traditional Chinese instrumental music, writing:

Remembering when I study the Chinese folk music repertoire, I am always amazed by the variation method of the traditional Chinese bamboo flute performance. Most folk solo pieces have a single theme each, with its sectional developments in different speeds, tonging and fingerings, and adding decorations on the important notes from the melody. It inspired me to construct my three-movement concerto, starting with the only theme in the initial three-measure phrase, which melodic material is drawn from a Chinese folk tune *Old Eight Beats*.\(^ {124}\)

Further, traditional Chinese bamboo flutes, particularly the *dizi*, inspire the timbral variety present within this work. As discussed in greater detail in chapter two, the concept of timbral variation speaks to larger aesthetic preferences. This analysis seeks to explore both references to the *dizi* tradition, as well as the function of variation as a compositional device within the *Golden Flute*.

Structure

While the overall construction of *The Golden Flute* in three movements (quick-slow-quicker) alludes to Western eighteenth century formal traditions, the interior structure of each movement, as well as the heightened function of variation, departs from these historical traditions. The primary theme of *The Golden Flute* shows characteristics of *Old Eight Beats* through a similar approach to harmonic and melodic structure (Figures 3.1 and 3.2).

\(^{123}\) Chen Yi, “Piano Concerto,” (DMA diss., Columbia University, 1993), 7. Translated to mean “eight beats” or “eight phrases,” this traditional melody is also commonly referred to as *Lao Baban* or *Lao Liuban (Old Eight Beats or Old Six Beats)* in the Southeastern Chinese *Jiangnan Sizhu* music.

As Figures 3.1 and 3.2 illustrate, these melodies show similar beat groupings, pitch content, and intervals. While the original folk melody appears in Gb pentatonic, the primary theme of *The Golden Flute* references F pentatonic. As a result, Figure 3.2 transposes the first phrase of the original melody down one half step to invite a more clear comparison. Both melodies progress from $\hat{3}$ to $\hat{6}$ to $\hat{2}$ to $\hat{1}$ to $\hat{5}$ and feature intervals of the perfect fifth, perfect fourth, and embellishing minor and major seconds that function as passing tones. While the primary melody of *The Golden Flute* also includes grace notes and a greater number of chromatic embellishments (most notably, the inclusion of $\#\hat{5}$ ), this theme also alludes to the $3 + 2 + 3$ beat groupings within *Old Eight Beats*. Though subsequent variations obscure this formal division, Chen frequently employs sub-sections of two, three, and four beats within her phrases as suggestive of the original folk tune.\(^{126}\)

\(^{125}\) Chen Yi, “Piano Concerto,” 17.

\(^{126}\) Ibid, 13-15.
Chen’s doctoral dissertation project, *Piano Concerto*, examines the presence of the Golden Ratio within *Old Eight Beats*. While Chen also highlights the function of the Golden Ratio (typically 2:3 within music) within the larger structure, she also points out interchangeable phrase subgroupings of two and three as indicative of the Golden Ratio. These subdivisions appear throughout the eight phrases of *Old Eight Beats* in various arrangements (Figure 3.2). The composer relates that the combined use of these subgroups produce the first four numbers in the Fibonacci Series, stating: “The sum of each neighboring two numbers of beats in the groupings (2 or 3) is five. The groupings, therefore, represent the figures from the Fibonacci Series: 2, 3, 5, 8.”

**Structure & Unifying Motives**

This concerto finds coherence amidst developing variations through repetition of pitch material and the incorporation of unifying motivic gestures. The first two movements are loosely constructed in an arch form. While both movements are through-composed and see no repetition of melodic material, each begin from nothing, develop to a climax, and dissipate again to nothing. The final section of each movement evokes the atmosphere of the opening.

The third movement juxtaposes two contrasting characters, ultimately leading to a climax in m. 178. The cadenza that follows sees the return and development of the primary theme from the first movement. This germinal approach to development within the cadenza signals the influences of Western classical form. The coda that follows includes a recapitulation of material from the previous movements, ending in an energetic accelerando.

**Unifying Motivic Devices**

Repetition of motivic gestures, as well as the pitch material of the opening theme, creates unity throughout this concerto. Significant tropes include the following in various transpositions:

![Figure 3.3 The Golden Flute, Descending Minor Third Motive](image)

127 Ibid, 15.
The descending minor third, frequently in the $\uparrow\downarrow$ rhythm, ascending major second, typically coupled with the $\uparrow\downarrow$ rhythm, as well as the pairing of the ascending perfect fifth with a descending perfect fourth in various rhythmic variations creates coherence within the work. Chen additionally fragments and references the pitch content and intervals of the original melody [B-A-D-G-F-C-B-C#] throughout each movement.

**Variation**

Traditionally, the main melody (*qupai*) serves as the structural foundation for variation based works.\(^{128}\) Referred to as *bianzou* (variation) in traditional Chinese performance, several approaches comprise this technique.\(^{129}\) Ethnomusicologists Sai-Bung Cheung and Alan Thrasher, as well as Chen Yi, respectively explored and categorized these complex means of variation. Two of these methods play a primary role in the development of the primary theme within *The Golden Flute*: the extension method, described as the expansion, variation or alteration of the theme; and melodic elaboration, characterized by the decoration of the primary melody with grace notes or rhythmic variation.\(^{130}\) Illustrated by the addition of neighbor and chromatic passing tones, as well as rhythmic variation of the primary pitch classes and intervals, the extension method serves as the principle approach within this work. Of these types of variation,

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\(^{129}\) Ibid, 80-81.

the inclusion of neighbor tones is particularly prevalent and shows similarities to the jiahua (adding flowers) technique common within sizhu chamber music.\textsuperscript{131} This type of technical variation frequently appears within ancient civil (lyrical) Chinese ensembles.\textsuperscript{132}

**Extension Method**

The compression and chromatic development of the primary theme reflect the application of the extension method (Figure 3.6). This type of variation is particularly prevalent in the first and final movement.

![Figure 3.6 The Golden Flute, First Movement, m. 16 and m. 27](image)

Chen compresses and displaces the main melody in both m. 16 and m. 27. Beat one of m. 16 illustrates the use of unifying motivic devices and chromatic development. Meanwhile, the pick up to beat two (m. 16) sees the reoccurrence of the [B-A-D-G-F] pitch content from the primary theme (indicated by brackets). The first beat of m. 27 also includes all primary notes of the original F-pentatonic melody [B-A-D-G-F-C-B-C#]. Similarly, the second beat displaces the pitch content, now initiating the pattern on the third note (D) of the pattern [D-G-F-C-B-C#].

The inclusion of neighbor tones occurs most prominently in the third movement. Similar to the first movement, these sixteenth note passages frequently refer to the primary pitch material outlined by the melody.


\textsuperscript{132} Chen Yi, Interview with Chen Yi.
As Figure 3.7 exemplifies, the first beat of m. 38 employs pitches from the primary theme [A-D-G-F] before launching into subsequent variations at the interval of a major second. Beat three of m. 38 and beat one of m. 40 demonstrate Chen’s use of the descending perfect fifth and ascending perfect fourth as unifying tropes within these sets of variations. Though obscured by octave displacement, beat one of m. 40 references the [A-D-G-F] pitch content.

**Melodic Elaboration**

Melodic elaboration appears throughout the work, indicated by the application of grace notes surrounding key structural notes. This device first appears in the primary theme (Figure 3.1). Mm. 68-71 of the first movement (Figure 3.8) shows Chen’s application of grace notes, as well as intervallic reference to the material of the primary theme through the predominance of the perfect fifth, perfect fourth, and minor third.

Moreover, grace notes receive a heightened function within *dizi* music. Typically one heptatonic scale degree higher than the principal note, these grace notes suggest the traditional upper finger articulation of the bamboo flute.\(^{133}\) As the *dizi* rarely employs tongue articulation, these

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\(^{133}\) Thrasher, “Structural Continuity in Chinese *Sizhu*,” 105.
appoggiatura-like divisions create separation within slurred passages and are particularly common between repeated pitches.

**Dizi References**

Variation is an integral aspect of *dizi* performance. Chen relates that the variation techniques associated with the lyrical style of *dizi* performance inspired her approach to this work. The composer originally conceived of *The Golden Flute* as a concerto for three different flutes: Western C flute, piccolo, and *dizi*. As the original flutist associated with the premiere, James Galway even received a bamboo flute as a gift from Maestro Chen. While this plan fell through as a result of logistical and practical challenges, Chen expresses her hope that the performer will emulate the sound of the lowest *dizi*. In addition to variation, four extended techniques within *The Golden Flute* reference the *dizi*. These techniques include specification of vibrato, glissandi, flutter tonguing, and timbral trills.

As discussed in greater detail in chapter two, *dizi* music frequently features glissandi in the attack and release of pitches. While this effect most commonly occurs at phrase ends, Figure 3.9 illustrates Chen’s use of this technique throughout.

![Figure 3.9](image)

Figure 3.9 *The Golden Flute*, Third Movement, mm. 105-106

In Figure 3.9, as well as much of the concerto, accents and slurs encourage the pointed attacks and releases typical to the *dizi*. Additionally, a wide variety of vibrato adopts greater significance in *dizi* performance, as performers create vibrato using the air column and the

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134 Chen Yi, Interview with Chen Yi.

135 Ibid.

136 Ibid.


fingers. Both timbral trills and the specification of vibrato adhere to methods of variation common to Chinese music (Figure 3.10).

![Figure 3.10 The Golden Flute, Second Movement, mm. 6-11](image)

The flutter tongue included within Figure 3.10 also alludes to a common feature in dizi performances. Even aside from the use of flutter tonguing within the dizi tradition, Chen additionally notes that the use of slurred flutter tongue within The Golden Flute strives to evoke the unique sound of this instrument, which is often described as buzzy. Further, the loud and athletic writing of the third movement suggests both the shrill nature of the instrument, as well as the seamless sixteenths frequently relegated to the dizi in ancient Chinese vocal ensembles.

Conclusion

While The Golden Flute was written for Western instruments within a Western genre, the influence of folk traditions and Chinese aesthetics within this concerto reflect Chen’s dual sources of inspiration. For the performer, understanding the function of variation within this work is important. Further, noting the importance of timbral variation, as well as the angular style of bamboo flute performance encourages the flutist to emphasize not only the larger sense of structural continuity, but also the significant gestures that comprise longer phrases. This understanding challenges the performer to surpass the restrictions of Western conceptions of “good” tone to find a new artistic voice that speaks to a globally defined concept of sound and meaning.

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139 Kim, “Use of East Asian Traditional Flute Techniques,” 25.

140 Chen Yi, Interview with Chen Yi.
CHAPTER FOUR
ZHOU LONG, FIVE ELEMENTS

Biographical Information

Born in Beijing on July 8, 1953, Zhou Long grew up within an artistic family that encouraged his early training in music. The Cultural Revolution, however, halted his entrance to the conservatory, sending Zhou and his family to the countryside for “re-education.” Only 16 at the time, Zhou farmed wheat, beans, and corn in rural Northeast China for five years. Zhou was later reassigned to a song and dance troupe near inner Mongolia where he worked as a musical arranger. This song and dance troupe first introduced him to the possibility of mixing Eastern and Western instruments. Attracted to the combined forces of this unique instrumentation and inspired by the realization that Eastern instruments could imitate Western and vice versa, this experience deeply influenced Zhou’s compositional style and ultimately fostered the basic philosophy of his New York based ensemble, Music from China.

Zhou enrolled in the Beijing Central Conservatory when it reopened in 1977. Following graduation, he accepted the position of composer-in-residence with the National Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra of China in 1983. The composer relocated to the United States in 1985 to pursue his doctorate at Columbia University, under the tutelage of Chou Wen-Chung, George Edwards, and Mario Davidovsky. Zhou’s many awards and grants reflect his success within Western classical music of the twentieth and twenty-first century. Most significantly, Zhou received the Academy Award in Music in 2003, a lifetime achievement award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He was also awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his opera

143 Ken Smith, “Focus on Zhou Long.”
Madam White Snake (2011). Significant commissions include the Kronos Quartet, the Tokyo Philharmonic, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, the Peabody Trio, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, and Chanticleer. Formerly on the faculty at Brooklyn College and the University of Memphis, Zhou is currently Distinguished Professor of Composition at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, Conservatory of Music and Dance. Married to fellow composer, Chen Yi, Zhou continues to compose actively, drawing inspiration from both his new home and his heritage.

**Musical Style**

While Zhou’s early works relied heavily on characteristics of Chinese folk traditions, his compositions beginning in the 1980s integrate Chinese attributes with atonality and Western form while exploring extended techniques and new media. A proponent of Chinese traditional ensembles, Zhou frequently combines Western and Chinese instruments in his compositions. Even in works strictly for Western instruments, the composer often uses extended techniques to reference Eastern instrumental characteristics. Moreover, many of Zhou’s scores appear in multiple versions, thus allowing musicians to perform on traditional Chinese instruments, Western instruments, or a combination of the two. The existence of the Five Elements score in three different versions illustrates this tendency.

Chinese philosophies and aesthetics vividly infuse most of Zhou’s compositions. Early Chinese music, as well as music and documents preserved from the T’ang Dynasty (618–907 A.D.), represent two major sources of inspiration. Of the delicate yet fluid relationship between tradition and innovation, Zhou observes:

> Traditional culture is something already formed. What is crucial is how to rediscover and comprehend it more fully. In this process of understanding and discovery, culture will become a living tradition, maintaining its long historical continuity. While this continuity undeniably impacts on the creativity of a given period, artists of one culture or tradition

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147 Lee, “Zhou Long.”

148 Ibid.

can also choose to absorb and extract the essence of various other cultures in the service of a lasting tradition.\textsuperscript{150}

While traditional Chinese music impacted Zhou’s work prior to his relocation, the composer’s move to the United States inspired additional explorations in Chinese philosophy.\textsuperscript{151} Overwhelmed by the drastically different environment of New York City, Zhou relates that he re-explored aspects of his Chinese heritage, remembering:

When I first moved to New York, the environment had so much information and so many different cultures. I stopped composing for two years. It was too confusing. I had to calm down—I thought Buddhist thought could help me deal with all this information. I started to review what I’d done. Then, I started to write atonal music influenced by Buddhist thought.\textsuperscript{152}

Related to this immense cultural and environmental change, Zhou’s compositional period from 1987 to 1994 was strongly shaped by Buddhism and, particularly, by the notion of “existence (yu) vs. non-existence (wu).”\textsuperscript{153} Works extending beyond this period, however, still reveal the strong influence of traditional Chinese aesthetics and philosophies, including references to spirituality and nature.

**The Five Elements: Genesis and Analysis**

**Genesis**

A co-commission from the Singapore Symphony Orchestra (Lan Shui, Music Director and conductor) and the Pacific Symphony (Carl St. Clair, Music Director and conductor), *Five Elements* received additional support from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation. Inspired by flutist Sharon Bezaly, this work was first premiered by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra at the Esplanade Concert Hall on July 17, 2008 and later recorded for BIS.\textsuperscript{154} The 2008 version premiered by Bezaly includes flute/piccolo/alto flute solo, flute/piccolo, clarinet, percussion,


\textsuperscript{151} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{152} Melvin, "Two Composers Exchanged Vows, But Not Musical Influence."


piano, violin, and cello. Two previous versions of *Five Elements* for alternate instrumentations were premiered in November 2002.\textsuperscript{155} The *San Francisco Contemporary Music Players* gave the first performance of the Western instrumental version of the work, which includes flute/piccolo, clarinet, percussion, piano, violin, and cello. Meanwhile, *Music from China* premiered *Five Elements* for Chinese and Western instruments, which features the *dizi*, *erhu*, *pipa*, clarinet, cello, and percussion.\textsuperscript{156} While the basic structure and features remain intact, each arrangement takes into account the characteristics and capabilities of the particular combination of instruments.\textsuperscript{157}

### Analysis

The Five Elements (*wu xing*), composed of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth, represent the five components of the universe within ancient Chinese scholarship. The associations of each of the Five Elements guide characteristics of each movement, as well as the overall balance of the form. In the score, Zhou notes:

> In my composition, *Five Elements*, each of the elements is represented in one of the five movements, which manifest the cyclic interactions of yin and yang that regulate life on earth. The five elements are also known as the ‘five movements’ (*wu yun*). These are qualities of energy that define the stages of transformation in the recurring cycles of seasonal change, growth, and decay, shifting climatic conditions, sounds, flavors, emotions, and human physiology. Like yin and yang, the five Elemental Energies maintain their internal harmony through a system of mutual checks and balances known as ‘creative’ and ‘control’ cycles. Both these cycles, which counteract and balance one another, are in constant operation, maintaining the dynamic fields of polar forces required to move and transform energies.\textsuperscript{158}

Additionally, Zhou draws upon the ancient *qin* tradition in the first movement, while Chinese folk percussion ensembles influence the second movement.

\textsuperscript{155} “Zhou Long,” *American Music Center*.


\textsuperscript{157} Zhou, Interview with Zhou Long.

\textsuperscript{158} Zhou Long, *Five Elements*.  

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**Qin**

The timbral variety, articulation, and aesthetic associations of the *qin* and Chinese bamboo flute shape the features within movements one, three, and five of this work. Dating back to 25 AD, the *qin* speaks to the use of music for meditation in early Chinese religious practices. As the favored instrument of the *wenren*, the *qin* was believed to allow an individual to find union between heaven and earth. Further, because *qin* music typically accompanied poetry, the music was flexible and strongly influenced by the flow of chanted words. This ancient music contained no rhythmic indication, as it was believed that application of strict time would “deaden the flow of the music.”

Inspired by the traditional Chinese *qin* melody, *Youlan (Secluded Orchid)* by Qui Ming (495-590 BC), *Metal* (movement one) underscores the aesthetic associations of *Youlan* and the *qin* tradition. Further, *Water* (movement three) and *Earth* (movement five) also adopt this emphasis on single tones, as well as timbral variation, atmospheric character, and an impression of rhythmic fluidity. *Metal* finds origins in Zhou Long’s *Su (Tracing Back)* for flute and *qin*. Both *Su* and *Metal* employ *Youlan* as an abstract source of inspiration, adopting the atmosphere of *qin* music more than the melodic characteristics themselves (Figure 4.1). *Metal* and *Su*, therefore, contrast to Zhou Long’s *You Lan* for Erhu and Cello (2005), which adopts both the four part structure and key features of the original melody.

![Figure 4.1 You Lan, mm. 1-15](image)

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Youlan occupies an important place within both the qin repertoire and within the history of Chinese notated music. Many sources attribute this work to Confucius, though Youlan first received mention in the writings of qin performer and scholar Sima Xiangru (179-118 BC). One of the oldest pieces for qin, the manuscript of Youlan still survives in its original tablature notation. Zhou describes the story of Youlan as a tale of the “disheartened Confucius on his way home, having failed to promote his ideas in several states. The sight of an orchid growing in a desolate valley among the weeds moves him, and he compares himself—an unappreciated virtuous and able man—with this lonely orchid, a fragrant and precious flower, but uncherished by the world.”

All three movements create timbral variation through the incorporation of pitch bends (characteristic within qin and the bamboo flute performance), tremolos, dynamic swells on single notes, as well as harmonics. Further, the inclusion of three members of the flute family (C flute, piccolo, and alto flute) heightens the function of tonal variation within this work. Figure 4.2 and 4.3 illustrate this use of simplicity and space within the first flute entrance of the first movement and the final cadenza of the third movement.

Figure 4.2 Five Elements, First Movement, mm. 14-17

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Additionally, the inclusion of repeated grace notes a half step above the primary note in m. 101 speaks to the common use of this embellishment to create pitch separation in the *dizi* performance.

**Folk Traditions**

Allusions to the *dizi*, as well as folk percussion ensembles, also appear within the second and fourth movements. The aforementioned greater prominence of timbral variation, as well as the use of angular articulation, underscores these references to the *dizi*. In our recent interview, Zhou communicated his desire that the forceful intensity and aggressive style of *dizi* performance inform Western flute renditions of his works. The composer further revealed that the wide variety of highly specific articulations present within this concerto strive to force the soloist and orchestra to adopt an angular style. Figure 4.4 demonstrates Zhou’s specific application of articulation in the second movement (mm. 39-43).

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163 Zhou, Interview with Zhou Long.
Zhou remarks that traditional Chinese folk percussion ensembles also motivate the spritely and repetitive character of the second movement. Rhythmically aggressive and secco, this movement starkly contrasts the more ethereal and fluid first, third, and fifth movements. This lively character reappears within the similarly spirited fourth movement. Repetition and variation of the primary motive (first appearing in m. 4 of the flute solo in movement two) form the basis of both Wood (movement two) and Fire (movement four).
Zhou notes that the general spirit of these folk ensembles (characterized by repetition and rhythmic vitality), rather than specific regional traditions or features, influence these movements.\textsuperscript{164}

**Structure**

While the concerto does not adhere to traditional Western formal structures, the balance inherent within its design speaks to the cyclical changes and juxtapositions that create equilibrium within the natural world. Further, this sense of balance exists on multiple levels. Beginning from nothing and ending in nothing, *Five Elements* contrasts the simplicity of spatial textures with buoyant energy. The first twenty measures function as an introduction, balancing the gentle decay of the concluding twenty-two measures of the final movement. The similar treatment of texture, rhythm, timbre, and time within the first, third, and fifth movements counter the lively activity of the second and fourth movements. Additionally, *Water* (interior movement) is significantly longer than the other movements. As a result, this movement stands alone as a counter balance to the other four of similar length, which flank the third movement, creating a relationship of 2:1:2 (217:124: 222). The works builds up to the fourth movement, *Fire*, which occurs at approximately the 2/3 point of the work, therein alluding to the Golden Ratio (334/556). This cyclical approach to structure is outlined below (Table 4.1).

\textsuperscript{164} Zhou, Zhou Long Interview.
Table 4.1 *Five Elements*, Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Metal</th>
<th>Wood</th>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Fire</th>
<th>Earth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Salient Features</td>
<td>Spatial, flexibility of tempo, atmospheric</td>
<td>Rhythmic, energetic, fast tempo</td>
<td>Spatial, slow moving harmonies</td>
<td>Rhythmic, energetic, fast tempo</td>
<td>Spatial, slow tempo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>94 mm. 6 min.</td>
<td>123 mm. 3.5 min.</td>
<td>117 mm. 8 min.</td>
<td>200 mm. 5 min.</td>
<td>22 mm. 3 min.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Symbolism**

Programmatic associations inspire the character of each movement within *Five Elements*. Of the first movement, Zhou reflects: “The first movement is *Metal*, a refined extract of Earth forged by *Fire.*”\(^{165}\) Symbolism within the first movement, *Metal*, appears in the opening metallic repercussions of the tam tam and the dissonant clusters articulated in the piano to symbolize the creation of iron (Figure 4.6).\(^{166}\) The sparse texture of the opening softly builds into quiet activity in the winds beginning in m. 9 and is extended by the terse interpolations of the piano. Zhou indicates that this musical gesture depicts the “extraction and refinement of iron.”\(^{167}\)

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\(^{165}\) Zhou, *Five Elements*.

\(^{166}\) Ibid.

\(^{167}\) Ibid.
Similarly, the spritely second movement, titled *Wood*, speaks to the vitality of the natural world through the incorporation of wooden percussion and crisp articulation. The primary motive first appears in the flute entrance in m. 4 and undergoes series of transformations throughout the movement (Figure 4.5). Further, the third movement references its title, *Water*, through the application of expanded and stratified textures and economy of means to evoke a sense of stillness and depth. The overlapping layers indicated in Figure 4.7 exemplify the sense of timelessness suggested by the movement. Running septuplets in the flutes further alludes to the murmurs of water (Figure 4.8).
Figure 4.7 *Five Elements*, Third Movement, mm. 30-34

Figure 4.8 *Five Elements*, Third Movement, mm. 1-2
In the score, Zhou notes: “Water, is a highly concentrated element containing great potential power.” The extended length and central position of the movement guarantees that the structural importance of this element mirrors its significance within the natural world. Moreover, the rhythmic fluidity, slow moving harmonies, and heightened emphasis on timbre (as compared to the second movement and fourth movements) serve to balance this movement with the first (Metal) and final movement (Earth).

The fourth movement, *Fire*, builds on the energy of the *Wood* motive. Zhou states: “Just as spring develops naturally into summer, the creative energy of Wood matures into the flourishing ‘full yang’ energy of Fire.” Similar to the second movement, *Fire* is characterized by rhythmic vitality and creative variation of limited pitch content. The penetrating sound of the piccolo and increased prevalence of mixed meter adds greater intensity to the rhythmic brilliance established in *Wood*.

![Figure 4.9 Five Elements, Fourth Movement, mm. 15-18](image)

Also like the second movement, *Fire* uses the four bar motive (Figure 4.8) as the basis for repetition and development. This motive further indicates its origins in the second movement through the continued presence of the tritone, use of embellishment, and secco and articulated style.

Finally, the last movement, *Earth*, restores equilibrium among the elements. Through its expanded texture, slow moving harmonies, and emphasis on color, this movement balances with the first and third movements.

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168 Zhou, *Five Elements*. 
Figure 4.10 *Five Elements*, Fifth Movement, mm. 6-9

**Conclusion**

Though the concerto genre and instrumentation speak to Western characteristics, *Five Elements* simultaneously suggests Chinese traditions through the use of symbolism and references to ancient Chinese music. Within these allusions, the notion of timbral variety receives heightened importance. Recognition of these influences again encourages the performer to explore the angular articulations of the traditional bamboo flute, as well as greater expression on re-articulations and variations of single pitches. The next piece discussed, Bright Sheng’s *Flute Moon*, will also employ the concept of symbolism, drawing on literature and mythology for inspiration.
Biographical Information

Composer, conductor, and pianist Bright Sheng was born in Shanghai, China on December 6, 1955. Sheng began his musical studies at age four, learning piano from his mother. The harsh restrictions of the Cultural Revolution impacted Sheng’s early music education and lifestyle. Born into a family of engineers and doctors, Sheng’s family attracted the critical attention of the government; by age 11, the Maoist regime confiscated his family piano. Following completion of junior high school in 1971, the government exiled Sheng to the Qinghai Province near the Tibetan border where he worked as an accompanist in a folk song and dance troupe and studied and collected folk music. “Everybody had to go,” remembered Sheng, “especially somebody with my background, which was considered politically very bad. The only way you could get away from being a farmer was if you had any kind of performing talent. I auditioned for many groups, in the army and in the big cities, and was actually accepted by several. But when they checked my political background I was turned down immediately.”

Following the end of the Cultural Revolution, universities reopened. Sheng entered the Shanghai Music Conservatory in 1978 where he learned music history, theory, and repertoire from the Western music department while taking select classes from the Chinese music department. In 1980, Sheng’s family relocated to the United States. He soon followed them, moving to the US in 1982 where he enrolled in Queens College of the City University of New York.

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Sheng went on to study with Chou Wen-Chung, Jack Beeson, and Mario Davidovsky at Columbia University, completing his DMA in 1993. During his time at Columbia, Sheng won fellowships to the Aspen and Tanglewood music festivals. At Tanglewood, Sheng met Leonard Bernstein for the first time. Bernstein remained influential to Sheng, who studied privately with the composer/conductor until his death in 1990. Unlike many of Sheng’s professors and peers, Bernstein urged Sheng to find his own voice—a voice that naturally embraced Eastern and Western influences. In an interview with Mark Swed, Sheng recalls asking Bernstein whether fusion was possible, relating: "After I had known Bernstein for about a year, I popped him that question and he looked at me surprised. 'What do you mean fusion?' he said. 'Everything is fusion. Stravinsky’s fusion. Shostakovich is fusion. Debussy's fusion. Brahms is fusion with folk music. I'm fusion. Of course it's possible."

Sheng quickly developed his own style and established a career on the West Coast. Numerous accolades from both China and the United States attest to his success, including the 2001 “Genius” award from the MacArthur Foundation, praising Sheng as “an innovative composer who merges diverse musical customs in works that transcend conventional aesthetic boundaries.” He has served as composer-in-residence for the Lyric Opera of Chicago, The New York City Ballet, Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Tanglewood Music Center, the Washington Performing Arts Society, the Mannes College of Music, and the Atlantic Center for the Arts. Sheng joined the faculty of the University of Michigan in 1995 where he is the Leonard Bernstein Distinguished University Professor of Music.

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173 Swed, "Classical Music: A Long Musical March from China."
175 Swed, "Classical Music: A Long Musical March from China."
177 Swed, "Classical Music: A Long Musical March from China."
178 Bright Sheng, “Biography.”
179 Ibid.
Musical Style

Sheng describes the equal function of Chinese and American musical stimuli within his style, relating: “Chinese and Asian music is unquestionably my mother tongue, while I consider Western music culture my father tongue.”¹⁸⁰ Sheng’s works composed shortly after his arrival in the United States particularly reflect the influence of folk traditions.¹⁸¹ The composer admires Bartok for his ability to “keep the beauty and savageness of (Hungarian) folk elements while blending them to the ‘fine art’ Western Classical music,” further speculating that “The result enriches both (traditions).”¹⁸² He recognizes, however, that Bartok’s ability to successfully integrate Hungarian and Western traditions stemmed from his innate understanding of both cultures and practices. Relating this to Chinese and Western music, Sheng reveals: “One must understand both sides [Chinese and Western Music] in great profundity and then when these two seemingly opposites meet at their most original end, a true transformation occurs.”¹⁸³ Sheng strives to incorporate Eastern and Western elements without “compromising the integrity of either.”¹⁸⁴ To this goal, the composer adds that he attempts to add complexity to the simplicity of Chinese music through the application of counterpoint and an expanded sense of tonality.¹⁸⁵ While Sheng’s works typically highlight Western instruments and genres, emphasis on melody, development through embellishment rather than traditional motivic development, a favoring of the linear line (over harmonic support) and strong reference to Chinese folk song speak to Sheng’s Eastern influences.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸² Ibid, 10.
¹⁸³ Ibid.
¹⁸⁴ Zhang, "Bright Sheng."
Flute Moon: Genesis and Analysis

Genesis

Commissioned by the Houston Symphony Orchestra, *Flute Moon* was premiered by this ensemble, under the direction of Christoph Eschenbach, on May 22, 1999, showcasing flutist Aralee Dorough. Provoking an enthusiastic response, Charles Ward of the Houston Chronicle described the premiere as “the best premiere the Houston Symphony has offered in many years,” going on to praise Sheng’s synthesis of “his deep affinity for Chinese culture and his exceptional skill in writing Western art music.”

G. Schirmer published this score in 2004. More recently, Sharon Bezaly recorded *Flute Moon* with the Singapore Symphony, including this work on the 2011 BIS recording titled: *Across the Sea: Chinese American Flute Concertos*. This concerto is dedicated to Christoph Eschenbach and the Houston Symphony Orchestra.

Analysis

*Flute Moon* draws upon two respective sources for inspiration: the mythological tale of *Chi-Lin* (movement one) and the art song of literati poet, Jiang Kui (movement two). Both movements include solo flute/piccolo, harp, piano, strings and percussion. Further, each movement evokes the character of their respective programmatic associations through a combination of modified pentatonic and chromatic material. Sheng indicates that this source of integration holds particular meaning within this work, relating:

This is perhaps the first piece in my writing in which I felt more comfortable using Chinese melodic materials (mostly pentatonic) AND chromatic harmony. So for audience or a listener, the change may appear very small or no change from my previous writing style, but for the composer, it was a big step. The flute part is a demanding one, some of the almost impossible trills, etc. The part requires someone who has a great technique and singing quality. But luckily many great players have played the work with conviction.

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190 Bright Sheng, Email Message to Bright Sheng, September 29, 2012.
While Sheng’s use of chromaticism and Western instrumentation allude to Western traits, the use of a traditional Chinese art song and the mythological tale of Chi-Lin signal Chinese influence. This chapter will explore Sheng’s musical illustration of the contrasting characters and stories within each movement of Flute Moon, examining structure and treatment of chromatic and modal material as it relates to these representations.

**Chi-Lin**

Characteristics of the first movement, Chi-Lin, describe features of the mythological Chinese unicorn by the same name. Sheng vividly describes this harrowing yet benevolent creature in his program note:

Also known as the ‘dragon horse,’ [Chi-Lin] is one of the four spiritual creatures in Chinese mythology…It is supposed to combine the body of the musk deer with the tail of an ox, the forehead of a wolf, and the hoofs of a horse. Eighteen feet high and covered with scales like a fish, its skin is of five colors-red, blue, white, black, with yellow under the belly. In short, it has a monstrous appearance albeit it symbolizes benevolence and rectitude.191

This legendary creature includes two nearly identical halves—the male (Chi), represented by the strings and percussion, boasts a single horn on his forehead. Meanwhile, the female, Lin, symbolized by the piccolo, is otherwise identical. The tale of Chi Lin shapes Sheng’s choice of motives and development of these materials. Though this movement does not adhere to Western, nor Eastern traditional formal structures, the arch-like construction of Chi-Lin invites balance and continuity.

Further, both the Chi and Lin motives recall the programmatic associations of this movement. Initially stated by the weighty articulations of the celli, coupled with a chromatic subtheme in the double basses and piano, the four measure Chi motive develops until the entrance of the Lin motive (piccolo) in m. 94 (Figure 5.1).

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The low range of the *Chi* motive and application of accents speaks to the dark appearance of this creature. This use of accents, coupled with Sheng’s indication for *al talone*, or at the frog, and down bow (requested on nearly every note of the main theme) furthers this marcato character. Additionally, the dissonant intervals created by the *Chi* theme (celli) and accompanying sub-motive in the double bass/piano line reinforces the tension of the theme. This *Chi* theme features subtle references to pentatonicism through the emphasis on the interval of the minor third and minor and major seconds (Figure 5.2).
More specifically, while m. 1 suggests allegiance to Eb pentatonic, m.2 signals a shift to B pentatonic, while m.3 references F pentatonic. Though these fragments, both in this example and throughout the work, allude to Chinese origins, pentatonic scales do not appear in their entirety. Further, the use of disjunct intervals, application of chromaticism, and tendency to avoid beginning modal allusions with the pentatonic root, further obscures any obvious sense of modalism.

Sheng develops this theme in its original form, as well as various transformations, culminating in the unison statement of a variation of the chromatic sub-motive in mm. 89-93. Fragmentary exclamations in the percussion and building glissandi in the harp punctuate the otherwise fortissimo unison texture in the strings (Figure 5.3).
This climax suddenly screeches to a halt with the entrance of the Lin motive in the following measure (Figure 5.4).

While the piccolo entrance remains forte, the drastic shift to a more sparse orchestral texture, combined with the more legato and lithe Lin motive, creates stark contrast. Similar to the Chi
motive, this female counterbalance employs the linear interval of the minor third and major second (suggestive of pentatonicism) and appears in the lowest range of the instrument. These similarities pay homage to the fundamentally identical nature of the male and female halves of Chi-Lin. The Lin motive continues to develop against the sparse accompaniment of the strings and percussion. The first clear reappearance of the Chi motive begins in the piano at m.131, signaling the development of the combined motives, which build until m. 167. Upon reaching the peak of the first movement in m. 167, the Lin motive retreats in m. 168. The Chi motive and submotive gradually diminuendo from m.168 to the close of the movement (m. 209), ending in silence.

**Flute Moon**

The traditional art song of literati (wenren) poet Jiang Kui (1155-1235) guides the second movement. Sheng includes his own translation of the poem in the score:

Evanescent Fragrances

Oh, moonlight, my old friend,
How many times have you accompanied
My flute beside the wintersweet blossom?

We plucked a sprig to arouse her beauty,
In the brisk and frosty air

But now your poet is getting old,
And he has forgotten the love and lyrics;
Yet, he still resents the few flowers beyond the bamboo,
For their chilling fragrances has crept into his chamber.

The composer reflects that the use of metaphor in this poem appeals to him, adding that “In this poem, the poet reminiscences and laments China’s prosperity before the invasions under the moonlight—the witness.”

*Flute Moon* references the introspective and poignant character of the art song while including melodic and structural features of both the poetry and melody (Table 5.1). Though the

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192 Sheng, “Program Note.”

193 Sheng, “Program Note.” The poet, Jiang Kui, lived in a tumultuous time in China, in which areas of China north of the Yangtze River were occupied by multiple invaders—first the Jin people and later the Mongols.
The proportion of measures within each section do not correspond to the number of lines within each stanza of the poem, the approximate duration of each part mirrors the structure of the poetry. This discrepancy results from the faster tempo of the middle section.

Table 5.1 *Flute Moon*, Second Movement, Poetic Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stanza</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lines within Stanza</td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Four</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measures</td>
<td>mm. 1-44</td>
<td>mm. 45-99</td>
<td>mm. 100-156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate Duration</td>
<td>3:40</td>
<td>2:35</td>
<td>5:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Characteristics</td>
<td>Slow moving harmonies, use of suspension, atmospheric accompaniment in strings coupled with sweeping scalar gestures and trills in flute</td>
<td>Increased rhythmic and dynamic intensity; greater function of pentatonicism</td>
<td>Decrease in dynamic and tempo; plaintive voice of the flute with sparse accompaniment in the strings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Use of Harmony to Convey Poetry**

Constructed in three parts, the tonal language and structure of this movement speak to the ancient and retrospective character of the poem. The opening employs slow moving spacious harmonies and open intervals to create a sense of expansiveness and tranquility (Figure 5.5).
Chains of suspensions, however, add tension, perhaps alluding to the poet’s metaphors. The resolution of suspensions in alternate voices furthers both the sense of continuity and apprehension. The C# in m. 1 (first celli), for example, resolves one measure later with the D in the basses. Similarly, the G# appearing in m. 2 (violas) achieves resolution in m. 4 (second celli). Dynamic swells within the strings additionally illustrate the gentle moonlight depicted within Jiang’s poem. Moreover, the string writing subtlety references the melody of the original art song (Figure 5.6) through the inclusion of the primary intervals within its melody: the perfect fifth and minor and major seconds. Illustrated by Figure 5.7, mm. 22-29 exhibits these subtle references to the original melody.
The sweeping gestures of the solo flute, beginning with a sustained trill in mm. 21-23, take place beside the static accompanying harmonies exemplified by Figure 5.7. Intensified with each subsequent occurrence in mm. 29-32 and mm. 39-45, the lyrical activity of the flute contrasts with the stillness of the orchestral accompaniment, signifying the juxtaposition between the flute and moonlight suggested within the poetry.

The second stanza, beginning at m. 45 of the work, insinuates climbing tension, indicated by the metaphor of “plucking,” as well as the “brisk and frosty air.” Heightened dynamic and rhythmic activity, as well as the greater prominence of percussion (particularly the chimes and gong) herald in this change. This section sees more reliance on fragments of pentatonic modes.

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194 Bright Sheng, Email Correspondence.
as well as intervals indicative of the pentatonic scale. The first violin part (doubled by parallel fifths in the second violin) in mm. 64-70 elucidates Sheng’s understated use of pentatonicism (Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8 Flute Moon, Second Movement, mm. 64-68

Similar to the first movement, Figure 5.8 highlights Sheng’s use of pentatonic scale fragments used in combination with chromaticism. Beginning with a rapid alteration between the C and Db pentatonic scales in mm. 64-66, the two scales fuse together, forming a hybrid in m. 68. Interestingly, enharmonic spellings obscure this juxtaposition and combination. Additionally, the increased use of pitch percussion (chimes) and the gong through this movement indicate the greater prominence of pitched percussion and timbre within Chinese traditional music.

Finally, the third and final section illustrates the solitary and longing atmosphere of the last stanza, articulated by the lone voice of the flute beginning at m. 100. The sparse accompaniment through this final section merely serves as complimentary or conversational in function to the plaintive voice of the flute. The pianississimo perfect fourths in the double basses exemplify this relationship (Figure 5.9).
Conclusion

*Flute Moon* colorfully illustrates the use of traditional Eastern and Western characteristics through the adept fusion of pentatonicism and chromaticism. Moreover, while Sheng adopts Western instrumentation, his colorful use of orchestration and reliance on ancient Chinese mythology and art song simultaneously suggest Eastern influences and aesthetics. Ultimately, *Flute Moon* favors neither East, nor West, instead evoking a style colored by the possibilities of both cultures but married to neither.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

New music will become more diverse because [we] have new influences from all other cultures and not only from Europe...the hybrid means you can combine naturally, not artificially, so I can predict that [this] kind of music will be developing and flourishing because now people have more information—they know other cultures around the world better and better and then they would adopt that kind of language, styles and even thinking, so that makes the music change and makes the music better. I think it is quite optimistic. —Chen Yi

Three major contributions to twenty-first century flute repertoire, Chen Yi’s, *The Golden Flute*, Zhou Long’s *Five Elements*, and Bright Sheng’s *Flute Moon* illustrate three individual and innovative approaches to integrating Eastern and Western attributes. Moreover, the organic assimilation of multi-cultural elements within their works speaks to the broadening definition of culture and influence within twenty-first century performance and composition.

The twenty-first century heralds in an increasingly global society. With access to technology and travel, we now enjoy more opportunities to explore the musical and cultural resources of the world. Supporting Chen’s belief that music will continue to embrace non-Western resources, Zhou further highlights the growing function of music as quintessentially universal in nature, reflecting: “You can’t predict what kind of style or music for the twenty-first century. But the one thing that’s very clear [is that] music composition and music that’s being played is widely mixed...What is American music? American music includes everything: African, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Asian—everything. So in the twenty-first century, I would see [that] classical music becomes world music.”

The rising popularity of Historically Informed Performance in Early Music speaks to the possibility that heightened awareness of external historical, cultural, and musical factors can expand the performer’s repertoire of expressive tools. I believe that this augmented consciousness need not be limited to music of the past alone. Performances of twenty-first century music can enjoy the same benefits when allowed a similar appreciation of intentions,

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195 Chen Yi, Interview with Chen Yi.
196 Zhou, Interview with Zhou Long.
influences, and aesthetics. After all, culturally informed performances of the present will one day become historically informed performances of the past. Whether historical or cultural, exploring the elements that shape compositions will offer additional insight into style and meaning, ultimately enhancing the possibility of connecting to compositions and concert audiences on a deeper level. Through an overview of salient philosophical and musical influences within these works, this treatise offers a greater understanding of the aesthetic values and cultural associations that can enhance performances of the twenty-first century flute concerti by Chen Yi, Zhou Long, and Bright Sheng.
APPENDIX A

Chen Yi Interview (Excerpts), September 17, 2012

C: When you heard this cd, this is the second cd made of this piece in which I added a cadenza for flute soloist Bezaly because she told me that she’s very good at circular breathing. She wanted something very long—no breathing in between to feature—so I added a cadenza for her.

S: Were there any additional changes made to the concerto in this later version?

C: No, absolutely not. The 1997 is the one that other people do. I keep with this because that has the beauty of the form. There is an article written by Hsu at Duke University. I guess she had asked me questions about that piece, that’s why I went through my old notes and found that there was a lot to talk about in that piece (old version), therefore the new version doesn’t change the structure.

S: So you must have worked closely with Bezaly in producing the recording?

C: No, not actually. I didn’t go to Singapore. I only talked to her on the phone and she tried out a little bit for me. The only question she had in the new version was – she said that the low register of these low repeated patterns was very hard—so she asked whether she could slow down in the beginning and then speed up later. I said, that’s fine with me –whatever you do, because it’s the cadenza—though, in my mind it’s kind of a minimalism approach: a very long, very even phrase with non-stop repeated patterns. Eventually the outcome was good because I told her to keep fluently going and she worked it out. I remember that I have also changed some low notes in the repeated patterns, to avoid using neighboring notes with difficult combination fingering.

S: Now, the 2008 cadenza – is this a version that you plan on publishing eventually?

C: Yes, this was published by Theodor Presser, with the additional cadenza. For many players who don’t want to take the additional cadenza, they could just choose not to play this cadenza between the first and second movement. Because in the third movement there’s a big cadenza before the end of the piece, so there’s still a chance to feature the soloist without playing the additional cadenza.
S: I read in the program note that this piece was originally inspired by James Galway and I was just wondering if you could talk a little bit about that.

C: The Wichita Symphony long time music director Chen Zuohuang invited me to compose a concerto for James Galway to play with the China National Symphony in the inauguration concert. I guess that was 1994. However, the plan didn’t happen due to the schedule conflict. This is why, when I completed the piece, the conductor of the Duluth Symphony in Minnesota, Mr. Yongyan Hu programmed the premiere of this piece. Three orchestras have asked for this piece around that time. The other conductor was JoAnn Falletta, who was planning to take the Virginia Symphony to Carnegie Hall to make their debut concert with James Galway. However, when she approached me, I had not finished that piece yet, so James Galway didn’t play my piece at Carnegie Hall with the Virginia Symphony. When the Duluth Symphony did the premiere, it’s not played by James Galway. I remember that after Zuohuang Chen asked me to write the concerto for James Galway, he bought a gift, a traditional Chinese bamboo flute for him. It was a long bamboo flute in C (the lowest version), because I could ask him to use that to play in the second movement.

**S (follow up question via email): Just to confirm: The Music Director of the Wichita Symphony and the China National Symphony (China Central Philharmonic Orchestra), Chen Zuohuang, requested the concerto for James Galway's performance with the Wichita Symphony in 1997?

C: Maestro Chen Zuohuang requested the concerto for JG's performance with the China National Symphony in their inaugural concert. Since CZH was the director of the Wichita Symphony Orchestra, so we could consider this as the co-commissioning work premiered by the two orchestras. Thus, I have applied to NEA Composer Fellowship program as a composer, and won the 1994 National Endowment for the Arts composer fellowship to write the piece.

The story is that Maestro Chen had talked to JG about the plan, and gave JG a Chinese bamboo flute as a gift, and thought that it might be great if it could be used in the concerto. JG talked to Mr. Lan Shui (then Associate Conductor of Detroit Symphony Orchestra) about the plan after he performed with the DSO, and Maestro Shui called me and told me about the interest among all
these musicians. That's why I decided to write the piece and applied to NEA for a commissioning grant. Although the Wichita Symphony has never performed the piece, it has been played by several other orchestras.

C: Originally, I planned to write three movements, one for regular flute, one for low bamboo flute and one for piccolo. However, Zuohuang Chen told me not to write for the piccolo. So I decided to write for the regular flute in all movements. With the low bamboo flute sound kept in mind, I used the low register of the flute in the second movement. I think that James still keeps that bamboo flute although he does not use it. He treasures the friendship and enjoys the timbre of the instrument.

S: Do you typically compose with a particular performer in mind? You’d mentioned Sharon Bezaly’s request for the cadenza.

C: Yes, but I don’t call this new version because it’s the same version—still what it was before—only the cadenza between first and second movement is new. That particular cadenza was new for Sharon Bezaly because she asked for it. She wanted my husband to write the highest pitches for her and she asked me to write the circular breathing section for her. The cadenza is always made up by the soloist anyway, it doesn’t change the structure of the work, so this is just standing alone as an extra section within this piece.

S: You mentioned the dizi a couple times— for the second movement of The Golden Flute, do you intend the performer to imitate the dizi?

C: Yes, in the second and other movements, you can hear some flutter tongue notes in a long phrase with a slur. When you do that, the timbre sounds like coming from the bamboo flute, because the bamboo flute has a little different structure than the Western flute. They have a hole that’s covered by a membrane. The membrane was made of a thin rice paper. You put the garlic juice around the hole and then you stick the rice paper on top of this hole. When the air comes through the hole with the membrane, it makes the timbre sound like, very fast vibrato, very light— that kind of timbre came from dizi. I used the flutter tongue on flute to imitate that timbre.

S: Do you play dizi or any other traditional Chinese instruments?
C: Haha, no, not me, I don’t play the *dizi*, but I teach a course called “Introduction to Non-Western Music” where I teach not only instrumentation of all Chinese instruments, but also the repertoire. The repertoire has two types. One is traditional and the other is newly composed work with mixed instrumentation, which would combine Chinese instruments and Western instruments in one piece. I classify all types of instruments into these basic types: the blowing, the bowing, the plucking, and the percussion instruments, so there are four categories. I teach this course to my undergraduate students, that’s why I know the structure, characteristics and style of those instruments, including the *dizi*.

S: Do you approach composing for Eastern and Western instruments differently?

C: Twentieth century techniques have been inspired by or borrowed from those ethnic instruments. That’s why in one of my classes, I even asked my students to write a one page transcription of a traditional instrumental solo piece for their own western instruments to play, and a short essay to compare their instruments and ethnic instruments, to see how their fingerings are different, and how they are influenced from each other. And then they put a lot of extended techniques in order to imitate the type of sound they found. For example, you can find from *The Golden Flute*, that type of glissando from top to bottom. It’s a very typical sound of bamboo flute, which we don’t use that much in Western flute. And also, a type of *dizi* in southern China would use very fast sixteenth notes without stop to accompany the singing part. *Sing example*: Very long phrases of sixteenth notes. I wrote this to imitate the bamboo flute music. Also the grace notes—they are in the style borrowed from the northern school of Chinese *dizi*. So if you want to list them one by one, you can find these fast grace notes and glissandos, these are similar to *dizi*.

S: Do you prefer composing for Eastern or Western instruments? Or a combination of the two?

C: It’s a combination, but normally I write for Western instruments because I came from this background. I am a modernist. I started learning repertoire from three years old, so basically classical repertoire up until I’m a teenager. Then I studied Chinese music later because I found out the musical language is closely related to speaking language, like your daily modern tongue. I found out this kind of style later and I combined it into my voice. It became my own
composition style. I have written for both instrumentation, and sometimes a combination of the two.

S: I noticed that you mentioned the parallels between musical and spoken language in a few previous interviews. Now in terms of the similarities, do you mean the accentuation of the voice and the way language itself is formed?

C: Yes, including the melodic tune imitating the speech. It’s like *sings* - this kind of melody making is actually based on reciting in a kind of poetic style. I’ll read a poem for you: *demonstrates.* If I write it into music it becomes: *sings words.* If I write it into string instruments, it’s: *sings same thing.* You can use this kind of technique. I don’t think that other people had used this kind of technique that much, but many of my melodies are based on this type of sound. In *The Golden Flute*, it’s quite like a kind of pure musical pitch oriented music, though. I didn’t want James Galway trying this…*laughs.* In *The Golden Flute*, the basic technique I used is Chinese traditional music variation technique. In traditional Chinese instrumental music repertoire you can classify them into two different schools of music, one is lyrical school, with pieces presenting personal moods or describing the beauty of landscapes, the other is martial school, with pieces describing battle scenes. Both of them used variation technique to develop the initial music material. The variation method is divided into two types. One type is the performing technique variation, which means that each variation section is based on a kind of fingering in performance. You will hear many kinds of performing technique played on a specific instrument in any given piece, because all pieces include various numbers of variation sections. The other type of variation method is the structural variation form. It means that you base on one theme and enlarge or shrink it proportionally. I used this a lot in various works, and did an analysis on my piano concerto. I used the first type of method in my concerto *The Golden Flute*.

S: Do you find that you typically think of composing pieces within one of the two categories (lyrical or battle)?

C: I find I sometimes combine. I don’t want to classify them so clearly because you don’t describe a battle exactly or a landscape exactly. My *Golden Flute* is absolutely an abstract piece. It doesn’t tell a story and it is pure music – it is not programmatic. I only have the tempo change.
I did give a tempo mark to each movement as the title of the movement. I guess on the cd they forgot to print this out.

S: Galway is often referred to as “the man with the golden flute” – was the title of this concerto inspired by him?

C: Yes. Also, I imagined this kind of brightness. In Hsu’s article (Duke University) she describes this piece along with other pieces of mine. I had mentioned this structural plan for her but I didn’t analyze this concerto for her. I used the golden section a lot to plan for many of my works. I wasn’t sure for this piece. What I was very sure was the pitch material and the variations based on this pitch material. You can find many kinds of variations used in different rhythms, different pitches, different keys and registers.

S: How did you approach composing this work? Can you describe your compositional process?

C: I wrote straight from top to end. Sometimes I write the cadenza or end first, but this piece I wrote from the beginning to the end because I had a very clear idea to follow traditional bamboo flute music’s traditional form and variation technique. They would go from one technique to the next… though I didn’t follow the traditional fingering at all, you can still detect this feature. This piece was pretty normal for me as a musical piece which was not hard to write. I could write easily because the mind is clear.

S: What do you see for the future of new music?

C: New music will become more diverse because you have new influences from all other cultures and not only from Europe. It’s like what you saw in my Third Symphony where I borrowed all this jazz and hip hop, which I heard from New York so much. I would borrow them and combine them into one piece or one movement with pentatonic phrases. When you meld them together you can identify but they became a kind of hybrid. The hybrid means you can combine naturally, not artificially, so I can predict that that kind of music will be developing and flourishing because now these people have more information – they know other cultures around the world better and better and then they would adopt that kind of language, styles and even thinking, so that makes the music change and makes the music better. I think it is quite optimistic.
S: A lot twentieth and twenty-first century composers have explored the world’s resources—are there any disadvantages to this approach?

C: I don’t think that is a problem, because everything could be improved in its progression. When good things happen in the beginning maybe it’s not mature, so there maybe a lot of exploration and experimentation until it comes to a more natural production—then it may become more mature. So in my view, I think that you should let them do it. If we stop them, if we criticize them, it may not be encouraging—although, for some superficial works, we think that it’s very childish. Sometimes I will laugh when I hear this – still, there is no reason to stop them. As long as you try, as long as you practice, other things will come up later. Because in the long run, within history, this is only a really small portion of experimental within music history development, so I think that some good things came out and some equally rooted in different cultures came out in good combination. So even in early stages, they keep coming out. The problem is not trying. If you let them try, something will be good.

S: Along those lines, do you have any advice to young composers?

C: I think for young composers, they should love people, society, life and nature. That will help them to give back to those that I mention. Because when you are creative, you will use your sharp eyes to look into the order of this and if you get inspiration and create your own musical work, that is feedback to the society. You will benefit that society. It will go back to the culture, go back to the people, go back to the love and to nature—to everything. That’s why I encourage young composers to go into society and go into your life. You’ve got to love people and then you can have your inspiration and to create in your own voice.

S: As a composer do you have any wishes or expectations of the performer?

C: For performers, I am a tough teacher—not only in technical training, but in composition approach, which is the requirements for performers because I myself am a musician (a violin player). I think a technical foundation should be laid very firmly. That needs hard work. That needs inspiration. That needs a wide range of interests for you to have your taste and to help you master your instrument better. In that case, I would encourage our musicians to have a broader mind and taste in terms of repertoire and technique. That may help them to develop their technique and their mastery of works. Basically, the technical training is very important for me.
Zhou Long Interview (Excerpts), September 17, 2012

S: Can you tell me a little bit about *Five Elements* for flute and orchestra?

Z: [Co-commissioned by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, Lan Shui, Music Director and conductor, and the Pacific Symphony, Carl St. Clair, Music Director and conductor. With the generous support of the Koussevitzky Music Foundations, for The Serge Koussevitzky Music Foundation in the Library of Congress, and dedicated to the memory of Serge and Natalie Koussevitzky, inspired by flutist Sharon Bezaly. First performed on 17 July 2008, by the Singapore Symphony Orchestra, and recorded for BIS at the Esplanade Concert Hall, Singapore.] Bezaly wanted a flute concerto, but it’s kind of a challenge. And then I thought about it and the traditional Chinese, the five elements, that would allow five parts for the whole concerto and I like to feature most of the kinds of the flute family. At the time, Bezaly is not very favored for playing the alto and the piccolo-usually the flutists in flute concertos prefer to play the flute entirely, but I insist that I have to. For these elements, I like to feature different qualities of sound for the flute. Finally she agreed and then we started.

S: Did you work closely with Bezaly in recording this piece?

Z: Actually, we recorded first and then we had the premiere in Singapore after the recording. I believe, yes, the recording took place before the premiere.

S: Dr. Chen mentioned that Bezaly asked that you write high notes for the flute. Did she make any other specific requests?

Z: At the time I spoke with Bezaly’s husband, Robert. He is kind of an expert of flute and married different women, most of them flutists, and he asked me to write in extreme range. That’s why I write in the very high register for both the flute and the piccolo.

S: I notice that the first movement shows similarities to *Su* for flute and *qin*. I was wondering what inspired you to draw on this material.
Z: I had the idea to adapt the *Su* so the first movement is kind of an ancient...I feel that ancient feeling. So first I thought that I needed to adapt this one. *Su* was originally written for flute and *qin* and adapted for harp in later version...because I can’t really find a *qin* player in New York. So the idea is, from the earliest score, it is *Su* itself. It is based on the *Secluded Orchid*, which is originally played by the [qin or guqin], so this material has different modes, like a scale. In ancient pieces and ancient music, this is very different from the folk [songs] (poems) of today, which are basically pentatonic. But in the ancient times, such as the *[guqin music] Secluded Orchid* (and the *qin*) [which] involved 11 tones, so I could use this to form the harmony [structure]...into the adaption of the [first movement of the] concerto.

S: So the harmonies are based on the original poems?

Z: The language of the original *qin* music. Yes, the *qin* music, the *Secluded Orchid* is very different from other ancient pieces, it actually includes 11 tones. I think by that time it was based on the *qin* instrument...They have many harmonics. That is why the tone also. I think that early period could have influence from Persia, [Kucha music-qiuciyue] [Serindia]. Especially during the Tang dynasty, a lot of Kucha music influenced into the Tang dynasty of Chinese music. Like the *pipa* is ancient music from Serindia. But the *qin* is an original Chinese instrument. But the very first notated music from *qin* music [such as *Secluded Orchid*] was also, the scholars also pointed out that they were influenced by the Kucha music, so these elements have more harmonic and harmony for the orchestra.

S: Now were any of the other movements shaped by specific ancient music in the same way that the first movement was influenced by *Su*?

Z: The second movement, wood is kind of a fast tempo, very percussive, so this is not ancient, but some kind of folk ensemble forms. Like a repetitive rhythm in the Chinese, folk music is more current – they form different percussion ensemble styles, so this is one of the styles that is often Chinese. I use the flute with fast passages and with allowing the orchestra with wood blocks with repeated patterns to compete with the wooden effect in the orchestra. The second one is based in general on the folk ensemble style. It is very different from the first, ancient *qin* music.
S: I notice that this work was originally commissioned by the San Francisco Contemporary ensemble and appears in several forms. Do you have a preference between the versions? And how did you approach arranging this for flute?

Z: Yes, this is based on the two extant portions. Of course, this is for flute concerto, so it’s very different treatment because it featured flute. I believe this movement uses regular flute. Adapting…the treatment is very difficult because I still need to deal with the orchestra and the regular flute is kind of…you play solo recital and the flute is loud enough but in this kind of force, compete with the orchestra is very challenging because of the repeated rhythm and heavy percussion and brass involved. During the premiere we discussed but ended up deciding to not use the microphone. The orchestration is intentionally marked down and the conductor was very good to deal with it. In the recording, it isn’t a problem to hear the solo part, but during the performances, it’s almost there, but in the performances…Maybe some flute players have bigger sounds, but during the last…in the concert, I feel that the flute part is kind of weak. Beyond anything I really thought about this movement, Wood – I don’t want to lose the energy from the orchestra part. At the end we switch back and forth and the very high notes can’t really play fast, but in the mid-range, the flute can really against the orchestra.

S: It is a challenge for us. I noticed that you composed a number of pieces for Chinese instruments. I was wondering about your experience with traditional folk instruments. Do you play any yourself?

Z: No, I don’t play any Chinese instruments. I started an interest in the Chinese traditional instruments about 40 years ago when I first came back from the countryside and joined the song and dance troupe. I arranged and conducted and started working with a small orchestra which included Western instruments and Chinese instruments. I worked with them for almost five years, so I start to use the unusual forces and combine from there. About 35 years ago, I started to combine these Western and Chinese instruments. And I find a very interesting effect. I don’t play the instruments, but I started to use them based on these combined forces.

S: What’s your compositional process? For example, how did you approach composing Five Elements?
Z: I like to plan the whole structure and *Five Elements* is obviously about the five movements, so I will plan to have five pictures in my mind. I like to have some kind of image in my mind. My logic is, if I’m working on a concerto, obviously there is a solo line. The orchestration is very easy for me, so the very difficult process is to form the structure. I like to write the melody first. Some composers are against writing the melodies in the twentieth century, but my ideas for composing still rely on the melody writing. So for the concerto too, I would have the flute part written first—kind of a reduction, I write a reduced piano score and mark some ideas for color and in the end, I almost would finish all *Five Elements* then make the orchestration at once. And for the opera, the same thing – I have the piano and vocal score first. I don’t want to waste time making the orchestration and then throw away what I’ve already orchestrated.

S: You mentioned some of the tendencies of composition in the twentieth century composition. Related to that, what do you see for the future of new music?

Z: I hadn’t really thought about the big picture. The twentieth century music is very different. You can’t predict what kind of style or music for the twenty-first century. But the one thing that’s very clear, the music composition and music that’s being played is widely mixed. You see the Eurocentric dominated classical music scene, but now it’s very mixed, not only with Chinese music, but what is American music?—American music includes everything: African, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Asian…everything. So the twenty-first century, I would see classical music becomes world music. Not that kind of world music, but the music is injected within very different cultures.

S: Recent composers have explored the world’s resources within compositions…Are there any disadvantages or advantages to incorporating elements of world music to modern composition?

Z: I don’t see any disadvantages. To be honest, the positives are the main thing. I would say, whatever your music style is, there is good music and bad music. Some experiments are successful and some experiments are not successful…Some are a mixture and some assimilate and they become accepted. Some work, are just not working, whatever the style. I still think it’s very positive in general. In the future, you can’t really say for the one style. There are many different schools –like Vienna school, the total serialism and minimalism—you can’t say one. I can’t stand for one style –I get bored. For composers, the challenge is how you combine and use
any school, any style, any culture and they could benefit you. So I agree that there’s been some criticism because some music is just not working.

S: What people, experiences or ideas that have been most influential to you as a composer?

Z: I would say all styles in some way influence my music. This includes the atonal and the George Crumb when I had the chance, I listened to his recordings. Before I came to the US. I listened to minimalist music when I have arrived in New York. In the very early years, I was influenced by Respeigi. He heavily influenced my orchestral writing. I don’t mind today’s writing. You can’t go far because the competition is creation, not invention. So for everything, you have to follow the continuity of the culture and everything is based on something. That’s art, you can’t invent anything. Even minimalism—the wood, those kind of repeated patterns. So in my music, I don’t reject anything, but you have to do it well.

S: Beyond the Five Elements themselves, were there any additional things that influenced you throughout the writing of this work?

Z: This was a commissioned work, so always like an assignment. So the reason some of the movements were adapted was because the time frame does not really allow me to create a study of about a half hour of music with large orchestra and concert. This is very time consuming, so that’s part of the reason I adapted into different forces—because of the time.

S: I really enjoyed that this concerto exists in multiple versions. I especially like the Music from China version—I found it really fascinating how you orchestrated for both of them.

Z: Yes, right. Because the idea was originally working on the piece for the two groups at the same time who commissioned the work. I was working on the same topic but for different combinations. They said that’s ok. The one group is all Western instruments, they’re in San Francisco and the musicians at Wesleyan College—they brought in Music from China and a faculty member and students. Of the two versions, I prefer the combined ensemble because when I adapt into the flute concert for large orchestra, I really want some sound qualities of the bamboo flute. In regular flute you never never—you can’t—because the way they play. When you play the bamboo flute it is not only about the instrument. If you play the dizi, it’s the buzzing sound. It’s not only the color, it’s also the way to play the instrument. It’s very very different—
the articulations, the grace notes, the way to treat the grace notes. I believe you were talking to Chen Yi about James Galway. He tried to play the bamboo flute but he gave it up. It’s very different. I would say the difference is that the folk traditional Chinese instruments use a lot of force—what we call “the moment” – the peak moment. And angular articulations, which the Western instrumentalists, they are not used to it. But I would say the twentieth century music, the contemporary ensemble, I would say they knew it. I think this is maybe the experience— influenced by the Eastern original folk playing or something…In my score, I use a lot of articulation to force the Western players and orchestra to play in this way for the angular articulation. To imitate—I try to have the sound. Sometimes during the rehearsals, I would show up and they don’t play that forceful. For the bamboo player, they’re trained this way. They have to play very forceful articulation. It’s part of the style. So compare the same music played by different ensembles, you have very different reactions, very different results.

S: Did you receive different critical reactions for the different versions of this work?

Z: The Five Elements, Chinese versions, many people, I think really like it because they put on youtube, especially for the bamboo flute version. It seems like some people like the Chinese flute version. There’s no recorded Western version available. Now we have this realized, they study into it, the flute concerto some parts are adapted from the Five Elements Chinese instrument version…not exactly, but they wouldn’t really compare with these two.

S: Do you have any particular wishes or expectations of the performer?

Z: With the Five Elements, it was unfortunate. One of the co-commissions never premiered because of the choice of the soloist. I would say, if there’s a chance to perform it again, that they player would not only play the extremely high notes, but would play them very precise and articulate effect and of course a bigger sound needed for the large orchestra concerto. For other pieces, I don’t really know what is the difference between the mid-sized and large orchestra, but I always feel in China, when the Chinese orchestra plays my works, they automatically get into the feeling. Maybe because I am Chinese trained and when I have compositions and the marks, I don’t need to say anything—they will get into it immediately. For Western orchestras, even if they are large major orchestra…well, I only have one experience with London symphony when they recorded on EMI, with that orchestra, you don’t say anything—they don’t allow me to say
anything. They only have one hour for reading and recording, so they even pick up the right opera gong. They didn’t consult me, they just find the right instrument and play very well. And some orchestras, they often play classical traditional repertoire, maybe they have very slow sense to get into it…They don’t have that ability. I think this not only for my music, but for contemporary or new music, some orchestras are just not good at it and some are very good. It’s not only about the orchestra size.
APPENDIX C

Statement from the IRB

Human Subjects Staff Review
2 messages

Human Subjects <humansubjects@magnet.fsu.edu>  Fri, Aug 17, 2012 at 11:29 AM
To: shelleysmithvt@gmail.com

Human Subjects Application - For Full IRB and Expedited Exempt Review

PI Name: Shelley Lynn Smith
Project Title: Eastern and Western Aesthetics in the Twenty-First Century Concerti of Chinese Born American Composers

HSC Number: 2012.8758

Your application has been received by our office. Upon review, it has been determined that your protocol is an oral history, which in general, does not fit the definition of "research" pursuant to the federal regulations governing the protection of research subjects. Please be mindful that there may be other requirements such as releases, copyright issues, etc. that may impact your oral history endeavor, but are beyond the purview of this office.
APPENDIX D

Sample Interview Consent Form

Eastern and Western Aesthetics and Influence in the Twenty-First Century Flute Concerti of Chinese Born American Composers

Shelley Smith, Florida State University

Interview Permissions Form

About the Project
The goal of this research is to better understand the Eastern and Western influences that shape your approach to composition. This field work takes place in affiliation with, and under the supervision of, the Florida State University College of Music under the guidance of Professor Eva Amsler.

Participant Details
Topics of discussion will include your background and training in both Chinese folk and Western Classical music, as well as your professional experiences in music and your personal philosophy towards composition. This project additional strives to bring greater awareness to your individual accomplishments and to the presence of your works within the canon of twentieth and twenty-first century flute repertoire. The content of this interview may be quoted or used in the publication of the doctoral treatise, “Eastern and Western Aesthetics and Influence in the Twenty-First Century Concerti of Chinese Born American Composers” by Shelley Smith, as well as in related publications in scholarly journals and academic presentations by Shelley Smith. Information provided in the interview will not be anonymous unless otherwise requested in the “Restrictions or Provisions” section of this document.

Summary & Consent
The Eastern and Western Aesthetics and Influence in the Twenty-First Century Concerti of Chinese Born American Composers project, under the supervision of Shelley Smith agrees that:

- No materials from the interview will be used prior to the signing of this document
- The interview will take approximately thirty minutes to one hour in length and will be recorded unless otherwise requested.
- Compensation will be provided at the close of the interview in the form of a small gift. Though the finances of this research are limited, this project offers participants the additional gift of opportunity—the opportunity to gain greater visibility within among American flutists. You may request a copy of transcripts, tapes, and/or related publications at any time.
• Special provisions or restrictions may be added at the close of this document. Restricted portions of the interview will be retained in the original recording but excluded from transcription and reproduction in any form.
• Interviews will not be anonymous, though participants may decline to answer questions or stop the interview at any time.

Original documents and recordings will be housed in the personal residence of Shelley Smith. Please direct any additional questions about the project or research procedures to Shelley Smith, Florida State University College of Music, Housewright Music Building, Office 011. Also available by phone and email, please contact her at 802.272.1891 or shelleysmithvt@gmail.com.

I agree to be interviewed and fully submit to the above stated terms of the Eastern and Western Aesthetics and Influence in the Twenty-First Century Concerti of Chinese Born American Composers Project without restriction of the above terms. An electronic signature in the form of email approval will be accepted in the place of a written signature.

Interviewee Printed Name _____________________________________
Interviewee signature __________________________________________
Address _______________________________________________________
Phone number ________________________________
Date ___/___/_____

OR

I agree to be interviewed by the Eastern and Western Aesthetics and Influence in the Twenty-First Century Concerti of Chinese Born American Composers Project with the addition of the following provisions. An electronic signature in the form of email approval (with provisions) will be accepted in the place of a written signature.

Restrictions or Provisions___________________________________________
Interviewee Printed Name _____________________________________
Interviewee signature __________________________________________
Address _______________________________________________________
Phone number ________________________________
Date ___/___/_____
APPENDIX E

Permission to Reprint Scores

October 2, 2012
Kevin McGee
Music Sales Corporation
G. Schirmer, Inc.
1247 6th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90401

Dear Mr. McGee,

I’m follow up my request for permission to reprint the selections from Bright Sheng’s *Flute Moon* for my doctoral treatise, entitled: “Eastern and Western Aesthetics and Influences in the Twenty-First Concerti of Chinese Born American Composers” at Florida State University. The excerpts to be reproduced are as follows:

Sheng, *Flute Moon*: Mvt. 1: mm. 1-4, 85-95-95; Mvt. 2: mm. 1-7, 22-29, 64-70, 95-106

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If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter (by pen or electronically) where indicated below and return it to me via email. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Shelley Smith

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

__________________________
Date: _____________________
October 5, 2012

Dr. Chen Yi and Dr. Zhou Long
4550 Warwick Blvd, Apt. 1104
Kansas City, Missouri 64111

Dear Dr. Chen and Dr. Zhou,

I’m writing to you to request permissions to reprint the selections from *The Golden Flute* and *Five Elements* for my doctoral treatise, entitled: “Eastern and Western Aesthetics and Influences in the Twenty-First Concerti of Chinese Born American Composers” at Florida State University. The excerpts to be reproduced will include:

Chen Yi, *The Golden Flute*
Mvt. 1: mm. 1-9; mm. 14, 42, 61, 16 and 27; mm. 68-71; Mvt. 2: mm. 6-11; Mvt. 3: mm. 28-41, mm. 105-106

Phrase one: Baban

Zhou Long, *Five Elements*
Mvt. 1: Mm. 1-8, mm. 36-44; Mvt. 2: mm. 14-17; Mvt. 3: mm. 29-35, mm. 101-108; Mvt. 4: mm. 15-18; Mvt. 5: mm. 6-9

The requested permission extends to any future revisions and editions of my dissertation, including non-exclusive world rights in all languages, and to the prospective publication of my dissertation by ProQuest through its UMI® Dissertation Publishing business. ProQuest may produce and sell copies of my dissertation on demand and may make my dissertation available for free internet download at my request. These rights will in no way restrict republication of the material in any other form by you or by others authorized by you. Your signing of this letter will also confirm that you own [or your company owns] the copyright to the above described material.

If these arrangements meet with your approval, please sign this letter (by pen or electronically) where indicated below and return it to me via email. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Shelley Smith
PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

_____________________
Dr. Chen Yi

PERMISSION GRANTED FOR THE USE REQUESTED ABOVE:

_____________________
Dr. Zhou Long
APPENDIX F

Glossary

Chi-yun sheng-tung- Roughly translated to mean “life-spirit-resonance,” this Chinese aesthetic concept was coined by Hsieh Hoe in the sixth century and describes resonance, naturalness and liveliness within art.


Dao (Tao)- Meaning “way” or “path,” dao is the comprehensive pattern governing all existence and operating within all aspects of nature.

Daodejing- Also referred to as Tao Te Ching, Dao De Jing or Laozi, this Chinese classical text was written by sixth century BC sage Lao Tzu (“Laozi”). This philosophical literature forms the basis of Daoism but also strongly influences other branches of Chinese philosophy.

Dizi- A transverse bamboo flute with a bright and reedy timbre, the dizi is characterized by timbral inflection and variation within performance. Dizis include a total of eight holes (six finger holes, one membrane hole and the tone hole) and may be played to the right or left side. The buzzing plant based skin that covers the surface of the membrane hole produces its distinct sound.

Gang of Four- Headed by Mao’s third wife, Jiang Qing, the Gang of Four imposed numerous regulations upon music during the Cultural Revolution. This quartet ultimately enforced censorship that encouraged “music of the people” while supporting the communist party.

I Ching- The I Ching constitutes the basis of Chinese scholarship, cosmology and philosophy, as well Daoism and Confucianism. Containing a divination system of eight trigrams composed of sixty-four hexagrams and 384 individual lines, the I Ching reinforces the notion of interconnectivity as well as the origins of all life in yin and yang. This venerated text dates back to 1122-256 BCE.

Qi (ch’i or Chi)- Defined as “life force,” “vapor,” or “spirit,” qi couples with dao to form the cyclical energy of life.

Qian Fu Lun- Qian Fu Lun, or “Comments of a Recluse,” is a philosophical treatise by Confucianist sage Wang Fu of the Han dynasty.

Qin (Guqin, Q’in or Ch’in)- A seven string instrument similar to the zither, the qin dates back to 25 AD and is strongly associated with the lofty wenren tradition.

Sizhu- Also referred to as “silk and bamboo” ensembles, sizhu chamber ensembles typically include the erhu, sanxian, pipa, yangin, dizi, xiao and sheng. Though the term “sizhu” itself is a
product of the twentieth-century, these ensembles first existed in the Ming (1368-1644) and Qin (1644-1911) dynasties.

Tian-ren-he-yi- This ancient Chinese aesthetic concept is described as the connection between man and heaven.

Wenren- Celebrated Chinese philosopher-artists and cultural leaders, the wenren were amateur performers who practiced music as a result of its lofty spiritual implications. As the favored instrument of the wenren, the qin was believed to allow individuals to find union between heaven and earth.

Yüeh-chi- Translated to mean “Annotations on Music,” the Yüeh-chi represents one chapter of the Confucian classic, the Liji (“Book of Rites”).
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Born in St. Albans, Vermont, Shelley Smith received her B.A. in music (magna cum laude) from Skidmore College, where she studied with Dr. Jan Vinci. She earned her M.M. degree in flute performance, under the guidance of George Pope, from University of Akron in 2008. Smith completed a M.M. in music history from University of Akron the following year, winning the recognition of “Outstanding Graduate Student in Music History.” Following additional studies at Ball State University, under the tutelage of Mihoko Watanabe, she pursued her doctorate in flute performance at Florida State University, studying with Professor Eva Amsler. At Florida State University, Smith completed a certificate in World Music while also taking lessons in Baroque recorder and Baroque flute.

During and prior to her study at FSU, Smith performed in master classes with Doriot Anthony Dwyer, Robert Dick, Wissam Boustany, Peter Llyod, Jeanne Baxtresser, Jean Ferrandis, Carol Wincenc, Jonathan Keeble, Mary Karen Clardy, Na’ama Lion, Mary Kay Fink, Marianne Gedigian, Alexa Still, and Leone Buyse. Additionally, she has performed in regional and national conferences, including the Florida Flute Association and National Flute Association Conventions, among others. As a teacher, Smith served on the faculty and staff of numerous summer programs, including Skidmore Summer Flute Institute. Graduate teaching assistantships have allowed her the opportunity to instruct flute and coach chamber music at the University of Akron, Ball State University and Florida State University and to instruct music theory (BSU) and tutor in music history (UA). Smith will serve as a sabbatical replacement in the spring of 2013, instructing flute and chamber music at Skidmore College.