When Chinese Sounds Meet Western Instruments

Yü Ko

Ensemble for Violin, Winds, Piano and Percussion by Chou Wen-Chung

by

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ABSTRACT

As a composer, Chou Wen-Chung (1923-2019) was a learner and inheritor of Chinese traditional music culture and was committed to carrying it forward.

As a native of China who had his primary musical training in the West, Chou Wen-Chung was one of the first Chinese composers to make his mark on Western music. He successfully combined Western elements and Chinese tradition in his music. Chou Wen-Chung was one of the few prominent East Asian composers known in the Western musical world, and his music therefore has had a strong influence on other Chinese composers.

In order to understand more clearly his music, I analyzed his chamber work: *Yü Ko*. This piece was composed in 1965 for 9 instruments: Violin, Alto Flute, English Horn, Bass Clarinet, 2 Trombones, 2 Percussion and Piano. Inspired by the ancient Chinese musical instrument the Qin (also called *guqin*, or "ancient qin"), which is a plucked seven-string instrument, Chou Wen-Chung composed *Yü Ko.* Literally meaning "fisherman's song," this work was composed originally for the Qin, based on a melody composed by Mao Min-Zhong who was a very noted scholar and Qin player of the late Southern Song dynasty (C.E.1127-1276).

This paper provides Chou Wen-Chung's biography, compositional styles and developments. It lists and explains the most common Chinese traditional cultural elements which he used in his compositions. In particular, it introduces the Qin in detail from the external structure, performance techniques, sound characteristics, the tablature notation, and compositional methods.

This document also includes a detailed analysis of *Yü Ko* in terms of the orchestration, pitch, tonal material, structure and tempo, dynamic and musical materials, and explains Chou Wen-Chung's imitation of the Qin as well as the influence of Western music shown in this piece.

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INTRODUCTION

> Let the different traditions intermingle to bring forth a new mainstream that will integrate all musical concepts and practices into a vast expanse of musical currents. But let us also make sure that each individual culture will preserve its own uniqueness, its own poetry.[1]

As a 20th century Chinese American composer, Chou Wen-Chung was concerned with composing innovatively, while, at the same time, carrying forth the traditional cultures. He successfully combined Western structural elements and Chinese tradition in his music.

When I listened to his music for the first time, I was attracted to his unique Chinese sound but performed by all Western instruments. He precisely synthesizes various Western and Eastern elements in his music. I became curious about this Chinese composer and his reason for doing this. Who inspired him? What is his musical background? Which Chinese elements did he use in his music?

In order to understand more clearly of his music, I will analyze his chamber work: *Yü Ko*. This piece exemplifies the aesthetic aims of combining Western structural elements and Eastern musical and philosophical theories; more specifically, Chou applied and experimented with the sound of the Qin, and the Chinese concept of *wenren* as a source of his artistic inspiration.

In the paper, I will first introduce the composer, and his composition styles and developments. I will then use his chamber piece *Yü Ko* as an example to show how he used Western instruments to produce and imitate the ancient Chinese instrument

[1] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung: The Life and Work of a Contemporary Chinese-Born American Composer* (Oxford, U.K: The Scarecrow Press, 2006), 1.

the Qin. In order to let the reader understand the Eastern elements with more ease, I will also introduce the Qin in more detail and how did he used in this music.

CHAPTER 2

BIOGRAPHY OF CHOU WEN-CHUNG

Life in China

The Chinese-American composer Chou Wen-Chung was born in Yantai, China, on July 28th, 1923. After the first year of his life, the family moved to Qingdao where he lived until he was six years old. His family then moved from Qingdao to Hankou, the center of commerce and foreign relations in Hubei province. In both Qingdao and Hankou, there were some Westerners who owned business offices and shops. This undoubtedly would have been the beginning of a Western influence on him. Chou's parents bought him and his brother the first Western instrument - a child-sized violin in Hankou.[2] They thought it was a toy and really enjoyed playing it. Their family told them that it actually is a real instrument and let Chou's elder brother take some violin lessons first.[3] Chou then started to learn violin from his elder brother just for fun. In 1932, his family moved to Nanjing, which was the political and cultural center of the country at that time. Chou attended the Jinling Middle school, which was founded by American missionaries and included courses taught both in Chinese and English.[4] He and his two brothers also had their early concentrated musical training there. Chou Wen-Chung studied violin and the *erhu*,[5] a two-stringed Chinese traditional instrument played with a bow and sometimes known in the Western world as the "Chinese violin." His eldest brother, Wen-Tsing played violin as well, and his second

[2] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung*, 16.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Chou Wen-Chung, "Chronology," Chou Wen-Chung Personal Website, accessed November 1, 2019, https://chouwenchung.org/about/chronology/.

[5] Chou Wen-Chung, "Chronology," https://chouwenchung.org/about/chronology/.

brother, Wen-Ho played trumpet and flute.[6] Chou also learned some harmonica, *xiao* (an ancient Chinese vertical bamboo flute) and mandolin from his second brother.[7] In 1937, the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression broke out and Chou's family moved again from Nanjing to Shanghai.[8] Several months later, the Japanese army captured Nanjing, Leading to the "Nanjing Massacre." Shanghai was also under strong attack by the Japanese army at that time. Chou's family lived in the Shanghai International Settlement where it was safer and where he also had chance to meet many foreign musicians. Shanghai was known then as the "paradise of the adventurers" before the war.[9] This cosmopolitan city always attracted a lot of foreign immigrants even during war time, which also included many musicians, mainly from America, Europe and a few Asian countries.[10] Chou recalls: "Shanghai then was full of refugee musicians from Europe (Jewish musicians) as well as white Russians and Italians, and as a result, the music making was highly advanced, diverse, and of superior quality." [11]

Beside foreign musicians, there were also many musical organizations and institutions that promoted the spread of Western music to the general public, including the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra and Shanghai Conservatory of Music. The Shanghai Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1879 as the Shanghai Public Band,

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[6] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung*, 16.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid., 17.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Wen-Chung Chou, correspondence with Peter Chang, April 18, 2004, 2, quoted in Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung: The Life and Work of a Contemporary Chinese-Born American Composer* (Oxford, U.K: The Scarecrow Press, 2006), 17.

and renamed as the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra in 1922. Officially named the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra in 1956.[12] Internationally known as "the best in the Far East,"[13] it attracted many great artists who performed with the orchestra, including Fritz Kreisler, Jascha Heifetz, Fyodor Chaliapin and Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. The orchestra's repertoire not only included eighteenth and nineteenth century works, but also some twentieth century works "such as Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* and *Nocturnes*, Stravinsky's *Firebird suite,* and Ravel's *Le Tombeau de Couperin* and *Mother Goose Suite.*"[14]

The Shanghai Conservatory of Music was established in 1927 as the first music education institution of higher learning in China,[15] and also the first institution for Western music learning. The two founders, the philosopher Cai Yuan-Pei and Dr. Xiao You-Mei were renowned educators who had studied abroad, especially Dr. Xiao You-Mei, who became president of the conservayory. He studied Western music theory and a few instruments intensely in Germany. Therefore, their educational concept was well blended with Chinese and Western approaches to music. In addition to noted Chinese artists, he also invited many outstanding musicians with Western music education background to teach at the school, so students could learn both Chinese and Western instruments and its repertoire. With their efforts, the Shanghai Conservatory of Music educated students in music and culture as it does today; while

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[12] "Introduction," Shanghai Symphony Orchestra official website, accessed November 1, 2019, https://www.shsymphony.com/about-introduce.html.

[13] "The Shanghai Symphony Orchestra," SSO in Berlin, accessed November 1, 2019, http://www.konzertbuero-richter.de/x_alt/sso/orchester.e.html.

[14] Kuo-Huang Han, *Shanghai Gongbuju Yuedui Yanjiu* [A Study of the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra] (Study of the Art 14, 1995), 163, quoted in Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung: The Life and Work of a Contemporary Chinese-Born American Composer* (Oxford, U.K: The Scarecrow Press, 2006), 18.

[15] "About SHCM," Shanghai Conservatory of Music official website, accessed November 1, 2019, https://en.shcmusic.edu.cn/79/list.htm.

popularizing Western music for the public and also trained a large number of musical talents.

In Shanghai, Chou experienced multicultural Western music and received more professional music training. He took violin lesson from Xu Wei-Ling, a renowned violinist who was trained in Belgium, and Chen You-Xin, who was a professor at Shanghai Conservatory of Music.[16] Chen and Xu both played violin in Shanghai Municipal Council Symphony Orchestra. In 1937, Chen and Ding Shan-De, who was a prominent Chinese composer, pianist and music educator, founded the Shanghai Yinyue Guan (Shanghai Music Institute), which trained musically talented teenagers. Chou studied there as a part-time student[17] and took Western theory instruction and violin lessons. With the professional music training, Chou started to compose or arrange some scores. Chou's father was very generous in music education for his children—all seven children were learning Western instruments, and sometimes the family held small chamber music concerts at home where the siblings performed together.[18]

Although Chou already spent a lot of time practicing violin, he still wanted to make more progress in music. He expected to pursue his music learning abroad, looking for good music institutions in America and Europe.[19] His father, however, wanted Chou to study science and technology so that he could help China to develop, especially during World War II.[20] Chou listened to his father and chose to study

[16] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung*, 19.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid.

architecture because he thought "architecture was a compromise between art and engineering".[21] This may have been due to the influence of British art critic, writer, and philosopher John Ruskin (1819-1900), "who considered architecture frozen music."[22] In 1941, Chou began studies in the civil engineering/architecture department at St. John's University in Shanghai. This university was "the only college in Shanghai that offered engineering with an architecture component." [23]

As the war intensified, the Japanese army eventually occupied the Shanghai International Settlement and it was no longer safe there. In 1944, Chou decided to go to Chongqing, which is known as the Mountain City and located in Southwestern China. This city served as the wartime capital of national government of Chiang Kai-shek during the War of Resistance against Japanese Aggression (1937-1945).
In 1945, Chou graduated with a degree in civil engineering from National Chongqing University and he decided to study architecture in America.[24]

Life in United States

Chou applied and won a five years architecture full scholarship from Yale and came to the United States in 1946. However, when he was far away from China and his parents, his original intention of continuing to study music emerged again and became stronger and stronger. For this reason, he finally decided to stop neglecting his desire to pursue music and switched his major from architecture to music. He told his eldest brother who was teaching at MIT in Boston his idea, who then related it to

[21] Ibid., 20.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Chou Wen-Chung, "Chronology," https://chouwenchung.org/about/chronology/.

his parents.[25] What he didn't expect was that his parents agreed with his plan and let him learn the major he really wanted to study. Thus, Chou declined the precious chance to study architecture at Yale in order to continue his music training. He moved to Boston to live with his brother and searched for good teachers and music schools. Regarding this experience he later reflected:

> In fact, I felt that I was really taking a chance. I agonized for years before I finally gave up the opportunity of becoming an architect all because of a rather stupid faith in myself.… Whenever someone asks whether he or she should be a composer, I usually say, do you feel that you would rather die without being a composer? Otherwise, I wouldn't. [26]

In the same year he began studies at the New England Conservatory as a violin performance major, but in the second semester, changed his major to composition with a minor in viola.[27] Chou's composition teachers at Conservatory included Carl McKinley, who was very strict about counterpoint and traditional harmony, and Warren Storey Smith, who was the first person to introduce Edgar Varèse's music to Chou.[28] He also studied chamber music with Wolf Wolfinson who founded the Mendelssohn Quartet.

In the second year, Chou studied with Nicholas Slonimsky, who made a strong impression upon him. Slonimsky discovered Chou's talent and thought Chou should

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[25] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung*, 19.

[26] Robert Kyr, *Between the Mind and the Ear: Finding the Perfect Balance* (League-ISCM, Boston, April 1990), 14.

[27] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung*, 23.

[28] Ibid.

take advantage of his Chinese background and encouraged him to use both Chinese and Western materials,[29] to develop a special composition style—his own style. Slonimsky wrote:

> It was immediately evident that the complexity of contemporary theories presented no difficulties to him [Chou]. Perhaps his training in exact sciences helped him in this respect. But above all, he knew what he wanted to do in musical composition.[30]

In these years when Chou studied in Boston, he mastered composition skills proficiently, studied a few major contemporary works also attended many contemporary music concerts. At that time, however, he realized that what he learned from school were more traditional composition skills; he still lacked modern composition techniques.

In 1949, after he graduated from New England Conservatory, he and his brother moved to New York City, which became his main residence and until his death in 2019. While in New York City, Chou had chance to take composition lessons from Bohuslav Martinu, who was teaching at Mannes School of Music (1948-1956), Princeton University and the Berkshire Music School (Tanglewood). Chou wanted to try different things in his music and wrote some Fugues as exercises. However, he did not write these in the style of Bach, but made some innovations by replacing the Diatonic scale with the Pentatonic scale. The result of these composition exercises for Martinu, however, were not satisfactory. After reading and playing a couple measures on the piano, Martinu suddenly stopped and asked Chou "why?" Chou could not answer and realized that simply mixing Chinese melodies in a Bach-like fugue was

[29] Ibid.,24.

[30] Nicholas Slonimsky, "Chou Wen-Chung," *American Composers Alliance Bulletin* 9, no. 4 (1961): 3.

similar to making Bach speak Chinese and totally incongruous.[31] He decided to discover his own music language.

In order to develop his own personal compositional language, Chou began to study traditional Chinese music and research performance techniques, compositional methods, and the history of Qin music. The Qin is a plucked seven-string Chinese instrument of the zither family. Beside Chinese music, he also tried to abstract Chinese Aesthetic from Chinese poetry, calligraphy, painting, concept *yin* and *yang* from I-Ching and Taoism.[32] In 1949, Chou finished his first major composition - *Landscapes.* This composition was composed for orchestra, based on three Chinese poems of the Ming (C.E. 1368-1644) and Qing (C.E. 1644-1911) periods. [33] For each movement of the work, Chou supplied subtitles to indicate his own sentiments toward the poems.[34] He also used three traditional Chinese melodies in this work to create three landscapes: "Under the Cliff in the Bay," "The Sorrow of Parting," and "One Streak of Dying Light.".[35]

During Chou's studies in Boston, he heard Edgard Varèse's music on several occasions, which made a strong impression on him. One day, Chou met Colin McPhee by chance, who had studied with Varèse. Chou told Colin that he was looking for a composition teacher and Colin thought that Varèse could be the right teacher for Chou.[36] Colin was indeed right.

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[31] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung*, 25.

[32] Ibid., 29.

[33] Ibid., 54.

[34] Ibid.

[35] "Landscapes," Chou Wen-Chung Personal Website, accessed December 1, 2019, https://chouwenchung.org/composition/landscapes/.

[36] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung*, 26.

In the first meeting, Chou showed Varèse his composition *Landscapes,* Varèse was very nice to Chou, encouraged him and agreed to accept Chou became his student.[37] Varèse even told Chou not to pay tuition, since when Varèse himself studied with Debussy, Richard Strauss and Busoni, they all helped him, but did not accept Varèse's tuition either.[38] Varèse only told Chou to try his best to help others and "pass on his legacy in future."[39]

Chou finally got chance to study composition privately with Edgard Varèse from 1949 to 1954, and that was an important turning point in Chou's compositional career. Varèse gave Chou lessons a couple times a week, took him to concerts, Romany Marie's café in Greenwich Village, and introduced his friends such as Carl Ruggles (composer) and Thomas Bouchard (photographer and filmmaker) to Chou.[40] Chou recalled the lessons:

> He [Varèse] would immediately sit down and become glued to your music. He would literally attack you all the time. "why do you do this? Why this…? That…?" he would point out that this cannot work and so on, and he would always say, "And don't say 'yes' out of politeness." He was always attacking you and he would back you into a corner; he wanted you to argue with him and debate him and it was very, very exhausting. He wouldn't let you go! He said, "you wrote it, you are responsible for it; you have to tell me why you think it would work. What are you trying to say, anyway?"[41]

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Gang Chen, "Zaochun Eryue Liuse Xin" [New Willows of the Early February], *People's Music* 11, no.12 (1979): 88, accessed February 2, 2020, https://www.ixueshu.com/document/411507a27d70b7a5318947a18e7f9386.html.

[39] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung*, 26.

[40] Ibid., 26-27.

[41] Robert Kyr, *Between the Mind and the Ear*, 15.

Varèse always encouraged Chou to discover his new own ideas and style, and forbade Chou from imitating other composers' style, include Varèse himself. He told Chou: "Wen-Chung, you want to be a composer: then you have to have courage; you have to be willing to burn your music. Sometimes you have to piss on it…Piss now! And he walked away."[42] Varèse taught Chou how to devise an idea and "turn it into a master plan that establishes logical connections for the very technical details by relating everything to the central idea." [43]

Varèse rarely corrected Chou's works. Sometimes, when he did not like something in Chou's music or thought one of the chords was not good enough, he usually did not tell Chou directly how to correct the problems.[44] He simply preferred to give Chou some plans, which he thought were feasible. On other occasions, Varèse would listen to the chords or the particular passage repeatedly while playing it on the piano, in order to rearrange a better chord or register.[45] After many years, Chou himself became a teacher; when he was teaching his students, he used a similar technique as his teacher Varèse did.[46] Varèse also believed that there is no shortcut in composing, so he never thought and would not teach his students something so-called tricks. Chou recalled:

> George Gershwin wanted to study with him [Varèse] before studying with Ravel. Gershwin said to Varèse, "I heard that you are a wizard with

[42] Robert Kyr, *Between the Mind and the Ear,* 16.

[43] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung,* 27.

[44] Ibid., 28.

[45] Ibid

[46] Ibid.

> orchestra. I want to learn some tricks from you." Varèse replied, "Tricks! I have none. Get out of here!"[47]

Chou also had good relationship with Varèse's wife Louise, who was an American writer, and noted translator of French literature, including the poetry of Rimbaud and Baudelaire. Chou was inspired by her and decided to translate Chinese poetry; one of his chamber work *Seven Poems of Tang Dynasty* was inspired by a collaboration between Chou and Louise.[48] Chou dedicated the piece to her when it premiered in New York in 1952. The composition, written for solo tenor, seven wind instruments, percussion and piano, *Seven Poems of Tang Dynasty* is the only piece in his entire oeuvre which features the solo voice.[49] The lyrics were taken from poems by several literary giants of the Tang Dynasty: Wang Wei, Liu Yuxi, Jia Dao, Li Bai, Liu Zhongyuan and Liu Changqing.[50]

Chou worked as Varèse's assistant, music copier and collaborator on his later works. Based on Varèse's notes and sketches, Chou edited, corrected and even completed two of Varèse's unfinished scores.[51] Chou also wrote many articles to commemorate Varèse. As an influential 20th-century composer, his music emphasizes more timbre, rhythm and new technologies. Despite all this, Chou knew that Varèse had a strong interest and was very knowledgeable in early music in medieval, renaissance and baroque periods, the emotional and symbolic content from early

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[47] Robert Kyr, *Between the Mind and the Ear,* 17.

[48] "Seven Poems of Tang Dynasty," Chou Wen-Chung Personal Website, accessed December 1,2019, https://chouwenchung.org/composition/seven-poems-of-the-tang-dynasty/.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Sau-Woon Rebecca AU, "*I Ching in the Music of John Cage, Chou Wen Chung and Zhao Xiao Sheng*" (PhD diss., The Chinese University of Hong Kong, August 2013), 67, ProQuest Dissertation & Theses.

music are also integrated into his music material, along with his modern music concept and view.[52] Chou was inspired and learned that a composer should not just simply follow the tradition - artistic creation should root in tradition, and then transform it into a new concept.

From 1949 to Varèse's death in 1965, they remained lifelong friends, and shared similar views on classical literature and art.

While studying with and working for Varèse, Chou graduated and received a master's degree from Colombia University, where he also studied under Professor Otto Luening and Henry Paul Lang in 1954. He continued work after graduation as a musical assistant to Otto Luening and Vladimir Ussachevsky at the Columbia Electronic Music Laboratory. In order to study traditional Chinese music, Chou applied for and gained a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.[53] With the funding, he was able to travel to different libraries in United States so that he could read many books of Chinese music and culture, examine collections of scores of traditional Chinese music, and listen to the recordings of classical Chinese music from libraries and his friends.[54] He also researched the historical background, literature, notation and the playing techniques of the ancient Chinese instrument the Qin. Besides the music, he also studied other Chinese arts in detail: calligraphy, painting, literature, Taoism and I-Ching. He tried to discover the process of artistic creation and understand the aesthetic value of the traditional Chinese arts and literature. All of this research paved the way for Chou's subsequent compositions.

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[52] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung, 29*

[53] Eric Chiu Kong Lai, *The Music of Chou Wen-chung* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 11.

[54] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung*, 30.

From 1958 to 1959, Chou was a research associate and resident composer at the University of Illinois. In 1961, he taught at Brooklyn College, Hunter College and Horace Mann School. In 1964, Chou started teaching at Columbia University as an Assistant Professor and was promoted to Professor in 1972. After he joined the Columbia University faculty, he taught more and more international students until he retired in 1991.

From 1969 to 1989, Chou served as the Chair of the Music Division, Acting Dean of the School of the Arts and first Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs at Columbia. He was named the first Fritz Reiner Professor of Musical Composition at Columbia University in 1984.

Over the years he taught and worked at Columbia University, he strengthened the composition department in order to widen students' understanding of different cultures; he developed curriculum for the ethnomusicology program; he taught Columbia's first course on "Chinese Music" and later developed the course "Asian Humanities in Music".[55] He also created the first doctoral program in composition in 1965, and was influential for other music graduate programs in composition in America.

As a distinguished teacher, his notable students include the most prominent 2nd generation of Chinese-American composers - Chen Yi, Tan Dun, Bright Sheng, Zhou Long, Ge Gan-ru, Jing Jing Luo. Joan Towers, Chinary Ung, James Tenney, Michael Rosenzweig, Jacques-Louis Monod, and Faye-Ellen Silverman also studied with him.

Besides his teaching responsibilities and academic works, Chou founded the Center for US-China Arts Exchange at Columbia University. It was the first

[55] Chou Wen-Chung, "Biography," Chou Wen-Chung Personal Website, accessed November 1, 2019, https://chouwenchung.org/about/biography/.

organization to improve cultural relationships between America and China, so that these two different cultures can understand each other better. The center also "actively promotes contemporary music from both part of the world. It has also implemented a multiyear exchange program on arts education at the precollege level."[56]

Chou was the president of Composers Recording, Inc. (CRI) for five years. He had served in various positions for many contemporary music organizations, including the Asian Composers League, American Music Center, American Society of University Composers, Composers' Forum, American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, International Society of Contemporary Music, Yaddo Corporation and American Composers Alliance.[57]

As a composer, Chou wrote almost thirty compositions (included six unpublished) for different instruments, most of them for diverse chamber ensembles or orchestra, with some for voice, chorus and music for films and televisions. He only wrote one solo work for piano and one for harp. His works have been performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Berlin Philharmonic, National Orchestra of France, Japan Philharmonic Orchestra and Central Philharmonic Orchestra in Beijing.

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[56] Seok-Kwee Chew, "*An analysis of the selected music of Chou Wen-Chung in relation to Chinese aesthetics*" (PhD diss., New York University, 1990), 31, accessed December 10, 2019, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

[57] Ibid.

CHAPTER 3

DEVELOPMENT OF COMPOSITIONAL STYLES AND CHINESE AESTHETICS WITHIN CHOU'S WORK

Various elements of Chinese philosophies, including the martial art of *tai-chi* and its *Yin* and *Yang* principles, had an influence on Chou Wen-Chung's compositions. His music was also inspired by Chinese calligraphy, Chinese painting, I-Ching, Peking opera, Taoism, Confucian philosophy, *Kunqu*.[58] narrative music (*shuochang*), and *Yayue.*[59]However the music of the Qin was central to his conpositions, as "Chou stated that it was Qin music that impacted on him most profoundly."[60]

Figure 1. The artist plays the Qin.[61]

[58] Originated in Suzhou, Kunshan, it is one of the oldest Chinese traditional operas, a combination of play, singing, dancing, poetry recital.

[59] It was originally a genre of ancient Chinese imperial court music, usually performed at royal court and temples for ceremony. Yayue were established in the Western Zhou Dynasty. Together with law and rites, it is one of the important branches for aristocratic political power to rule the country.

[60] Sau-Woon Rebecca Au, *I Ching in the Music of John Cage, Chou Wen Chung and Zhao Xiao Sheng,* 66.

[61] "The Guqin: The Instrument Of The Sages," Brandscovery, Last updated Mar 02, 2018, accessed December 20, 2019, https://brandscovery.com/business/content-2254437-guqin-instrument-sages.

Generally, Chou's compositions are related to Chinese aesthetics in different ways: 1) "Use of original folk themes or folk-like themes; 2) Recreation of ancient Chinese Qin music; 3) Relating Chinese aesthetic concepts to the structure of his music"[62]

Chou's compositions can be divided into 3 periods:

The Early Period: 1940's and 1950's

In Chou's work of the early period 1940's and 1950's, his creative inspiration was mainly from Chinese poetry and Chinese folk melodies. This characteristic is reflected in his early works: *Landscapes* (1949), *All in the Spring Wind* (1952-1953), *And the Fallen Petals* (1954), *Willow Are New* (1957), and *Soliloquy of a Bhiksuni* (1958).

He developed the "Re-merger" principle during this early period. In 1957, he wrote a paper entitled "The Nature and Value of Chinese Music" for a conference that was held in San Francisco. In this document, he mentioned and explained a principle which played a great guiding role in his creation, both in terms of aesthetic and composition skills. He called it "Re-merger" - he attempted to combine Western structural elements and Eastern theories of calligraphy, the Qin, single tones, the I Ching, all while using Western instruments to imitate and produce Chinese sounds. In one of Chou's interviews, he mentioned:

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[62] Seok-Kwee Chew, *An analysis of the selected music of Chou Wen-Chung in relation to Chinese aesthetics*, 33.

> It is my conviction that we have now reached a stage in which the beginning of a re-merge of Eastern and Western music concepts and practices is actually taking place. By "re-merge" I mean that I believe that traditions of Eastern and Western music once shared the same sources, and after centuries of divergence, they would remerge to form a mainstream, a new musical tradition that would integrate all musical concepts and practices, past and present.[63]

Chou also proposed that in the twentieth century, the ways of cultural integration were more diverse than ever. A number of Eastern composers, for example, accepted the education of Western music theory and had knowledge of Western music theory and techniques, which they used in their compositions, in addition, to also using atonality. Some Chinese composers also tried to mix the Twelve-tone technique with pentatonic mode in their works.

On the other hand, many Western composers used traditional Chinese theories in their artistic creations. Debussy used the pentatonic scales in a variety of ways in his compositions, sometimes to convey an Oriental atmosphere,[64] or at other times by stressing the minor third element found in the third to fourth note as well as the interval from the fifth note down to first note of the pentatonic scale. The example of

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[63] Wen-Chung Chou, "East and West, Old and New" (speech given at UNESCO International Music Symposium, Manila, Philippines, 1966), accessed November 1, 2019, https://chouwenchung.org/writing/excerpts-from-east-and-west-old-and-new/.

[64] Elizabeth Ann Christensen, "*Scales, and their use in the Piano Music of Debussy and Ravel*" (master's thesis, North Texas State College, 1952), 29, accessed November 1, 2019, https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc798160/m2/1/high_res_d/1002603830-Christensen.pdf.

the minor third element is found in the top notes of the right-hand part in Figure 2.

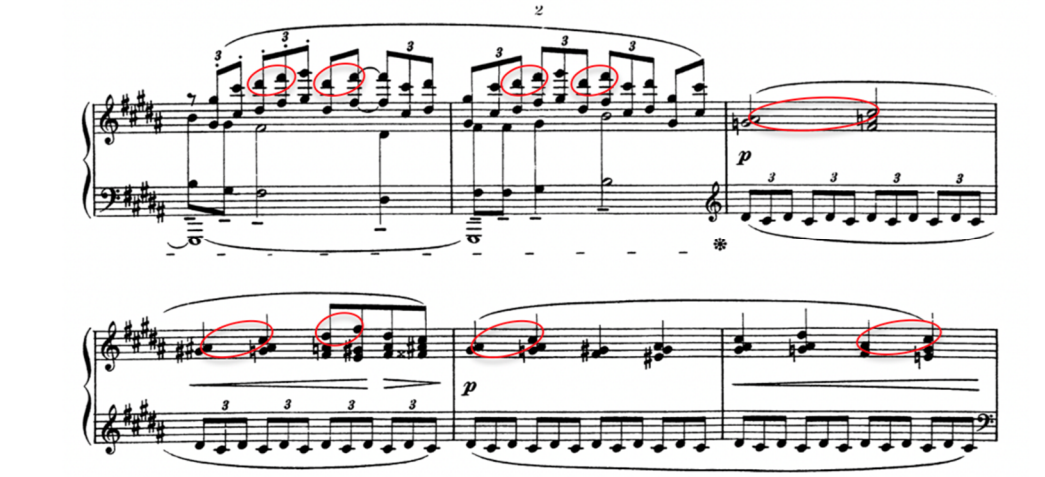

Figure 2. Debussy's *Pagodes* (*Estampes)* (1903), mm.13-18.

Not only Debussy, but also the French composer Ravel used the pentatonic system quite frequently in his compositions to create a sense of Orientalism.[65] We can find examples of this in his use of highlighting the minor third and falling sixth intervals within pentatonicism (Figure 3).

[65] Elizabeth Ann Christensen, "*Scales, and their use in the Piano Music of Debussy and Ravel,*" https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc798160/m2/1/high_res_d/1002603830-Christensen.pdf.

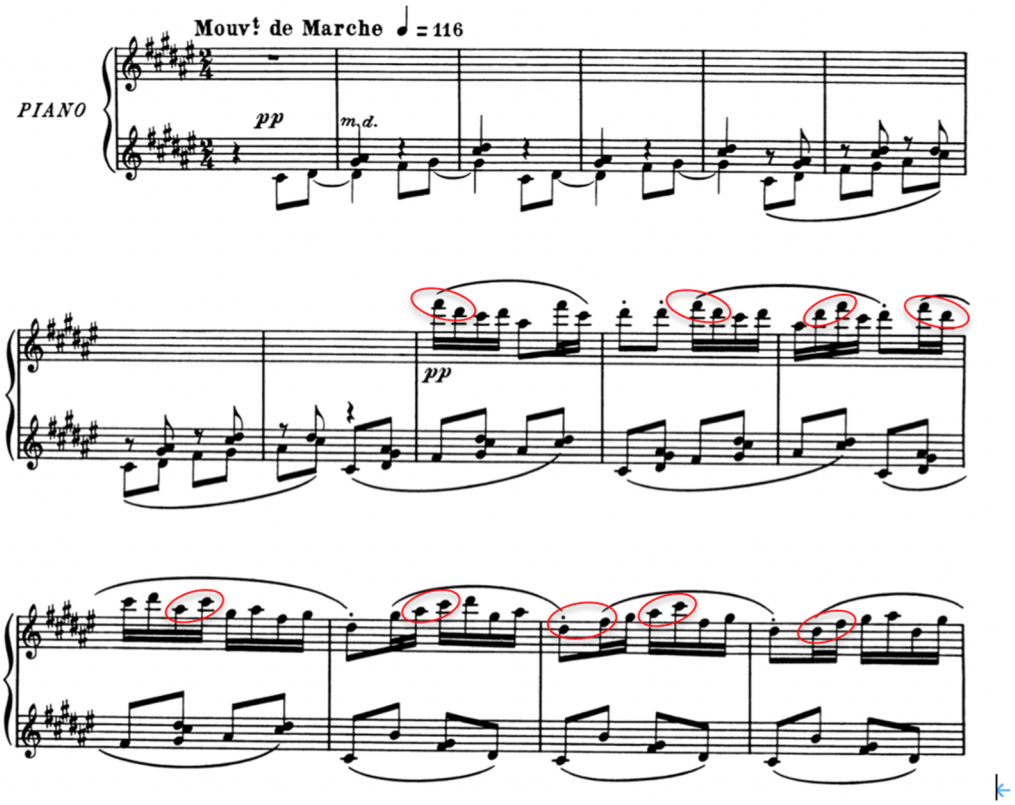

Figure 3. Ravel's *Laideronnette, Impératrice des Pagodes (Ma mère l'oye)* (1910), mm. 1-15.

Besides the using of pentatonic, Puccini used the theme of a very well-known Chinese folk song *Mo-Li-Hua* (Jasmine flower) in his Opera Turandot, when Turandot enters in her official capacity as Princess. John Cage used I-Ching when he was making decisions of the process of composition as early as 1951.

Even though "the traditions of Eastern and Western music shared some sources" with each other, Chou also believed that different cultures in the "mainstream of a new musical tradition" should retain their unique characteristics while merging with each other.[66]

[66] Wen-Chung Chou, "East and West, Old and New," https://chouwenchung.org/writing/excerpts-from-east-and-west-old-and-new/.

In this early period, he mainly used the mode of musical thinking in terms of Chinese visual and literary principles such as the control of ink flow in calligraphy, brevity in landscape paintings, the Qin playing gestures, and especially the Chinese poetry in musical form.[67] It is a tradition for Chinese artists to inscribe poetry on paintings. Therefore, the main theme that the artist wanted to express in the work was displayed through painting, poetry and calligraphy. Chou referred the same idea in many of his early compositions, an ancient Chinese poetry was inscribed at the beginning of the score [68] in works such as *Landscapes* and *The Willows are New*. He also used decorative Chinese melodies directly in the music to commemorate his childhood musical memories. For instance, in *And the Fallen Petals* Chou used tunes from several Chinese folk songs to fuse into a new theme.

Chou thought that there are many qualities in Chinese melodies worthy of reference. He wanted to learn the musical structure, voice leading, supporting sonorities as well as timbre and emotion from this traditional music. He also tried to prove the correctness of the basic Chinese musical concepts; that is, each individual tone has various subtle pitch changes and expressive capabilities. He realized that the timbre of each tone is an important aspect in Chinese traditional music, especially for Qin music.[69] Through different playing techniques, the timbre of the Qin can be varied and changed in many different ways. Chou's teacher, Varèse, emphasized timbre and rhythm in his music and realized the reason that visual art and music in color exploration was different because modern composers did not explore the

[67] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung*, 87.

[68] Eric Chiu Kong Lai, *The Music of Chou Wen-chung*, 27.

[69] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung*, 62.

concept of color as extensively as modern painters. For the role of color in music, Varèse's view is

> The role of color or timbre would be completely changed from being incidental, anecdotal, sensual or picturesque; it would become an agent of delineation, like the different colors on a map separating the different areas, and an integral part of form. These zones would be felt as isolated.[70]

Chou learned from Varèse how to find the connection between visual art and musical art and use it as the purpose and starting point of his work.[71] He used the theory as the foundation in his musical creation.

During this period, Chou often tried to use one idea for several pieces, and then abandoned it to start a new piece. As an example, Chou wrote *Soliloquy of a Bhiksuni* in 1958. Before this piece, in 1956 and 1957, Chou wrote two chamber works, *In the Mode of Shang* and *The Miniatures from Tang* which were never published. These two works are related to each other, both in similar melodies and harmonies, but Chou was not satisfied with either one. After continually trying to develop the musical ideas, a new composition evolved from this process and Chou finished his new work, *Soliloquy of a Bhiksuni*.

His music in this period used Chinese aesthetics expressed in Chinese poetry, folk melodies, water-ink paintings and calligraphy, and only used harmonies based on the interval of the fourth and Western instrumentation to create the atmosphere and timbre of the pieces. In July 16, 1960, Chou wrote a letter to Slonimsky:

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[70] Edgard Varèse and Wen-Chung Chou, "The Liberation of Sound," *Perspectives of New Music* Vol. 5, No. 1 (Autumn - Winter, 1966): 11-19, accessed November 10, 2019, http://www.jstor.org/stable/832385.

[71] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung*, 63.

> I was stimulated by your suggestions when I began in 1949 to make a serious study of classical Chinese music and subsequently other Eastern music as well. In the meantime, I tried to integrate the result of these studies with the most advanced contemporary musical techniques. I believe the foundation of my musical thinking was formed beginning with "Landscapes" written in 1949 and culminating with the composition of "And the fallen Petals". [72]

Slonimsky recalled, "I encouraged him to cultivate his knowledge of traditional Chinese music because I felt that he had the unique chance of creating an oriental style in a twentieth-century idiom." [73]

Mature Period: The 1960's

From 1960 to 1969, during which Chou's composition style became more consistent and mature, he wrote twelve works (three unpublished) in this period, mostly in chamber ensembles for piano, winds, and percussion. Examples include the documentary film scores music: *Music for Hong Kong* (1960), *Tomorrow* (1961), *White Paper of Red China* (1962), and *A Day at the Fair*, (1964).

Chou was obsessed with producing Chinese sounds in order to explore the "integration of structural constructs such as articulation, pitch and timbre modification, and rhythmic elasticity by absorbing specific Chinese instrumental performance techniques in his works of the 1960s."[74] *Yü Ko* (1965), a chamber work for Violin, Winds, Piano and Percussion, is an example of this. In this period his inspirational sources changed from Chinese poems to I-Ching, or The Book of Change.

The ancient Chinese oracle book I-Ching is one of the oldest books in China,

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[72] Nicholas Slonimsky, "Chou Wen-Chung," 3.

[73] Nicholas Slonimsky, "Chou Wen-Chung," 3.

[74] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung*, 88.

which content covers many fields such as philosophy, politics, life, literature, art, and science. It is a classic of Confucianism and Taoism. It includes two parts, one of which is originally used for prediction in the Zhou Dynasty (1046-256 BC). The character I (易) of I-Ching is composed of two Chinese characters, sun(日) and moon(月).[75] It refers to "the alternation of the sun and moon in the universe reflects the equilibrium of *yin* and *yang* forces in the cosmic."[76] There are two meanings of "I" in I-Ching: "Change" and "Simple".

I-Ching is also called Ba Gua; this literally means eight trigrams, which is the basic element of the I-Ching. These eight trigrams represent "the germinal elements of all that happens in the universe, including natural phenomena, human affairs, and ideas."[77] The eight trigrams consists of three lines, solid (___) or broken horizontal line (_ _), and in different combinations. I-Ching explains the meanings of the sixty-four hexagrams.

[75] Seok-Kwee Chew, "*An analysis of the selected music of Chou Wen-Chung in relation to Chinese aesthetics*", 66.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Wen-Chung Chou, *Metaphors* (New York, NY: C. F. Edition Peters, 1961), program notes.

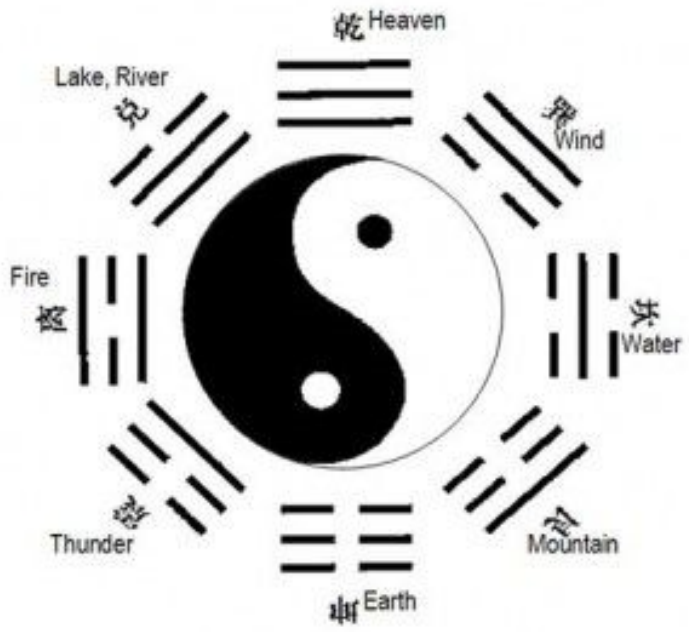

Figure 4. The eight trigrams.[78]

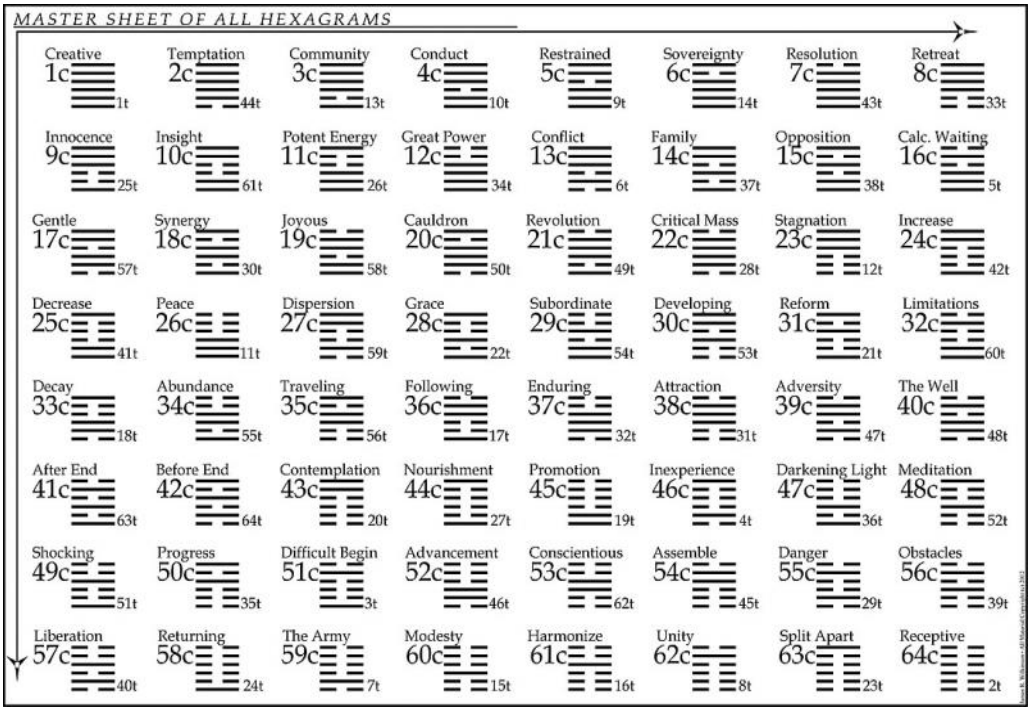

Figure 5. The picture of sixty-four hexagrams[79].

[78] "Learning from The Book of Change - 易经 Yi Jing Part 02," BvOtech, December 12, 2009, accessed December 27, 2019, https://images.app.goo.gl/LvQAnNHhhrGXv9nd8.

As the diagram shows, this part of the I-Ching are these different combinations. When seeking divination, the dice would be rolled to produce a random number, which, in turn would be compared to the I-Ching chart. The corresponding number has a specific meaning, which can be used to predict the future.

"The I-Ching is also a book of philosophy that tries to explain the origin of the world, its ethical principles"[80] and "the elements of all that happens in the universe, including natural phenomena, human affairs, and ideas."[81] Ancient Chinese believed that change is the true essence of being, and in particular, they believed in the never-ending exchanges between the "Two Polarities," for instance, the *Yin* and the *Yang*, good and bad, white and black, day and night, etc. "I-Ching has influenced many different kinds of disciplines, and the I Ching concepts also inform the composition of music, film, drama, dance, sculpture, painting, poem and poetry writing. Among all these different art forms, music composition is one of the most concretely influenced by the I-Ching." [82]

Chou Wen-Chung had heard of and was acquainted with the principles of I-Ching as a child through his father's influence and deep knowledge of I-Ching. His father being well-read, educated in I-Ching, and very eloquent.[83] In additional, Chou's family are the descendents of the Song dynasty philosopher and Confucius scholar Chou Tun-I (1017-1073), who synthesized "the elements of Taoist (especially I-

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[79] "The I-Ching," Spirit Walk Ministry, accessed January 12, 2020, https://spiritwalkministry.com/divination/the_i-ching.

[80] Sau-Woon Rebecca AU, "*I Ching in the Music of John Cage, Chou Wen Chung and Zhao Xiao Sheng*", 1.

[81] Wen-Chung Chou, *Metaphors*, program notes. (or Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung,* 89.)

[82] Sau-Woon Rebecca AU, "*I Ching in the Music of John Cage, Chou Wen Chung and Zhao Xiao Sheng*", 2.

[83] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung,* 15.

Ching), Buddhist doctrines and Confucian ethics with metaphysics that had become the dominant mode of thought in China for nearly 1,000 years."[84]

Chou was not the only composer who has used I-Ching as a major source of inspiration. There are other Western composers with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds who have used or referenced I-Ching in their works: Lou Harrison, Udo Kasemets, Larry Austin, Per Nørgård, Pauline Oliveros, Richard Burdick, Stefano Giannotti and Frank Steiner Jr. Among Western composers, John Cage (1912-1992) cannot be ignored as the pioneer who explored I-Ching as a compositional manual. He composed several pieces that used the I-Ching, including the Music of Changes and the Concerto for prepared piano and chamber orchestra (1950-1951).

The manner in which Chou and Cage used I-Ching in their music was very different. Unlike Cage's interest in relegating composers' responsibilities for structure to that of the dice, Chou was interested in devising a musical, structural model whose germinating power would lie in the interaction between two opposite poles: change and constancy; change and constancy also always complement each other.[85]

Chou experiment with and applied the principles of I-Ching in harmonic, thematic, textural, and rhythmic structures, [86] in works such as in *Metaphors* (1961) for Wind Symphony Orchestra and *Pien* (1966) for Winds, Piano and Percussion. Instead of relying on the dice operation, Chou followed the I-Ching principle that "everything is generated from the interaction between two forces in treating melodic,

[84] Sau-Woon Rebecca AU, "*I Ching in the Music of John Cage, Chou Wen Chung and Zhao Xiao Sheng*", 1.

[85] Ibid., 88.

[86] Ibid., 93.

rhythmic, and harmonic materials." [87] The I-Ching was not used as a tool to predict the future, but rather to express a complete philosophical idea.

Chou thought that when Cage used the eight trigrams to determine the structure of the composition, he did not really understand the Chinese text of I-Ching and its philosophy. Chou wrote,

> Cage's application of I-Ching does not take the text into consideration but merely translates each hexagram into a preassigned music value…. Iannis Xenakis's idea of a "stochastic music" is closer to the concept of I-Ching than Cage's….Gyorgy Ligeti speaks of "global categories" involving the interrelationship of "register and density, distribution of various types of movement and structure," and of "compositional design of the process of change"; he too is closer to applying the principle of events and processes of I-Ching. [88]

In this period, he also developed a system of "variable modes" relying on I-Ching. Each intervallic patterns of these modes contains three groups of minor thirds, which correspond to the eight trigrams consists of three lines. These thirds can either be a minor third (E - G) or an inserted passing note in the minor third (E - F - G). The leap of the third is represented by the solid line (___), and the third with the passing note is represented by a broken horizontal line (_ _) in trigram. [89] The mode of music changes variably according to the change of the hexagram.

Third Period, Later Works in and after the 1980's

In Chou's early and mature period, his works are more "pentatonic-related."[90]

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[87] Ibid., 88.

[88] Wen-Chung Chou, "Asian Music and Western Composition," *Dictionary of Contemporary Music*, ed. John Vinton (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1974), 26.

[89] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung,* 107.

[90] Jianjun He, *Zhou Wenzhong de "Cao Shu"* [Chou Wen-Chung's Cursive] (Hunan, China: Hunan Literature and Art Publishing House, 2004), 2-3.

With increasing dedication to the development of his own personal music language, in the 1960's, his compositions became more flexible by developing and experimenting with variable modes. His works in the 1980s and 1990s, in order to "make his modal concept more inclusive and flexible, Chou further modified it by adding additional pitches in the interval within a given segment, like auxiliary ones were added to principal ones in the mode to preserve the identity of modes." [91] For example: in the minor third F - A ♭ , F - G - A ♭ are principal notes, and F# is the auxiliary one. Chou stated this as "a conceptual union between the Chinese calligraphic concept of Tian Bai[92] and Bartók's idea of filling out a large interval with additional pitches."[93] Chou used this idea in Piano Quartet *Windswept peaks* (1990), *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra* (1992), and *String Quartet No. 1 "Clouds"* (1996). In addition, he also replaced the previous three minor thirds and developed them into two kinds of dyads, major second and minor third or the reverse form.[94] Chou considered the two new kinds of dyads as two forces: the *Yin* and the *Yang* which are complementary, interconnected, and interdependent in the natural world, and considered responsible for the evolution of the universe.

Although Chou's music ideas had been developing and the creative inspirations of each period have been different, in general, there was one philosophy embodied in Chou's works. Throughout his career his compositions reflect on the relationship between man and nature, which is a Chinese moral concept Chou took as a source of

[91] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung,* 117.

[92] Fill the space, opposite of Liu Bai or leaving out white space.

[93] Wen-Chung Chou, correspondence with Peter Chang, May 11, 2004, 1, quoted in Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung: The Life and Work of a Contemporary Chinese-Born American Composer* (Oxford, U.K: The Scarecrow Press, 2006), 117.

[94] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung,* 118.

his artistic inspiration - *wenren*.

According to Chou, *wenren* refers to the artist who is proficient in a variety of arts and cultures. The literal meaning of wen and ren being arts/culture and people, knowledge or order respectively. "In ancient China the artist - *wenren*, or 'the person with ultimate knowledge of the arts,' was simultaneously a scholar or scientist, a statesman." [95] The aesthetic of *wenren* emphasizes the harmony between man and nature. The ancient Chinese musicians believed that the various sounds from nature were the sounds of the earth and the nature of the human was quiet. When humans heard the sounds of earth, however, they were excited and inspired by it; music was then created. Great music reflects the unity of man, earth, and heaven.

"This concept of *wenren* may have prompted Chou to adapt the I-Ching in formulating his compositional system of variable modes, given that the core principles embodied in the I-Ching also emphasizes the interaction of cosmos and mankind in maintaining a harmonious relationship." [96]

As a *wenren*, Chou believed that "while creativity was one of the responsibilities of *wenren*, the most significant duty was to continue the heritage."[97]

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[95] Wen-Chung Chou, "*Wenren* and Culture," in *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music,* ed. Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 213-214.

[96] Sau-Woon Rebecca AU, "*I Ching in the Music of John Cage, Chou Wen Chung and Zhao Xiao Sheng*", 68.

[97] Eric Chiu Kong Lai, *The Music of Chou Wen-chung*, 21.

CHAPTER 4

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE QIN AND *Yü KO*

When Chou decided to combine traditional Chinese art in his music, he tried to understand the true meaning of this traditional art and music, rather than just imitate the sound of traditional Chinese music. He also asked himself a question posed by people who have heard traditional Chinese music: Does it sound acceptable to play Chinese melodies on Western instruments? In order to answer this question, he approached his research in more depth and in more detail. In addition to reading collections of scores and listening to recordings of classical Chinese music and Qin music, such as the recordings of the legendary Qin master Zha Fu-Xi, Chou even which is very complicated.[98] It indicated hand positions on the instrument and instructions on articulations of the string, modifying the pitch, vibrato, and glissando all in one character. He remarked:

> Qin notation, for example, had such an influence on my own work - makes you realize that hundreds of years ago, someone already systematized the way sound can be controlled, played, and communicated through this notation. This was already total organization of sound, long before any attempt to try that in European music. And this is a more musical approach; it tells you how to use vibrato and even how to change from one vibrato to another. [99]

Compared to teaching himself to play the Qin, Chou was more interested in understanding the aesthetics of the Qin, how to play it by reading the notation and how to produce different timbres by using different techniques.[100]

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[98] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung,* 30.

[99] Robert Kyr, *Between the Mind and the Ear*, 20.

[100] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung,* 30.

The Qin

The Qin (also called *guqin*, or "ancient qin") is the most ancient Chinese string instrument and has a history of more than three thousand years. The oldest Qin in existence is about 2700 years old, and the Qin has been played in China since the time of Confucius. In ancient China, there were four arts that were respected and needed to be mastered in order for one to be considered a well-educated individual: the Qin, weiqi (also called go, an abstract strategy board game for two players), calligraphy and painting. Among these, the Qin is the most important of the four arts, due to its clear, gentle and elegant tone quality, embodies the independent and extraordinary attitude of the artists. The Qin is the best representative of the art of Chinese classical music.

External Structure

The Qin is a plucked seven-string Chinese instrument in the zither family. The seven strings are tuned in the pentatonic scale: G, A, C, D, E, G, A. The Qin is generally about 3.65 chi (a unit of length =1/3 meter, so that 3.65 chi is around 1.21 meters), which is a symbol of 365 days a year.[101] The top is round, and bottom is flat, symbolizing sky and earth.[102] The body of the instrument corresponds to the human body, including head, neck, shoulders, waist, tail, and feet. In order to make the sound fully vibrate, the panels of the Qin are generally made of the wood from the tung and fir trees. The surface of the Qin is composed of seven thick and thin strings from the outside to the inside. Among the seven strings of the Qin, the thickest one is called "the first string"一弦, and the thinnest one, in turn, is "the seventh string"七弦. In

[101] "Guqin," Baidu, accessed January 15, 2020, https://baike.baidu.com/item/古琴/6153?fr=aladdin. Translated by author.

[102] "Guqin," Baidu, https://baike.baidu.com/item/古琴/6153?fr=aladdin. Translated by author.

ancient times, the strings were made of silk. The Qin originally had only five strings, symbolizing the five elements on earth: gold, wood, water, fire, earth, and the pentatonic scale (five tone scale) in music.[103] These five strings also symbolized the five different social classes in ancient times. Later, two extra strings were added to represent the good relationship between two ministries and the Emperor.

There are thirteen points embedded on the panel outside the string, called the Qin emblem. They symbolize the twelve months, and the largest emblem in the center represents the leap month.[104] Most of the emblems are made of mother-of-pearl inlay, or refined materials such as gold, silver, jade, and stone. The point of the emblem is actually a harmonic vibration point of the string, which is naturally formed, and it is tuned by *just* intonation (pure intonation).

Figure 6. Chinese traditional string instrument: the Qin.[105]

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] "Qin or guqin," Mim musical instruments museum, accessed January 15, 2020, http://www.mim.be/qin-or-guqin?from_i_m=1.

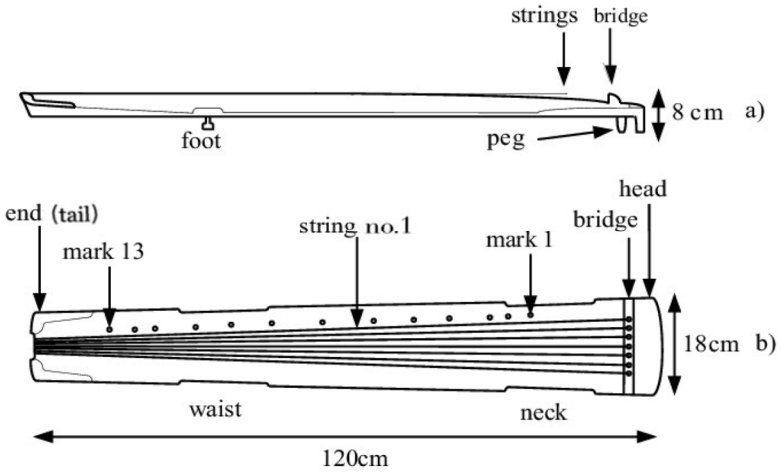


Figure 7. Construction of the Qin from a) side view and b) top view.[106]

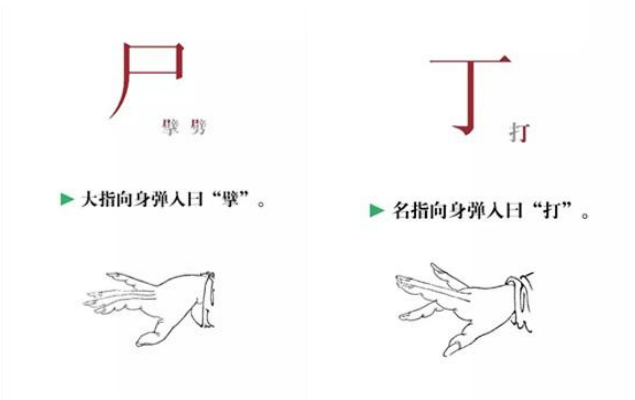
Performance Techniques

Musicians should place the Qin on a table or on their lap while playing, use their right hand to pluck the strings, and the left hand to depress a point on the string to vary the intonation, similarly to the practice of altering intonation on Western string instruments. The playing techniques are various and complicated. The right hand mainly has eight fingerings: mo抹、tiao挑、gou勾、ti剔、pi擘、tuo托、da打、zhai摘，and their different combinations; The left hand is mainly divided into two types: *an yin*按音 (the left fingers or thumb presses the string until it touches the surface board) and *hua yin* sliding 滑音(left hand slides up and down to vary the note). Among them, there are seven different methods to play *an yin,* and seven different methods for sliding as well.

[106] Vesa Välimäki, "Construction of the guqin from two angles: (a) side view and (b) top view," ResearchGate, accessed January 16, 2020, https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Construction-of-the-guqin-from-two-angles-a-side-view-and-b-top-view_fig2_234034679.

In playing the Qin, there are 1,159 fingering names and 1,070 fingering notations, according to statistics. Therefore, the most difficult and important thing while learning to play the Qin is to learn and memorize the fingerings. Different timbres can be produced by plucking the same pitch on different strings or by using different fingering techniques."[107]

（Mo 抹）　　（Tiao 挑）



(Pi 擘)　　(Da 打)

Figure 8. The symbolic pictures of the different fingering techniques.[108]

[107] Ming-Yueh Liang, Music of the Billion: *An Introduction to Chinese Musical Culture*. New York: Heinrichshofen ed, 1985, 201-209.

[108] Baimiyishu, "Beginner to learn Guqin fingering: 'Eight Methods' on the right hand," Baidu, April 20, 2019, accessed January 19, 2020, http://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1631310115940979678.

Qin music is built on pentatonic scales, and the Qin is tuned by using *just* intonation and Pythagorean intonation which uses a combination of the major third and the perfect fifth to determine the pitch of each note in the scale. It must be noted that the equal temperament used for tuning in Western instruments is not used on the Qin or any traditional Chinese instruments. Therefore, when Chou used Western instruments to play and imitate the Qin sound, he made adjustments while composing by using the minor seconds as an ornament in many of his works to imitate an original Chines color. "On the whole, he was more interested in the use of sliding tones or microtones produced by plucking while pulling or pushing the strings of the Qin."[109]

Sound Characteristics

The range of the Qin is four octaves and two notes. Its lowest pitch is about two octaves below middle C (C2), similar to the cello. The Qin has three different tone colors:

1. *San yin* 散音,which means scattered sounds, and is produced by plucking the required open strings directly with your right hand.
2. *Fan yin*泛音 or harmonics, which means floating sounds, and refers to putting one or more left fingers lightly over the Qin emblem (the points *fan yin*) on the strings without depressing, and plucks the corresponding strings with the right hand, creating a crisp and clear sound.
3. *An yin*按音 or stopped sounds. The left finger or thumb presses the string until touching the surface board, and the right hand plucks the string to produce the

[109] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung*, 31.

sound. At this time, only one section of the previous string is vibrating. In addition, the musician's hand often slides up and down to modify the pitch.

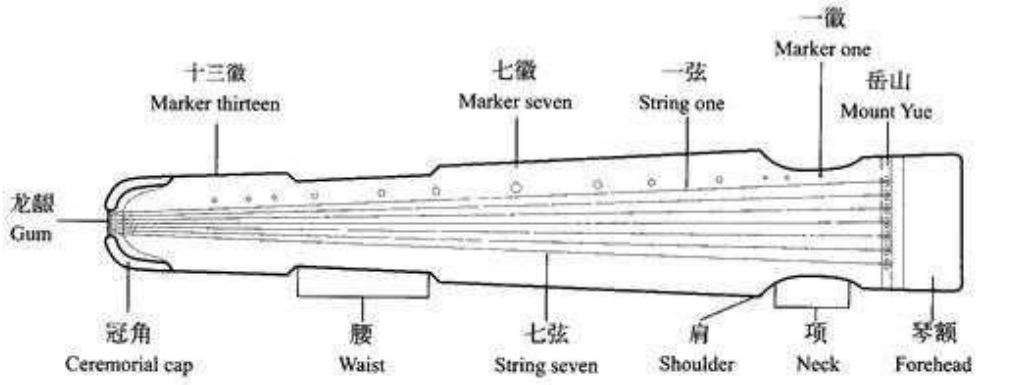


Figure 9. The picture of the positions of these thirteen points on the Qin's strings. [110]

Referring to the various tone qualities: *Fan yin* represents the sky and sounds ethereal and crisp; *San yin* represents the earth, and sounds bright and spacious; and *An yin* represents people, the sound is very rich and diverse. Therefore, these three sounds symbolize the harmony of heaven, earth, and people. There are seven *san yin* sounds (each string producing one *san yin*), ninety-one *fan yin*, and one hundred forty-seven *an yin* (depending on the different position that the left hand presses on the strings. Each string can produce many different *an yin* and *fan yin*). In most of Qin music, *san yin* and *an yin* appear more often, and *fan yin* usually appears in one concentrated section.

The sound of the Qin is very unique; Most people can feel the quiet and remote sound of the Qin when they listen to the music. Quietude can be the biggest feature of

[110] "Huiwei," Baidu baike, accessed January 25, 2020, https://baike.baidu.com/item/徽位/5729852.

the Qin sound. The sound is also called “the sound of ancient times” and “the sound of heaven and earth.” The “quietness” here has two meanings: One is that the player needs a quiet environment while they are playing the Qin, and the other is that when playing the Qin, the player needs a quiet state of mind. The Qin player not only listens to the music with ears, but also through fingers and heart. Especially the ending of the tone is generally very soft, so that the dying of the tone can hardly be heard through the ears, but only felt through the fingers. Chou also adapted into his works the feature that the Qin music ends in softness and pauses at the end of a phrase or section to imitate the hardly audible sound of the Qin.

In addition to the quiet aspect, another feature of Qin music is the variable timbre. A literatus of the Ming Dynasty, Leng Qian, wrote an article called “Sixteen Methods for the timbre of the Qin” (琴声十六法). In this article, he put forward a summary theory on the performance skills, aesthetic mood and various timbre of the Qin, which greatly influenced and guided the aesthetics of later generations. The “Sixteen Methods for the timbre of the Qin” is translated by Robert Van Gulik, and includes the following touches[111]:

1. 轻 Qing: the light touch. (the theory on the sound of gentleness and clarity, and the relationship between skill control and expression of interest)
2. 松 Song: the loose touch. (Technological theory on the importance of wrist relaxation when vibrating the strings)
3. 脆 Cui: the crisp touch (technical theory on the flexibility of finger and wrist

[111] Robert Van Gulik, *The Lore of the Chinese Lute: An Essay in the Ideology of the Ch'in*, *2nd ed.* (Rutland, Vt, and Tokyo: Charles Tuttle and Sophia University, 1969), 331-334.

strength)

4. 滑 Hua : the gliding touch (technical theory on the difficulty of fingering skills in gliding performance)
5. 高 Gao: the lofty touch (artistic theory on the profoundness, elegance and simplicity of Qin music's artistic conception)
6. 洁 Jie: the pure touch (ethics theory on the combination of timbre and morality)
7. 清 Qing: the clear touch (ideological theory on the importance of peaceful and clean environment, mood, and instrument conditions in performance)
8. 虚 Xu: the empty touch (ideological theory on the importance of coordinating the internal and external factors of "quiet heart" and "quite voice ");
9. 幽 You: the profound touch (Morality theory on the elegance of timbre of the Qin comes from the Qin player's elegance and appreciation for fine leisure)
10. 奇Qi: the rare touch (expression theory on the special of Qin music is the decorative fingering and the processing of the phrase development)
11. 古 Gu: the antique touch (style theory on the simple style of Qin music comes from the composer and player's calm and generosity);
12. 澹 Dan: the simple touch (style theory on the elegant essence of Qin music)
13. 中 Zhong: the balanced touch
14. 和 He: the harmonious touch (essentialism theory on the essence of harmony as

the perfection of skill)

15. 疾 Ji: the quick touch (skills and artistic conception on how to deal with the fingering speed)

16. 徐 Xu: the slow touch (essentialism theory on the unruffled Change of Fingerings).

The Tablature Notation of the Qin

There are around 150 Qin collections with more than 3360 pieces in existence now. Unlike the staff notation used in Western music to indicate the scale, tempo and rhythm, the Qin uses the tablature notation.

Before the tablature appeared, learning the Qin relied on the teacher's oral dictation, one sentence at a time, and one piece at a time. As the fingering gradually became more complicated with the development of the Qin technique, in order to memorize easily, the detailed playing method of every piece, including the fingerings, strings and emblems, were documented by the Qin player in words since the Han Dynasty.

At that time, it was called *wenzi pu*, 文字谱 (character / written notation). This kind of notation, however, was very inconvenient. A sentence was needed to describe a fingering, and for this reason, the description was often very long. Due to the complexity and inconvenience of writing, a person named Cao Rou in the late Tang Dynasty invented a reduced form of character notation, which was called *jianzi pu* 减字谱, (reduced notation). This reduced notation used important part of keywords from *wenzi pu* and combined them to form a new word. The "word" could usually be

divided into two parts: the upper part indicated the left fingering, portamento, different kinds of vibrato[112], and the emblem position. The lower part indicated the strings, the right fingering, and the use of nail or flesh. For example, the notation for *fan yin* (泛音) is  , which is taken from the word "fan" (泛). When the Qin players read the notation  , it means to start using *Fan Yin*, since the lower part is taken from word "start"(起). When they read  , the upper part is the same, however the lower part is the word "stop" (止), thus the notation indicates to stop using *Fan Yin*.

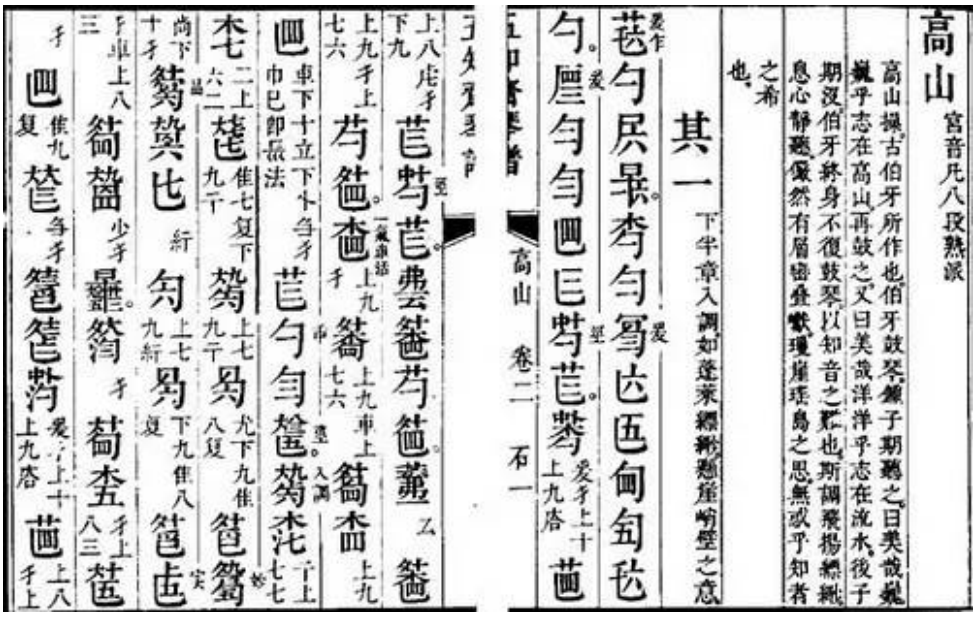


Figure 10. The notation of the Qin.[113]

The reduced notation indicated the fingering of both hands, the position on the

[112] There are more than one hundred and twenty kinds of vibrato in Qin music.

[113] "Basic knowledge of Guqin," Baidu, October 29, 2019, accessed January 29, 2020, http://www.tzqsng.com/czdjt/2036323.jhtml.

strings, the modes of articulation, the changes in pitch, timbre, and the tempo in a more convenient form than the character notation. As a result, a large number of scores after the Tang Dynasty are passed down to this day, while most of the scores before the Tang Dynasty are lost. There is only one manuscript that was recorded by character notation, which has survived from the Tang Dynasty, called *Jieshi Diao Youlan*《碣石调·幽兰》 (Solitary Orchid in Stone Tablet Mode); it is the oldest known Qin score in world.

Performance and Compositional Methods

The Qin can be used in performance in two ways - either as a solo instrument or as an accompaniment for singing, or sometimes poetry. The music that is written for solo is called "*Qin qu*"琴曲(Qin melody); when the artist is playing and singing instead, the music is called "*Xian ge*"弦歌(String Song),[114] or also known as "*Qin ge*" 琴歌(Qin Song). Qin Song is generally shorter and simpler than *Qin qu*. In addition, the Qin could also play with the *Xiao* (an ancient Chinese vertical bamboo flute) or the *Se* (an ancient Chinese twenty-five-stringed plucked instrument, similar to the zither). The *Se* in particular was mentioned many times with the Qin in the earliest collection of poems in China - *The Book of Songs* (诗经). These verses show that the Qin and the *Se* often performed together in ancient time.[115]

"Some of Qin music is written to accompany the chanting of a poem. The

[114] Jian Xu, *Qinshi Chubian* [A History of the Qin: A Preliminary study] (Beijing: People's music Publications, 1982) 7.

[115] Jian Xu, *Qinshi Chubian*, 7.

phrasing of the poem determines the rhythm of the music."[116] However, there is no record of rhythm in the Qin notation, since ancient Chinese musicians believed that the flow of music depended on the different player's understanding of the music and their individual breath control. For this reason, every rhythmic interpretation would be different. When performing a piece, the performers have more freedom for re-creation according to their own personal style and different understanding. For this reason, there are often many different interpretations of the same song, such as two of the most famous pieces in the Qin music repertoire: "*Pingsha luoyan*"平沙落雁 (Wild Geese Descending on the Sandbank), which has over fifty different interpretations, and "*Yuqiao wenda*"渔樵问答 (Dialogue between the fisherman and the woodcutter), which has more than thirty versions.

In addition to playing the same piece of music, the performers would "re-create" according to their own understanding; the ancient composers also recomposed, recombined, and edited the existing musical materials. The reason for the appearance of this ancient traditional re-creation method of composition is due to the difference in social classes and the harsh rule of the Emperor. Composers were afraid to be punished for writing compositions that the ruler was not satisfied with, and thought that only new works written by sages and wise men were good. The creative ideas of those composers were based on variations, not innovation; Sai-Bung Cheung summarized the three methods used by ancient composers to expand the theme in his book *Historical Studies of Chinese Music II*:

1. "Multiple method (重叠法) is the simplest and oldest method of composition with

[116] Seok-Kwee Chew, "*An analysis of the selected music of Chou Wen-Chung in relation to Chinese aesthetics*", 55.

the main theme being repeated several times. This method of composition is seen in the early compositions of *The Book of Songs* 诗经 (The Oldest Collection of Poems in China) in the Chou Dynasty.

2. Extension method (引申法) is the variation and modification of existing themes to expand their scope. This method of composition is most popular in the Song Dynasty.
3. Combination method (组合法) is the combination of various pieces based on their similarity of modes or phrases to form a larger work. Fragments of a theme can also be re-combined to form new phrases or new themes. From the Han Dynasty and the Song Dynasty onwards, most compositions are created based on this method." [117]

These compositions that were composed in the styles of each era allows us to experience the form and style of the music from centuries past, or even from over a thousand years ago. Chou Wen-Chung also used these traditional methods of composition in his music, such as *The Willows are New* and *Yü Ko*.

The length of Qin music is varied. The short ones only take one or two minutes, and the long ones can take up to tens of minutes. However, no matter how long the music is, the structure of the music must consist of four major parts: a free introduction散起, the start of the theme 入调, the start of a *ritardando* 入慢, and the coda 尾声.

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[117] Sai-Bung Cheung, *Historical Studies of Chinese Music II* (Hong Kong: Union Press, 1975), 476, quoted in Seok-Kwee Chew, "*An analysis of the selected music of Chou Wen-Chung in relation to Chinese aesthetics*", 60.

Qin music usually starts with a free rhythm in a slow tempo, which is called "a free introduction"散起. Its length depends on the length of the whole piece and the performance needs. The mode in this section is not clear. After the introduction, the theme begins with presenting thematic material (入调). At this point, the tempo has become regular and the mode is very clear. This section is also the main part of the music and should take up more than half the length of the whole piece. After the climax, the emotions calm down gradually and the music proceeds into “the start of a *ritardando”* (入慢). With the contrasts in rhythm and changes in mode, the music is introduced into a new realm. This section is very different from the "the start of the theme " in the rhythm and mood. In the “coda”(尾声), the music becomes light and slow and usually ends with “*fan yin*”, forming the mood effect of reverberation. In general, there are only four parts of the music, but for some longer pieces, composers sometimes added an extra "return to introduction"复起 part before the "coda". In this section, the composers inserted the materials from previous themes or made variations of it.

The above-mentioned structure of Qin music can only roughly summarize the structure of some of its music. In addition, there are some ancient Qin music in which tunes are transplanted from other genres of music. Songs specially sung for accompaniment have their own special structure, which cannot be included in the above examples. All these forms are based on the traditional spirituality existent in the nation, which gradually formed into a long-term practice.

“There are three types of Qin music: the narration of historical events (*xushi* 叙

事), the depiction of scenery (*shujing* 抒景), and the expression of emotion (*shuqing* 抒情).”[118] In order to describe or explain in detail the meaning, content or mood it represents, Qin music generally has a descriptive title, similar to the idea of program music. When the work has a turning point in the story or a change in mood, each section is also marked with a subtitle.[119] The reason why the title appears is because the Qin was only played solo and singing didn’t occur for a long time until the end of the Ming Dynasty, when some Qin artists advocated adding lyrics. In the Qing Dynasty, most players did not pay much attention to the lyrics of the Qin and even opposed singing. Therefore, the title and content of Qin music were very important and exact and could help the player to better understand the music. Chou also applied this idea in much of his compositions.

[118] Seok-Kwee Chew, “*An analysis of the selected music of Chou Wen-Chung in relation to Chinese aesthetics*”, 56.

[119] Ibid.,56.

Yü KO

Yü Ko is a chamber work was composed in 1965 for 9 instruments which include Violin, Alto Flute, English Horn, Bass Clarinet, Trombone, Bass Trombone, 2 Percussion instruments, and Piano. The first performance took place on April 19, 1965, in New York City, performed by an American ensemble: The Group for Contemporary Music at Columbia University directed by Harvey Sollberger. This ensemble also performed Chou's *Pien*, *Landscapes* and other works. Chou wrote this piece due to a tradition of Sollberger's chamber ensemble performing works inspired by ancient repertoire at the beginning of the concert before performing contemporary ones.[120] The whole performance duration of his piece is about five minutes.

Yü Ko 漁歌, literally means "fisherman's song," is an original Qin melody composed by Mao Min-Zhong, notes scholar and Qin player of the late Southern Song dynasty (C.E.112-1276). *Yü Ko* is one of his most influential works. The primary characteristics of Mao while performing on the Qin were known for his clarity, good projection, and softness in timbre. Mao Min-Zhong's music was influenced by the complicated national politics of the late Southern Song Dynasty and the turbulent life of the people. The Song Dynasty was a very important developmental stage in the history of ancient Chinese music. Almost all the music before the Song Dynasty was composed for court performances. Starting with the Song Dynasty, ordinary people could also perform in public places. The performances transferred from the court to the common folk and the performers changed from aristocratic to civilian. The performance atmosphere now became less important than

[120] Gang Chen, "Zaochun Eryue Liuse Xin" [New Willows of the Early February], 69, https://www.ixueshu.com/document/411507a27d70b7a5318947a18e7f9386.html.

the pursuit of plot and drama in the music performance.[121] The development of various "poem songs," Qin music, Chinese opera and narrative music (*shuochang*), and a new exploration of music theory led to the great variety, complexity and personalized characteristics in the music of this period.

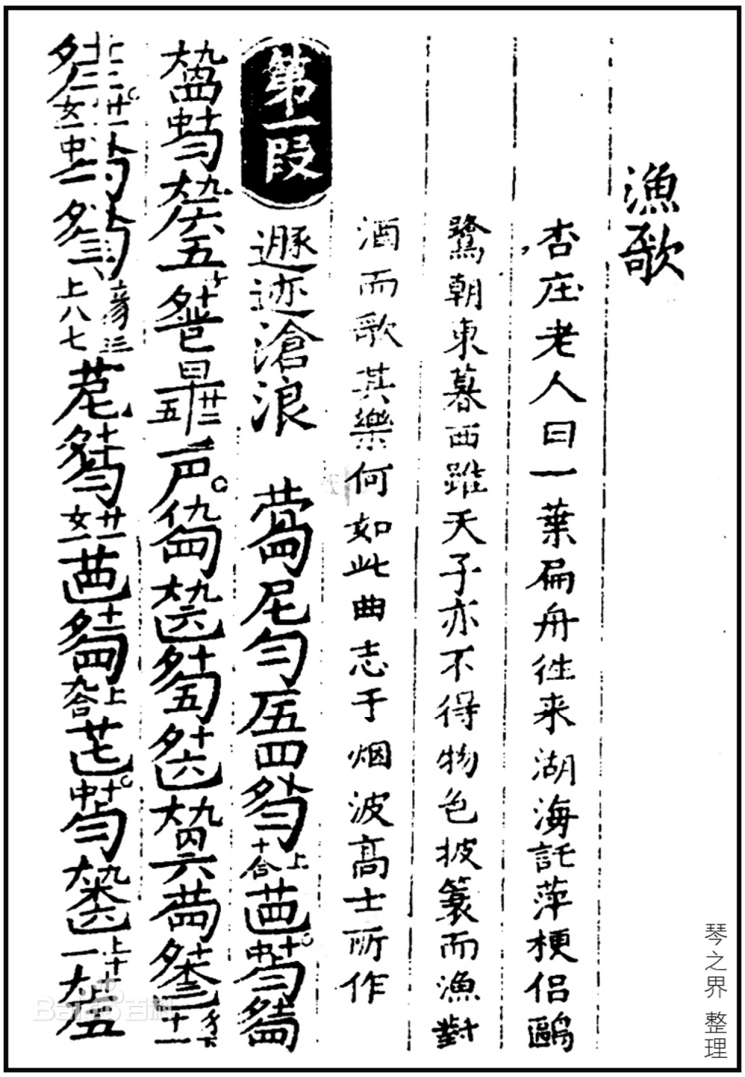

Figure 11. The first section of the Qin tablature notation of *Yü Ko*. [122]

[121] Wei-Min Zhao, "Jianlun Songdai Yinyuede Zhuyao Tezheng Jiqi Lishi Diwei" [A Brief Discussion on the Main Features and Historical Position of Song Dynasty Music] *JiaoXiang- Journal of Xi'an Conservatory of Music* vol. 3 (1997): 27. Translated by author.

[122] "*Yü Ko*," Baidu baike, accessed February 2, 2020, https://baike.baidu.com/item/渔歌/20147372?fr=aladdin.

Mao Min-Zhong's *Yü Ko* was inspired by the poetry of *Fisherman*渔翁, which was written by Liu Zongyuan, a renowned author, poet, and philosopher of the Tang Dynasty. *Fisherman* is a landscape poem. This poem expresses the poet's state of mind in seeking detachment after political failings by describing the fisherman having gained his inner peace from the natural landscape. This poem is similar to an elegant landscape painting, full of color. The fisherman is a symbol of the man who is in harmony with nature[123] and this reflects the poet's desire for a free life. The following is the original text and the translation of the poem.

《渔翁》 柳宗元

渔翁夜傍西岩宿，晓汲清湘燃楚竹。

烟销日出不见人，欸乃一声山水绿。

回看天际下中流，岩上无心云相逐。

Fisherman Liu Zongyuan

By the west Cliff, a fisherman anchors for the night,
In the morning, he dips from the clear Xiang River and cooks over a Chu-country bamboo fire.

Mist and fog dissolve upon sunrise, he is out of sight,
A creak of the oars came from the green hills and waters.

He glides far down in mid-stream, looking back at the sky,

[123] Wen-Chung Chou, *Yü Ko* (New York, NY: C.F. Peters Corporation, 2001), 1.

Clouds are floating on the top of the hills, as if they are racing one another casually[124].

Although the original Qin melody is named *Yü Ko* (fisherman's song), there are no lyrics associated with the Qin melody and the performer plays it without singing. The oldest existing tablature notation of *Yü Ko* is from the Qin handbook *Xilutang Qintong*西麓堂琴统(*Xilu* Hall Qin Manual) of the Ming Dynasty in 1549. This melody was recorded in more than forty handbooks and was also adapted into many different versions by different Qin performers.

In the one of the popular versions, played by the very renowned Qin player Zha Fu-Xi according to *Ziyuantang Qinpu* 自远堂琴谱 *(Ziyuantang Qin handbooks)* (1802), there are eighteen sections plus a coda. Each section has a subtitle to describe the development of the music. Mao imitated the sound of rowing and paddling in the song. The entire song is based on the chanting melody that appears in the first section, through performance skills shifting, rhythm changing in different registers, modulation and the theme expanding for use throughout the song. In the fourth section, a deep and powerful tone is played with *san yin*; when the same melody is repeated in the eighth section, *fan yin* is used and the tone is elegant and flowing. The melody sometimes is low and soft, sometimes bright, and is reminiscent of the scene of a fisherman rowing in a boat and singing among mountains and rivers. In the eighteenth section, there is a key change, which adds a new color to the music, and the piece ends in this new key. It can be understood that after seeing the beautiful landscapes and clouds, the mood of the fisherman (composer/ poet) has changed.

[124] This translation from the Chinese into English by the author.

This piece is based on pentatonicism. The duration of Mao's original Qin melody *Yü Ko,* which was played by Zha Fu-Xi, is about fifteen minutes; however Chou's composition is only five minutes long in duration. Chou did not completely copy the original Qin melody, but only adapted the thematic material, basic rhythm and pitch content from the original version[125] and made reductions and arrangements in the music. He also explored the variety of producing sound effects in different Western instruments. Instead of using a single instrument, Chou used nine instruments to produce a wide range of possibilities for imitating the various timbres of the Qin, "variable tone inflections or microtones on Western instruments."[126] The following musical example (Figure 12) will demonstrate how Chou used standard Western instruments in a unconventional way.

[125] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung,* 102.

[126] Ibid.

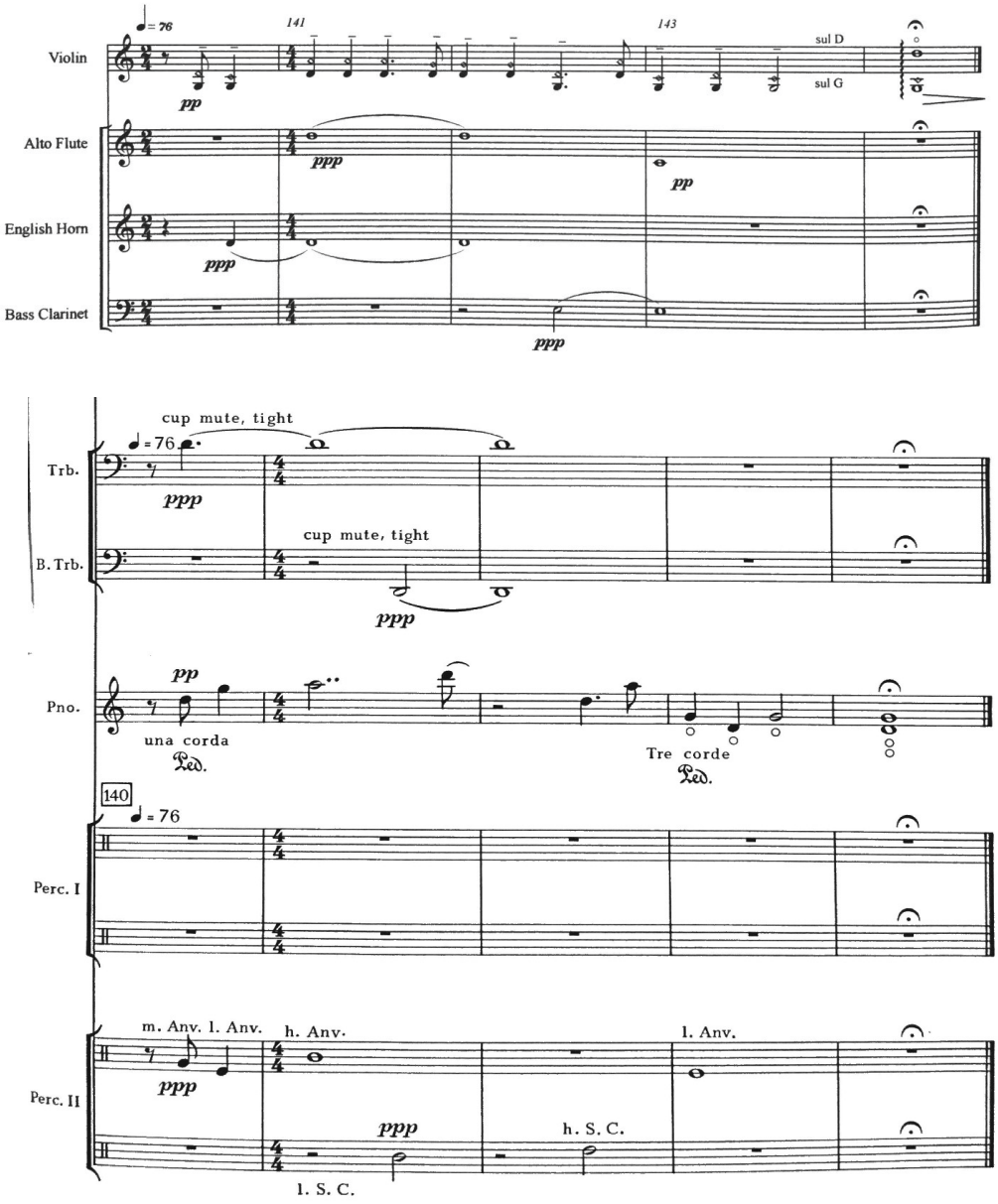

Figure 12. *Yü Ko* mm.140-144.[127]

Instrumentation

When Chou was composing *Yü Ko*, the instrumental techniques of the orchestration he used were very innovative. In order to imitate the different sounds of the Qin, he translated the tablature notation, adapted the Qin's finger technique, and

[127] Chou Wen-Chung, *Yü Ko* (New York, NY: C.F. Peters Corporation, 2001), 27.

used different and unusual playing techniques and methods to discover a "Chinese" sound in these Western instruments. In the score of *Yü Ko*, Chou explained in detail the instruction of playing each instrument. Examples of the use of innovative instrumental techniques include: [128]

1. The violin's pizzicato and different ways to play glissandos to imitate the sliding tones in the Qin.
2. When playing the woodwinds, the players should lower the pitch evenly to a minor second or start the notes sharp in pitch and slide back to the right pitch that is written on the score by rolling the instruments to adjust the angle or through lipping in order to imitate the Qin's tone inflection and microtones.
3. The trombones play most of the piece with stone-lined cup mutes[129] to keep the quiet sound quality of the Qin. The vibrato should be played slowly with wide amplitude; *glissandi* should be played evenly and be started as softly as possible.
4. The Qin is imitated in the interior of the piano by either pressing or wearing the thimble to tap the strings near the bridge, or lightly touch the string in the middle to create a *fan yin* when the note is being played. In addition to the typical sound of the piano, there are four different timbres which can be produced and heard in this composition.
5. Although the percussion instruments do not use any new playing techniques, two groups of ten types of percussion instruments (Temple blocks, bongos, timbales,

[128] Wen-Chung Chou, notes in the score of *Yü Ko* (New York, NY: C.F. Peters Corporation, 2001), 2.

[129] Bruce Archibald, "Chou Wen-Chung: Pien and Yü Ko. Cursive. The Willows Are New," *The Musical Quarterly* 04 (1972):333. Accessed April 20, 2018, https://www-jstor-org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/stable/741313?Search=yes&resultItemClick=true&searchText=Bruce+Archibald%2C+Chou+Wen-Chung+Pien+and+Yü+Ko.+Cursive.+The+Willows+Are+New.&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3DBruce%2BArchibald%252C%2B%2BChou%2BWen-Chung%2BPien%2Band%2BY%25C3%25BC%2BKo.%2BCursive.%2BThe%2BWillows%2BAre%2BNew.&ab_segments=0%2Fbasic_search_SYC-5462%2Fcontrol&refreqid=fastly-default%3A227f411f89a377902e6e17012458899c&seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

tom-tom, woodblocks, anvils, triangle, suspended cymbal, Gong and drum) with a total of 20 different models and registers have been used to set the mood of the piece. Moreover, when they collaborate with other instruments, these percussion instruments can enhance some special sound effects, similar to the sounds that are produced by certain Qin fingerings in performances.

Each instrument has its own role in the rich expressiveness of shaping the music and the imitation of the Qin.

While playing the Qin, the right hand has to pluck the strings while the left hand presses different points on the strings to produce different pitches. The Qin player slides the left-hand fingers continuously on the strings to reach the different points, which is how the sliding tone is made. Each notation explains which fingering the right hand uses to pluck the string. In Chou's work, the piano part recalls the various techniques and the piano part corresponds to most of the original Qin notation (Figure 13 and 14).

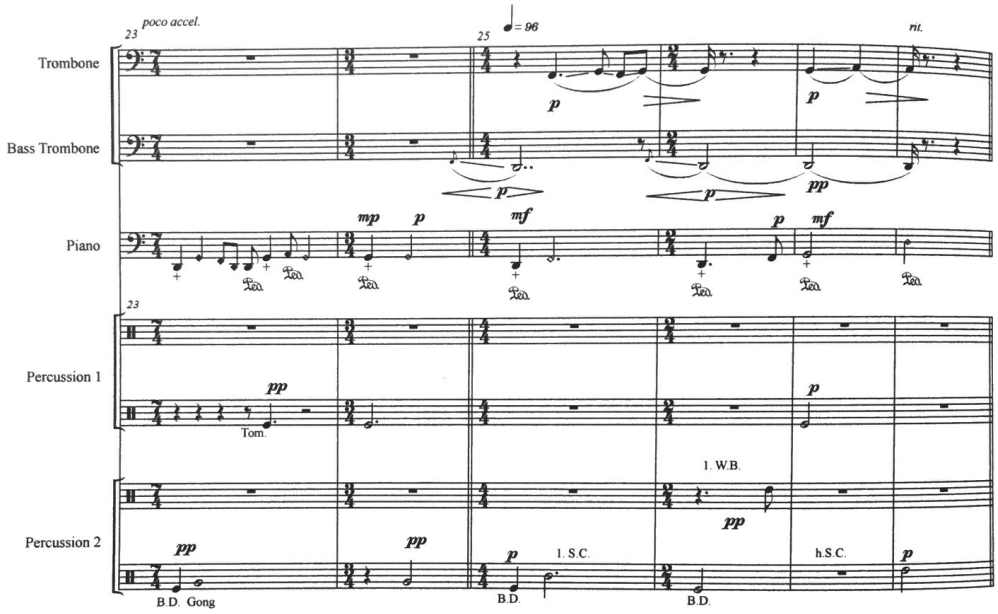

Figure 13. *Yü Ko* mm.23-28[130]

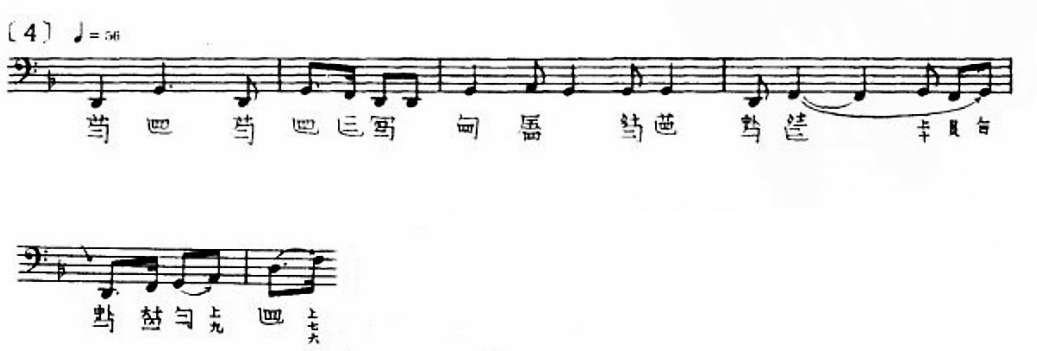

Figure 14. Similar melody in Qin notation of *Yü Ko* [131]

The piano mimics the sound of plucking the strings of the Qin. The reason that Chou used the piano to imitate the starting note is because the piano sounds are

[130] Chou Wen-Chung, *Yü Ko*, 7.

[131] Min-Zhong Mao, *Yü Ko*, ed. Zha Fu-Xi, Zhongguo qupu wang, last modified July 22,2011, accessed November 11, 2019, http://www.qupu123.com/qiyue/guzhengguqin/p33571.html.

achieved through a percussive attack and this characteristic makes the starting note very clear. The individual strings of the piano cannot produce a gliding tone, and once a note is played, its sound will gradually weaken in volume in duration over a period of time. In *Yü Ko,* the different methods to play the piano also represent the different timbres of the Qin and the different playing fingerings:

1. Most of the timbres produced by using the fingering gou 勾 and mo 抹 on the Qin, are produced on the piano by holding the string near the bridge and then playing that note; 
2. Most of the timbres that are played by using the fingering tiao 挑, li 历 and tuo 托 on the Qin, are produced by wearing the thimble to tap the string near the bridge; 
3. A *fan yin* can be created by lightly touching the string in the interior of the piano and subsequently then playing the notated piano key. 

   Both the violin and the Qin are string instruments. Among the nine instruments in this work, their timbres are the most similar, and for this reason, Chou also used the same playing technique on the violin to imitate the *fan yin.*
4. Besides the playing technique that can create a *fan yin*, the other two performance methods mentioned above, plus the original sound of the piano, can indicate *san yin.*

The melodic lines that are represented by the Qin's reverberations are expressed through woodwind instruments and the muted trombones. The woodwind and trombone players can imitate the endless sound of the Qin through the control of their

breath and can exaggerate the various and delicate changes in timbre of the Qin. The woodwind instruments imitate the tone inflection and microtones of the Qin, whereas, the trombones imitate the Qin's very quick *glissandi* and rapid dynamic changes.

Moreover, when playing the Qin, some fingerings also indicate two different ways of plucking the strings, either with the finger pad or the nail, so that the timbres are different. In Chou's work, he used the percussion instruments, temple blocks and bongos, to mimic the sound of nail strikes. In particular, the temple blocks always appear at the end of the measures with sixteenth or eighth notes each time, which mimics the crisp and short sound of the striking of the fingernails.

The composer uses all these performance techniques not only to imitate the tone of the Qin and the change in pitch, but also to show the charm and mood of Qin music. For example, at the end of the work, Chou specifically emphasized that the trombone player should put the cup mute tightly in the trombone, and the pianist should use the *una corda* pedal to imitate the music at the end of the Qin song , which usually becomes light and slow, forming the mood effect of reverberation and the disappearance of sound. Therefore, the solitary mood and the inner peace that the fisherman finds in the landscape can be expressed in more detail.

Pitch

Since the Qin is tuned by using *just* intonation, there is a discrepancy between the intervals played by the Qin and the intervals played by Western instruments using equal temperament. Besides using special instrumentation and creating new techniques of glissando to fills the intervals and imitate the dissonant timbre of the Qin as Chou indicated, "the dissonant timbre of the Qin's silk strings is approximated

by dissonant harmony, and in this piece the use of dissonant major second in chords stands out prominently." [132]

Tonal Material

Chou used the basic pentatonic mode of Mao's version which is *shang*商 (Re) in G.

Shang mode:

Re	Mi	Sol	La	Do	Re
(*Shang*)商	(*Jue*)角	(*Zhi*) 徵	(*Yu*)羽	(*Gong*)宫	(*Shang*)商

Shang transposed to G:

G	A	C	D	F	G

Structure and Tempo

Similar to Mao's original Qin piece, the form of Chou's *Yü Ko* is theme and variations. However, in comparison to Mao's work, which consists of 19 parts, Chou's work is mainly divided into four parts and a coda, and the division of these parts is also related to the *Da qu* of the Tang Dynasty.

Da qu is a genre of traditional Chinese music with a multi-segment structure. It combines singing, dancing and instrumental ensemble. The earliest *da qu* in Chinese history was developed from the Han Dynasty (C.E. 25-220) through the Qing Dynasty (C.E. 1636-1912). During the Tang Dynasty (C.E. 618-907), the development of *da qu*. reached its height. Tang *da qu* not only had a large number and a wide range of sources and inspiration, and also had a high level of art. Although the structure of *da qu* in the Song Dynasty (C.E. 960-1279) is basically the same as that of Tang Dynasty,

[132] Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung,* 103.

it did not completely adopt the huge structure of the Tang *da qu*, but only used part of it.

According to the analysis of the noted Chinese music educator Yang Yin-Liu, Tang *da qu*'s typical structure is composed of three parts: *San xu* 散序 (Introduction) - *Zhong xu* 中序 (second Introduction) - *Po* 破(Entering the Proper).[133] Sometimes the composer added a coda called *San* 散(rubato coda) to end the composition and the tempo in this section was very rubato and slow to correspond to the *San xu* (introduction). The whole piece, therefore, ended in a quiet and slow mood. The following is Yang Yin-Liu's description of the three-part structure of the *da qu,* translated by Peter M. Chang*:*

i. *"San xu* (Introduction):

Instrumentation: solos or ensemble (not specified)

Rhythmic character: rubato, free rhythm with ritardando.

ii. *Zhong xu* (second Introduction): features voice

Instrumentation: not specific but with singing

Rhythmic character: regular beats, slow tempo, later accelerando (dance: optional)

iii. *Po* (Entering the Proper): features dancing

Instrumentation: not specific but with dancing

Rhythmic character: from free rhythm to regular beats, tempo from slow to fast , and then slow again. (voice optional)

Seven Subsections:

1. Free rhythm

[133] This translation from the Chinese into English by Peter M. Chang.

2. Free rhythm - regular pulse
3. Moderately fast
4. Accelerando
5. Presto
6. Ritardando
7. Finale" [134]

According to the structure, the principle of Tang *Da qu*'s tempo change is: rubato 散 - slow慢 - moderato中 - fast快 - rubato散.[135] Both Mao and Chou's work followed the tempo principle, and tempo change is frequent. There were fourteen tempo markings in Chou's work:

First section:	Tempo:(Quarter note=):	Principle:	Structure:
mm. 1-3	56	*rubato*	*(Introduction)*
mm. 4-18	63	slow	
mm. 19-21	69		
Second section:		*moderato*	*(second Introduction)*
mm. 22-24	76		
mm. 25-28	96		
mm. 29-56	76		
Third section:		fast	*(Entering the Proper)*

[134] Yin-Liu Yang, *Zhongguo Gudai Yinyue Shigao* [Drafts of History of Chinese Music in Antiquity], 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Beijing: People's Music Publications, 1981), 221, quoted in Peter M. Chang, *Chou Wen-Chung: The Life and Work of a Contemporary Chinese-Born American Composer* (Oxford, U.K: The Scarecrow Press, 2006), 104.

[135] An-Chao Wang, "Tang *Da qu* Yinyue Jiegou Fenxi" [Analysis of Tang Daqu Music Structure] *JiaoXiang- Journal of Xi'an Conservatory of Music* vol. 28, No.4 (December 2009): 23. Translated by author.

mm. 57-66	84		
mm. 67-78	76		
mm. 79-112	92		
mm. 113-121	96		
Fourth Section:			
mm. 122-127	84		
mm. 128-132	92		
Coda:		*rubato*	*(rubato coda)*
mm. 133-139	84		
mm. 140-144	76		

In addition, there are two characteristics in Tang *Da qu*'s structure. First, the main melody of each section was repeated many times. Second, a developmental principle called "*Hewei*" 合尾, was commonly used in Tang *Da qu* as well[136], which means that the composer used the same melody at the end of each section. In Mao's original Qin piece, this characteristic shows in section 1, 3, 4, 7, 11, 13, 15, 17 (Figure 15).

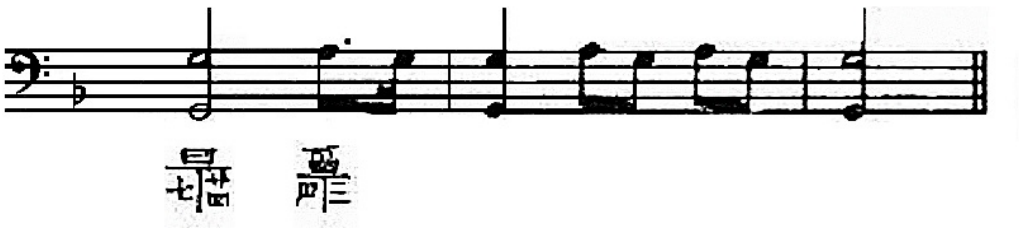

Figure 15. The melody of "*Hewei*" in Mao's *Yü Ko*[137]

[136] An-Chao Wang, "Tang *Da qu* Yinyue Jiegou Fenxi," 21. Translated by author.

[137] Min-Zhong Mao, *Yü Ko*, ed. Zha Fu-Xi, http://www.qupu123.com/qiyue/guzhengguqin/p33571.html.

This feature is also reflected in Chou ’s work. Chou used the same repeated melody from Mao ’s work, in which the recurring phrase was repeated four times, each time appearing in the end of the section 1, 2, 3, 4, and to be played by different instruments ((Figure 16,17,18,19).

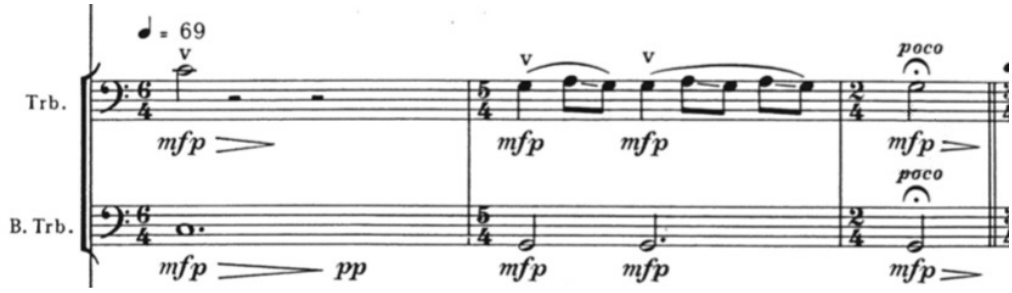

Figure 16. *Yü Ko* mm.19-21[138]

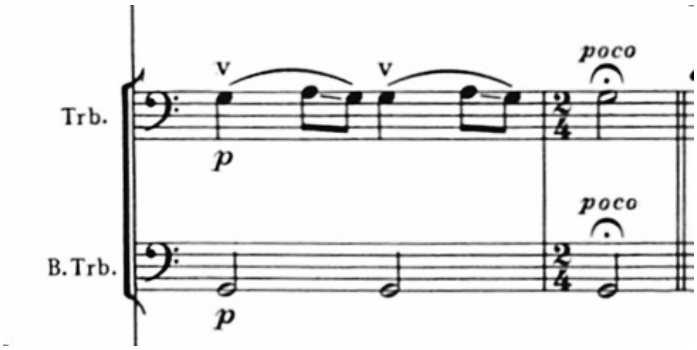

Figure 17. *Yü Ko* mm.55-56[139].

[138] Chou Wen-Chung, *Yü Ko*, 6.

[139] Ibid., 12.

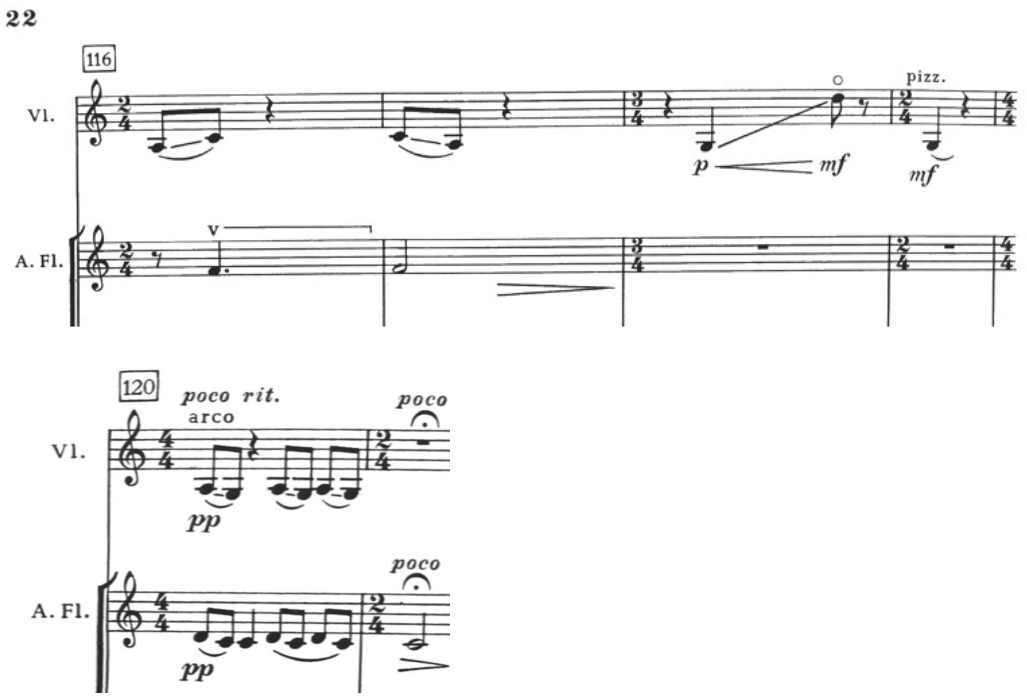

Figure 18. *Yü Ko* mm.119-121[140].

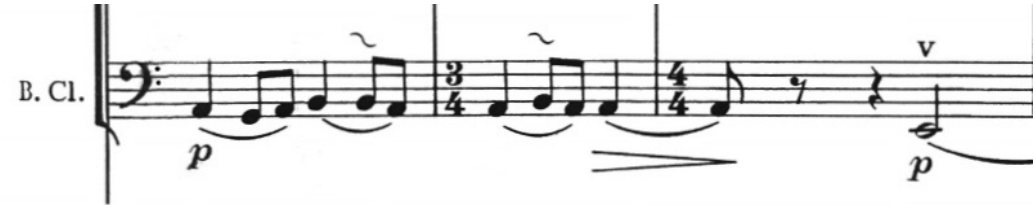

Figure 19. *Yü Ko* mm.130-132[141].

It is worth mentioning that in addition to the frequent changes in tempo in Chou's work, the time signature changes are also very frequent and complicated. The time signatures include: 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 7/4. Most of the time, it changes in 2-3 measures, and the most frequent one is continuously changed in 8 measures (Figure 20).

[140] Ibid., 22-23.

[141] Ibid., 25.

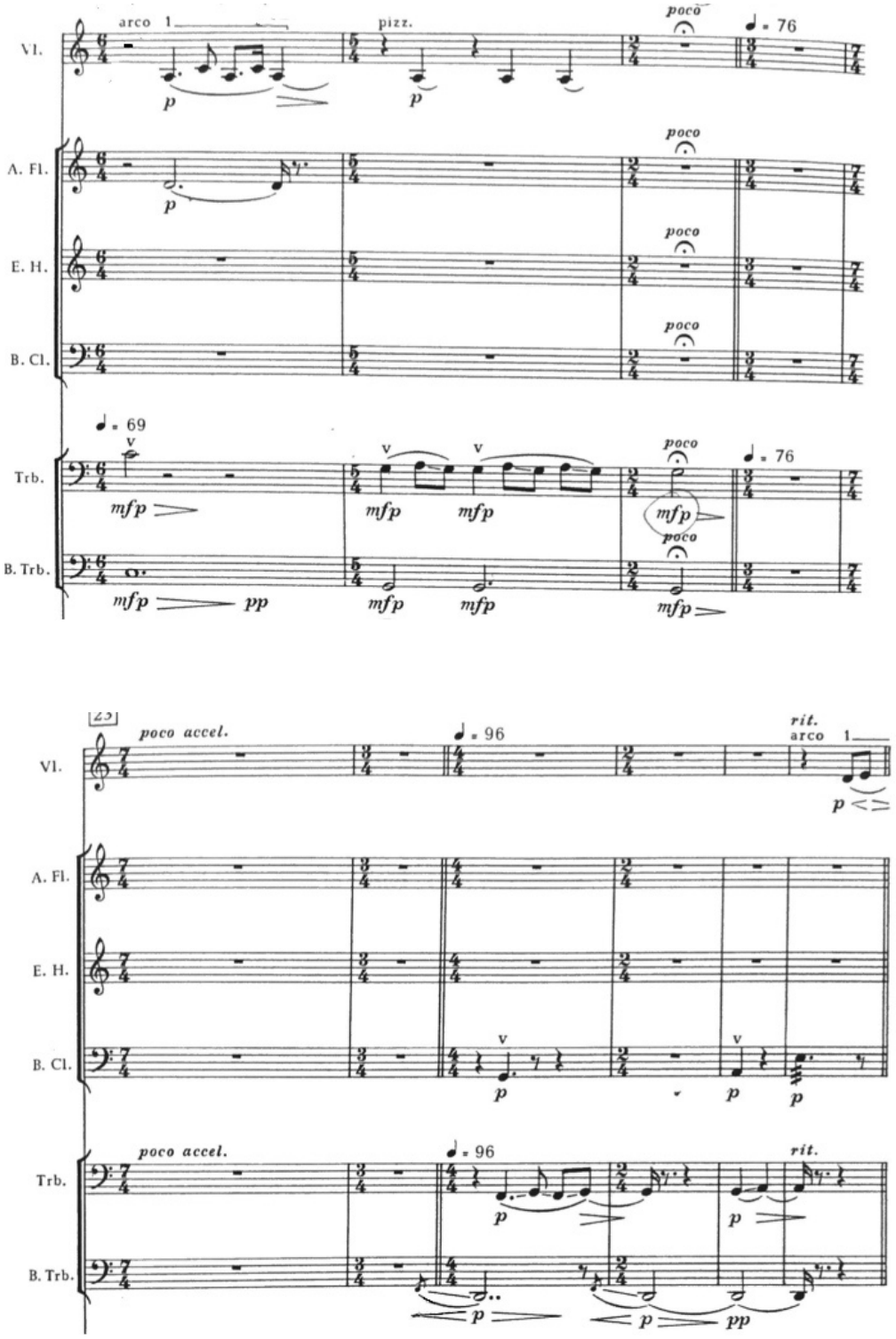

Figure 20. *Yü Ko* mm.19-28[142].

[142] Ibid., 6-7.

The frequent change of the time signature by Chou reproduces the flow of music that ancient Chinese musicians believed in. Ancient musicians gave more freedom to re-creating music by not recording the rhythm; Chou expressed this freedom by not letting the music be restricted by time signatures through his understanding of the composition.

Dynamic

The reduced notation does not indicate the dynamics for Qin player, therefore, Chou's dynamic markings in this work are only for the acoustic effects of Qin playing. In order to show the most salient feature of the Qin sound (Quiet), most of the dynamic markings that Chou used in this piece are softer than mf, especially at the end of the piece when Chou used *ppp* to imitate the fading-away of the Qin sound. Only when the piano mimics the initial sound of plucking the strings in the Qin, the dynamic goes up to f and mf. The trombones have dynamic changes almost every time, whether it is gliding or playing a single note. The dynamic marking of *mfp* appears occasionally in the score for the violin and woodwind instrument parts, but mainly in the trombones. This indicates that the instruments are imitating the starting sound of the plucking of the strings on the Qin, just as in the piano part (Figure 21). This dynamic marking also emphasizes the rapid dynamic change from strong to soft after plucking the strings.

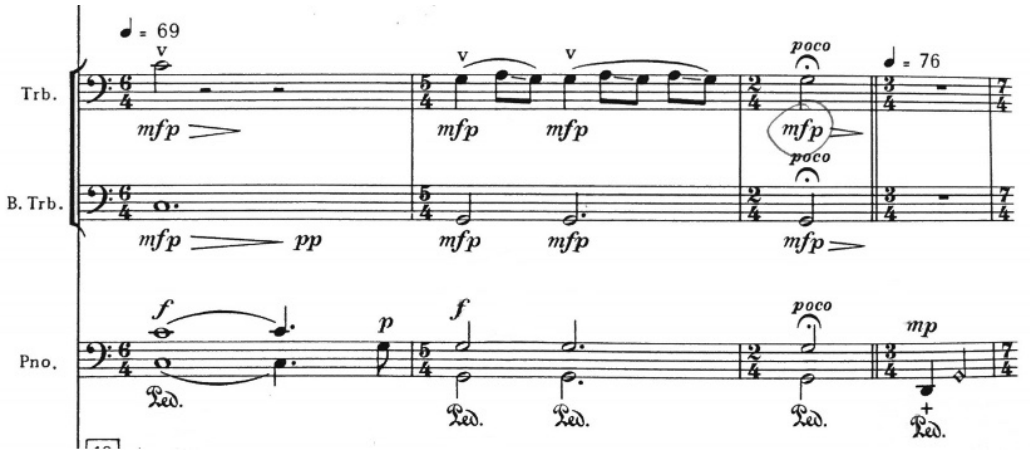

Figure 21. *Yü Ko* mm.19-22[143].

Furthermore, in order to imitate the joyful singing when the fisherman is pulling the boat, the changes are expressed through the emotional mood of the music. In mm. 122-127, for the only time, Chou let the trombones remove the cup mute and retain its bright tone characteristics. The accents in the trombone and bass trombone parts are staggered from each other, while four different percussion instruments reinforce each accent. The music has a strong power here, vividly expressing the lively mood of the original poem "A creak of the oars came from the green hills and waters." The composer developed the rich sound of western brass instruments, which is in contrast with the entire song's imitation of the Qin's quiet acoustic characteristics and adds a special mood to the music.

[143] Ibid., 6.

Materials

In order to retain the characteristics of different variations in the Qin piece, Chou adopted the musical materials from some of these variations in different sections.

By comparing the version of the staff notation that was played by the renowned Qin player Zha Fu-Xi according to Ziyuantang Qinpu 自远堂琴谱 *(Ziyuantang Qin handbooks)*, the thematic material of the first section of Chou's work is mainly from the first section of Mao's work (Figure 22).

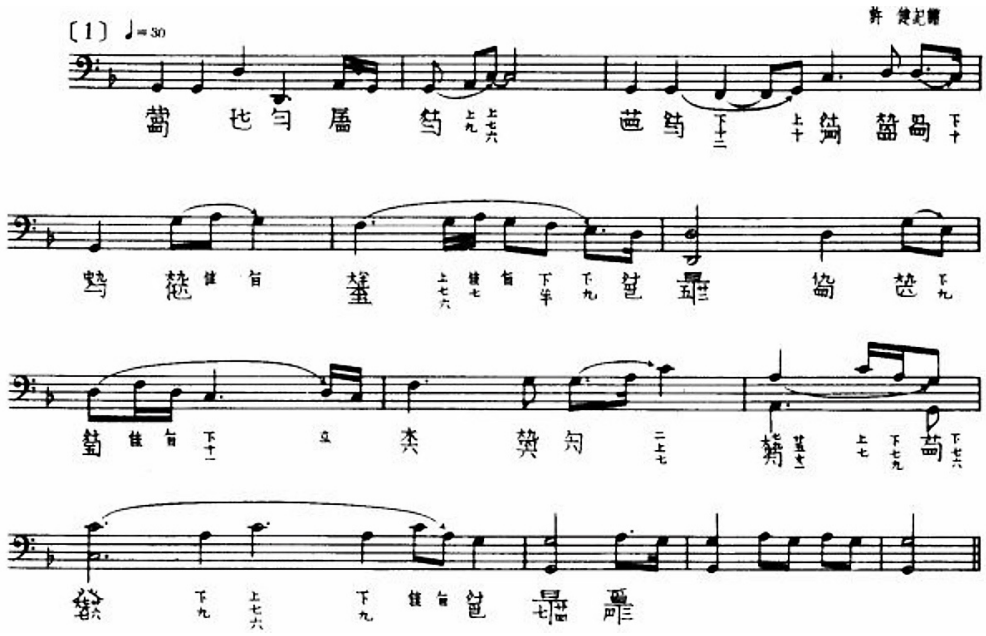

Figure 22. Reduced notation and staff notation of the first section of Mao's version[144]

The thematic material of the second section of Chou's work is mainly from the fourth section of Mao's work (Figure 23).

[144] Min-Zhong Mao, *Yü Ko*, ed. Zha Fu-Xi, http://www.qupu123.com/qiyue/guzhengguqin/p33571.html.

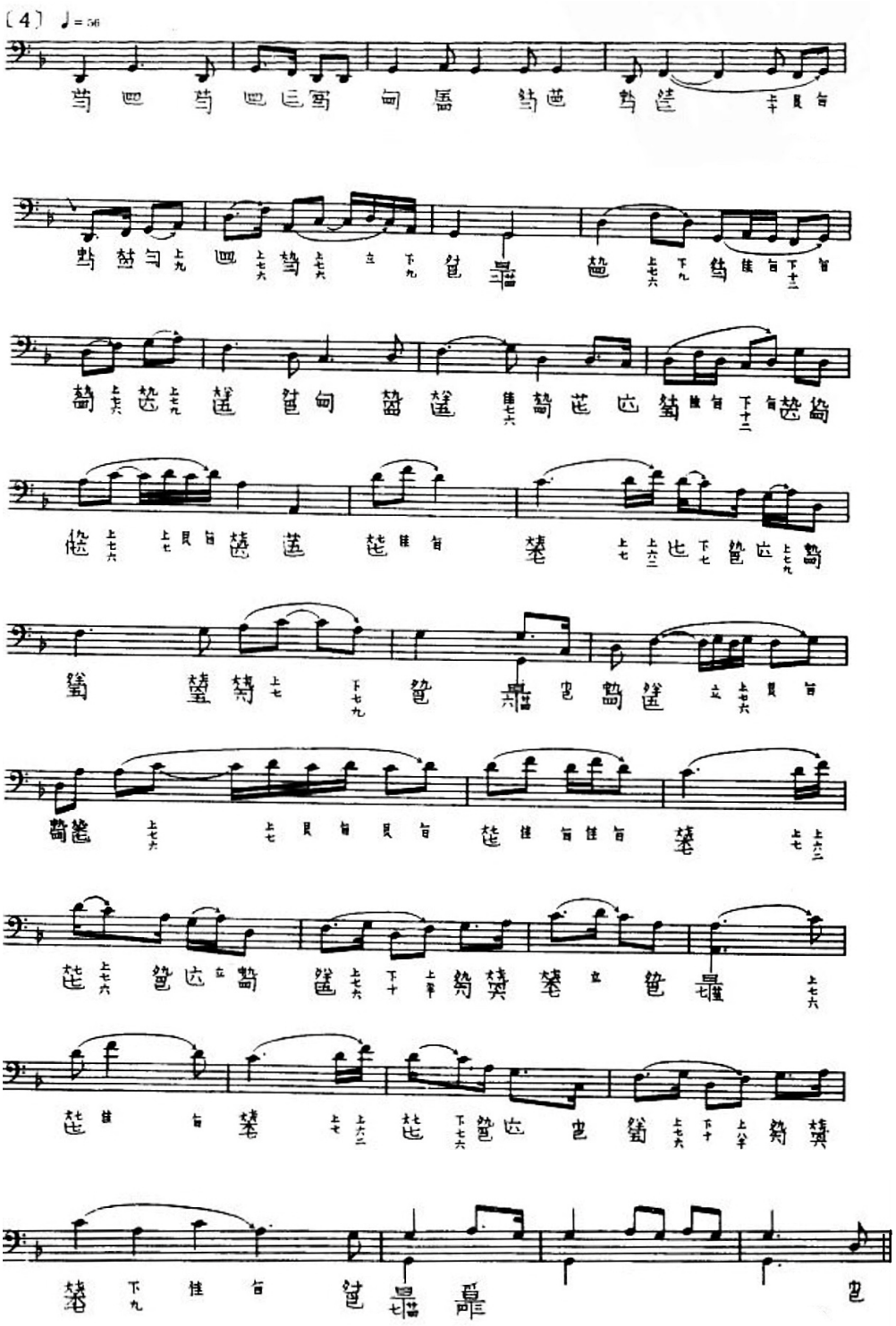

Figure 23. Reduced notation and staff notation of the fourth section of Mao's version[145]

[145] Ibid.

In the third section of Chou's work, he used the thematic material from the sixth section of Mao's version (Figure 24). Similarly as in the first and second section as well as in mm. 57-78 of the third section, Chou used almost the same melody from Mao's work (the rhythm is rarely adopted). However, in mm. 79-121, Chou no longer just simply followed the Qin melody, but adopted some of the materials that from Mao's works, to re-create and develop the music (Figure 25).

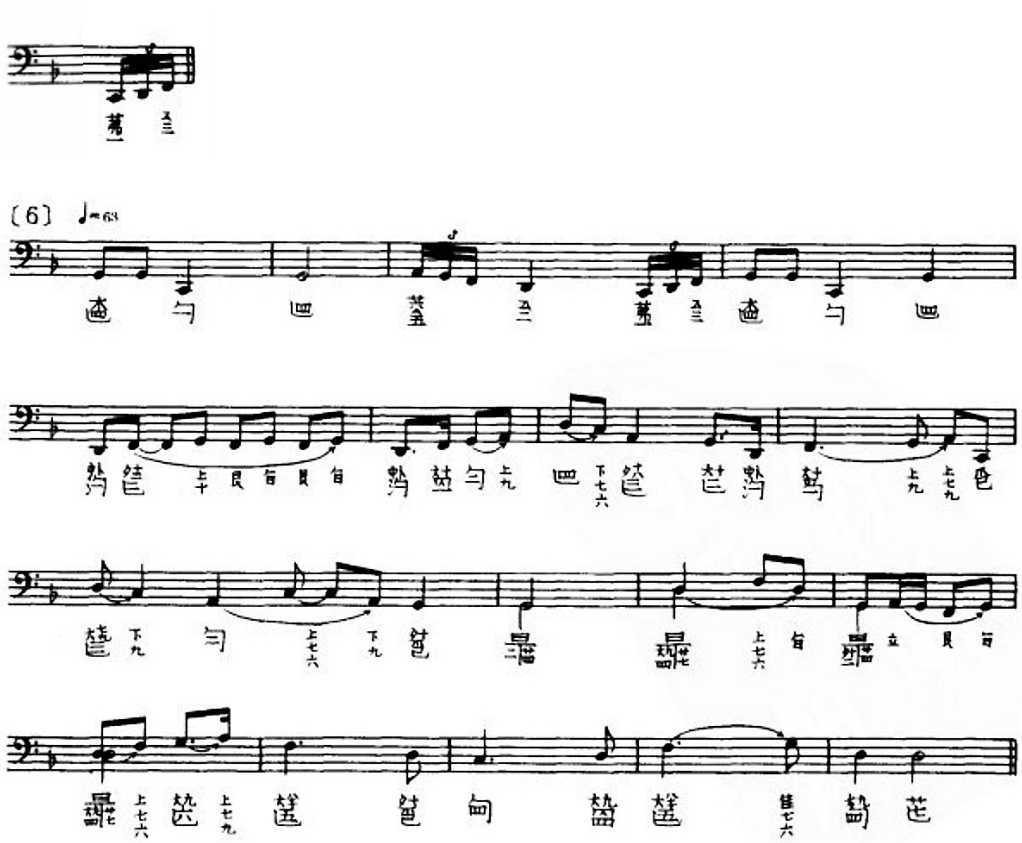

Figure 24. Reduced notation and staff notation of the sixth section of Mao's version[146]

[146] Ibid.

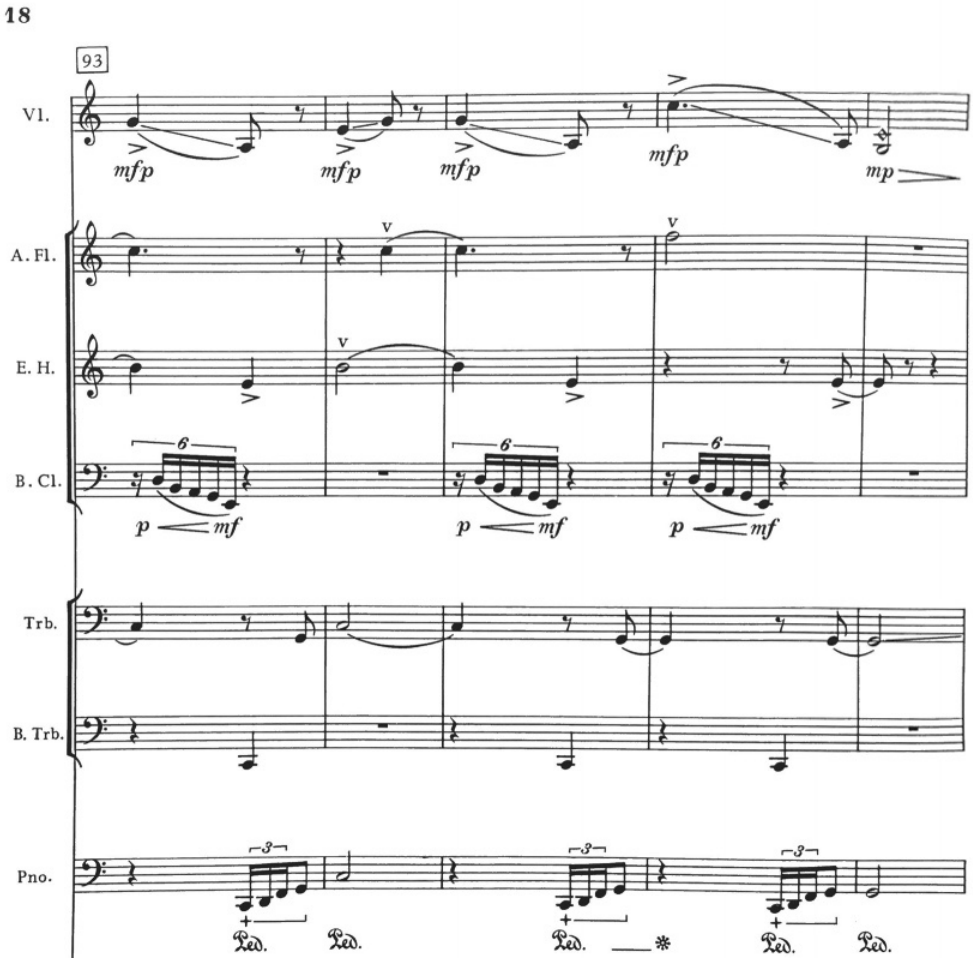

Figure 25. *Yü Ko* mm. 93-97[147]

Chou adopted the sextuplet from eighth section of the Mao's version (Figure 26), used in the clarinet and flute parts to imitate the the "*Gun*滾 and *Fu*拂" fingering in the Qin. The *Gun* fingering requires the fourth finger to pluck the strings outward, and continuously plays several notes. The *Fu* fingering requires to pluck the string inwards by the second finger and play several notes continuously.

In fact, in the original Qin score, there were not a lot of "*Gun* and *Fu*" techniques used, but only a little added to sections 8, 12, and 15. The reason that

[147] Chou Wen-Chung, *Yü Ko*, 18.

Chou reproduced this technique in the work frequently was to highlight this acoustic feature of the Qin. Simultaneously, it can evoke the sound of rowing, especially with the continuation of the music, the way and frequency of the appearance of these sextuplets are also different. From the appearance of a single group at the beginning (Figure 27) to the two groups at the climax (Figure 28), a scene of a fisherman rowing a boat in the river is shown, and he rows faster and faster. The arpeggio played quickly in the high register of the piano (Figure 28) represents the paddle hitting the water with splashes.

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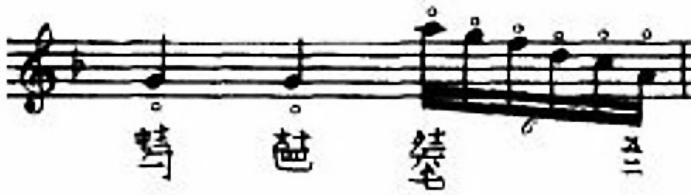

Figure 26. Sextuplet in section eighth of the Mao's version[148]

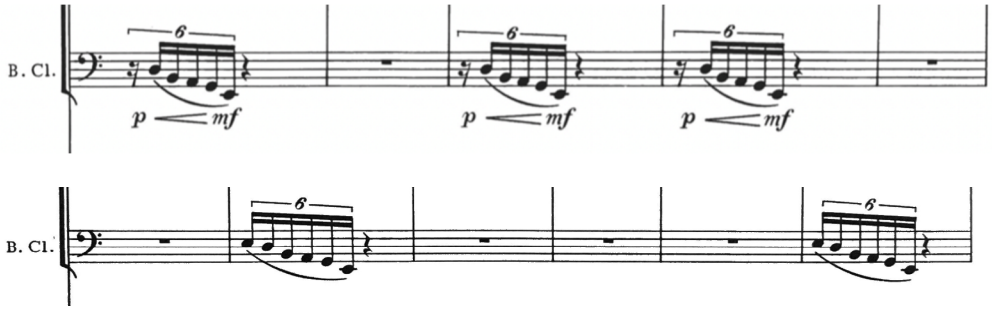

Figure 27. two kinds of sextuplet appear as single group[149]

[148] Min-Zhong Mao, *Yü Ko*, ed. Zha Fu-Xi, http://www.qupu123.com/qiyue/guzhengguqin/p33571.html.

[149] Chou Wen-Chung, *Yü Ko*, 18 and 20.

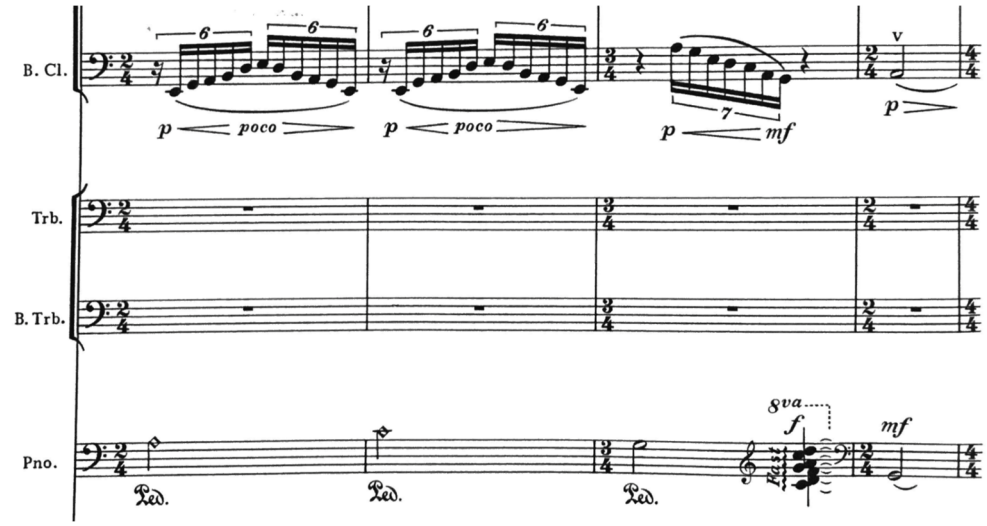

Figure 28. two sextuplets group in one measure[150]

In Chou's version, mm.122-127 of fourth section, he used part of the thematic melody from eighteenth section in Mao's version (Figure 29) and the original thematic material is to be played by the piano. However, in mm.128-132, Chou used the same sextuplet material as in the third section in flute part.

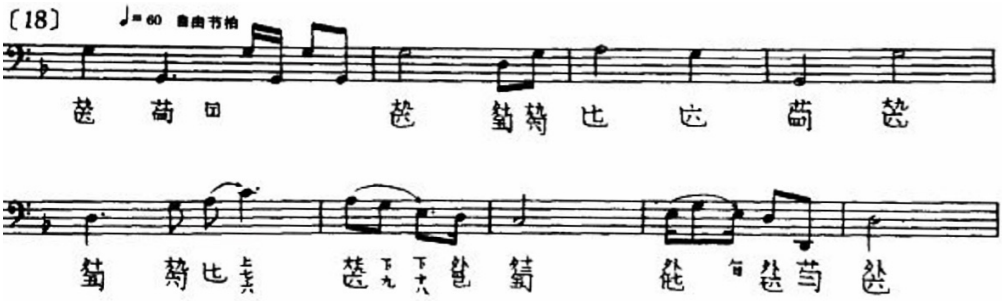

Figure 29. the first half of the eighteenth section in Mao's version[151]

The Coda can be divided into two parts, in mm.133-139 as the first part, using

[150] Ibid., 22.

[151] Min-Zhong Mao, *Yü Ko*, ed. Zha Fu-Xi, http://www.qupu123.com/qiyue/guzhengguqin/p33571.html.

the thematic material of the twelfth section in Mao's version (Figure 30), and imitating *Fan yin* (Harmonics) through specific playing methods in the violin and piano parts. The second part is mm. 140-144, in which Chou fully adopted the coda melody from the coda in Mao's version (Figure 31) with a rearranged rhythm. Chou's imitation of *Fan yin* in the piano part at the end of the work also followed the principle that usually a piece would end the song with *fan yin* in the Qin music.

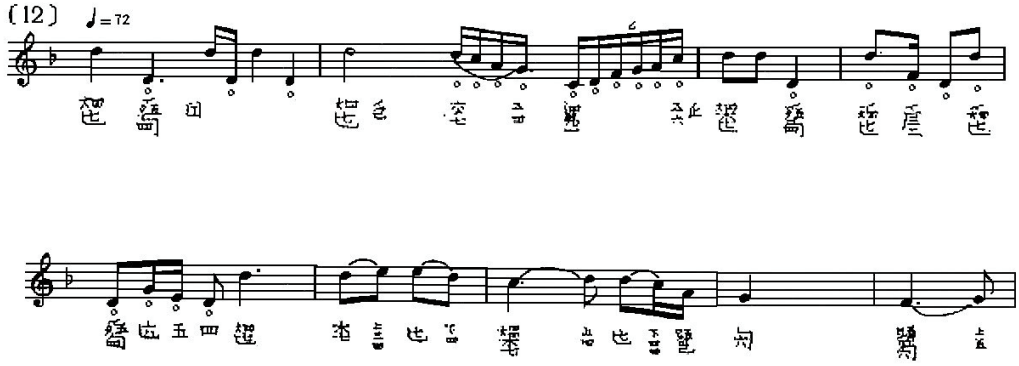

Figure 30. The thematic material that Chou used from the twelfth section in Mao's version[152]

Figure 31. The coda in Mao's version[153]

[152] Ibid.

[153] Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In Chou's *Yü Ko*, the composer conducted thorough research and experimented with the playing and orchestration methods of Western instruments. Based on the Qin's playing techniques and acoustic characteristics, he implemented the concept of the "re-merging" of different musical and cultural elements as the main idea to run through his artistic creation. Through these nine Western instruments, Chou not only imitated the timbre of the Qin, but also generally imitated the color, charm and emotion in Qin music. As Chou clarified:

> "based on the original work, I have magnified… these inflections in pitch, articulation, timbre, dynamics and rhythm to a more perceptible level by expanding the articulations and timbres possible on each instrument used and by controlling the microtonal modifications in pitch according to the nature of each instrument. In terms of the performance method of the Qin and the calligraphy movement, and so on, the works do not focus on the rules, but pay attention to the charm." [154]

Despite living many years in the West and receiving a good education in Western music, Chou was also a Chinese composer. He combined the two - musical thinking on the basis of in-depth research on the tradition and modern music culture of the East and the West. In Chou's works, we can always find his deep expression of Chinese music and Chinese culture, whether it is inspired by Chinese poetry, calligraphy and ink painting, or based upon traditional Chinese music and instruments, or influenced through the I-Ching and traditional Chinese philosophical thoughts. He combined the traditional Chinese cultural aesthetics with Western composition techniques, musical instruments, and the musical concepts of Western composers

[154] Chou Wen-Chung, "Compositions: *Yü Ko,*" Chou Wen-Chung Personal Website, accessed April 2, 2020, https://chouwenchung.org/composition/yu-ko/.

such as Varèse to create his own new musical language. His spirit of exploration and creative ideas have inspired many composers of the younger generation to learn and inherit the traditional Chinese music culture and display the artistic charm in a combination of Chinese and Western musical aesthetics. More importantly, his efforts for the exchange of Chinese and Western music culture cannot be ignored on the music stage.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER OF PERMISSION

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