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Letting musical compositions to relate closely to one selves' national culture is a habit with a long history in Chinese music making. The formation of this habit is done sometimes on purpose, sometimes subconsciously. The Chinese people's feelings toward culture, toward living, toward history as well as interpersonal exchanges influence and permeate compositions by Chinese composers. Whether or not this is done on purpose, the reality of this is very clear. I also deem music to be a human creation. When people write music, it should be for the use of people themselves, and not something else. Therefore, the tight relations between Chinese people composing music and Chinese national culture is completely natural. Admittedly, of course, people have a great variety of feelings, and they accept or understand national cultures differently.

Though I may have it wrong, I think we could put this in another way: Is Chinese composers consider only their own country when composing music? And I reckon the answer is no. Because in my opinion, a true composer is someone who treats one's own culture as a door leading one to enter the world in which all different feelings, cultures and thoughts are embraced. As I am a Chinese, I achieve my goals through my own culture. Canadians, from the west arriving western culture, can also understand Chinese culture, and use Chinese feelings to create their works. I also can with Westerners' feelings. Most of the time, whether you go forward from here or from the West, although the path may be different, our destination is actually the same.

This topic can actually be very big. There is an old Chinese saying called "Mang Ren Mo Xiang" (blind men touching elephant): we in our own culture, no matter how knowledgeable, are limited. Even great philosophers can seem limited as in the story of blind men touching an elephant if we magnify their historical background a thousand times. When we talk about the culture of a music, we have more or less a certain definition in time period. For example, most Western composers' time background is from the rise of professional composers to now.

However, in recent times, I feel human society to be leaving agricultural culture in a process of going into industrial culture. The feelings we have of Tao Yuanming's peach-blossom source out of this world (story of a paradise on earth) and the feelings of in a concrete jungle with machine factories are not the same. Chinese culture has more agricultural culture to it. Western culture has clearly, since the Renaissance, changed its thinking on humanism, life and death. It is not like that of

ancient Greece or ancient Egypt or China. Its thinking has continued, more clearly so in modern times.

Most of the music composition work that we are talking about appeared after the Renaissance and the Industry Revolution. Art is forming in the brain. When we talk about Western art, we are actually not talking about the history before Bach, but the history after Bach of modern avant-garde music continuing a culture from the past. Compared to that of the West, China's cultural trait is influenced by the feudal society for a longer time, with more color of the farmers. In contrast, modern Chinese culture's feeling is deeply influenced by musical compositions since the Renaissance from the West.

I think these two aspects may have more influence now, even more than Western culture. Red Power in China since the Mao era stresses "Gu Wei Jin Yong, Yang Wei Zhong Yong"(Antiquity for present use, Foreignness for China use, which were instructions written in 1964 by Mao on a letter by a student of the Central Conservatory of Music). Regardless of how music in that time was advocated to serve politics, Mao's way of thinking IS the process of combining the West and China. In comparison, because of the dominance of Modern Music, Western composers mostly has been operating in their own culture. Some set their gaze on the East. As a result, Western 72

music has a mix of many different things such as the opera Turandot. Puccini builds the foundation of a musical language on Chinese folk songs. Debussy gains important insights from Gamelan. These composers surpass their own culture and enrich it at the same time. As a Easterner, my process of studying music is to learn to combine cultures. I feel in Western music more logic and rationality. Many composers think music needs these two things, and doubt the artistic values of compositions which do not embody these pursuits.

I am well known in China as a composer of many well-liked pieces. It is not because I am skillful than others in my compositional process, but because the cultural features with which the people can identify are more vivid and numerous in the music, such as my Chun Qiu Pipa Concerto. Chun Qiu may mean to a Westerner literally the seasons of Spring and Autumn, but it is synonymous also with Chinese culture. My understand of this title is different from that of other composers. Explanations given by others that refer to the historical dynasty of the same name, with plots and characters from history, are twisted. I aim not to express the time period, of Confucius and many great others, but to appreciate and eulogize the pride and feeling of Chinese people towards their culture, through the representativeness of that time period and the personalities in it. This concerto has both the character of Eastern music and Western music; it does not call itself an authority on the West just because it uses Sonata Form of the West. The abstract way of the West toward music is not like that of Chinese. The Sonata Form is about a kind of philosophy that if you compose according to it, it is music. However, the most typical Chinese thinking is without any form, which is about natural expressivity, but very close to spiritual communication. As Chinese music is concrete while Western music is abstract, the music of Chun Qiu, by not portray concrete plots or characters and by infusing feelings of that time, is abstract, in accordance to Western music.

This piece of music has in it the poem Luo Shen Fu (Ode to Luo River Goddess) by Cao Zhi (a poet during the Wei-Jin Dynasties). I am so touched by it. I did not know that even the son of a king, Cao Cao, can have this subtle feeling towards the beautiful human feeling. This feeling can represent the romantic side of Chinese people, the hope for love, and the depression after a broken dream. It is analogous to LingBoWeiBu (dainty steps on waves) in both the novel by Jin Yong and the poem by Cao Zhi. Both describe the rich imagination of a beautiful goddess in water. The exchanges between human and goddess in these masterpieces are so outstanding that I want to challenge myself to write these feelings and to make my music reach that realm.

Actually, music could be linked together when you try to write music that has feeling in it, like apple-pear growing out of grafting apple trees and pear trees together. If some music moves me, then I may create some new music on the basis of

the music preceding it, like the soft but gloomy sound of drops awakening feeling in people's heart. Chinese artistic conception comes from three sides: instrumental tone color, intangible feeling, and the melody of music. Such is the feature and uniqueness of Chinese music and culture. In this piece, as the music of descending water grows, it is like a goddess emerging; an equivalent imagery is Debussy's *Sunken Cathedral*, which also begins with a feeling of something ascending from the water. It is not merely a kind of experiment in Eastern music culture; I do not think about that when I compose it. Actually, I get equal influence from the ancient music and from Western music. I, in encompassment of these moving and touching feeling, through my experience and techniques, write this kind of work.

This piece of music is very simple. It is the classical beauty of China. What is Chinese music like? Ancient lyrics translated into another language may not be comprehensible, as poetry from Tang Dynasty and lyrics from Song Dynasty themselves contains tones, scales and accumulated emotions. For example *ChuangQianMingYueGuang* ("bed front bright moon light", first line of a famous poem by Li Bai) has lyric quality because every Chinese character is pronounced with its own tone. Chinese poetic forms determine their music by their words, one tone per character at a time. Why can one know it is Chinese music upon first listening? It is because the rhythm of ancient poetics itself is music.

This theme [singing] has about six beats, featuring regularity in rhythm, like some Chinese classical poems that have five characters per line or seven characters per line. *Qu* (Chinese poetic form), which flourished since 73

Yuan Dynasty, features so-called three sighs per intoning, or in the terminology of Chinese Opera, TuoQiang (melisma) which sequences many pitches out of a single syllable.

This section called ShiShuiZhiShen (goddess who masters water) conforms with the style of ancient Chinese poetic form; its melody bears the distinguishing trait of having one tone per syllable.

This piece of music is influenced by the Western music in terms of its use of variation form as musical structure. There are altogether 10 sections, each with a transition in some specific rhythm but not in a fixed method to buffer the audience into speeding-ups. The variations are in groups. Some like flowing clouds are slower and some like playful water is faster. The faster ones are written longer and slower ones shorter.

The first section expresses the water falling, and the second one tells us about the goddess mastering the river; the third one is about her complexion and her figure as dignified and respectable, and it links to what following with the elegant unfolding of a theme on the flute.

Entering into the LingBoWeiBu (soaring waves slight steps) section, the goddess walks on water. It is more dynamic, revealing a sense of beauty.

LingBoWeiBu is light and flexible footsteps that feels like dragonflies touching the water. The next section GuLangChingYun (drum wave clear sound) is more sumptuous surging of waves. All of these imageries are developed in accordance with the process of the music.

First, I read the poem, understanding its special images, meanings and pictorial aims, for example, LingBoWeiBu as small walk on waves, GuLangChingYun as waves surging, like wind rolling snow. All of these have associations, which are musical images of fairy and water. As you are attracted to visible beauty of imagery, the beauty affect us through images of wind and wave. Music changes. Seeing makes you think. Enter then into the realm of human emotions. Emotions linked to music then make sceneries that touch feelings. As the music climax into cadenza then return to the introduction of GuWangHuaiChou (look back with sorrow), its spirit of emptiness becomes like some unattainable good things in life. The poetry of Cao Zhi originates from his sense of loss, his recollections of his own life.

Often inspiration for creativity comes from indirect life experience. I have not this kind of sense of loss when I compose this piece really, but I think people have sympathetic responses towards sad things. In order to compose music, composers are to use many varieties of emotions. This composition is inspired by a poem, but that does not must I must experience the same events as the poet did. For example, I have not seen LingBoWeiBu before, but you can feel it. The section GuWangHuaiChou not only let you see, as with your own eyes, but also associate

and understand your own life, as you turn around to see your past, your faults, joy and sorrow. This is the effect of art, subliming feelings into Common Sense. To put it simply, it is about people wanting their loved ones to live forever, but that is not to be: the tragic must exist among humans. This is going into the world of common feelings through the door of Chinese culture.

Before the coda of GuWangHuiShou (look back with sorrow), the final section is RenShenDaoShu (different ways of human and deity), in which one walks pass one's fantasy, gradually feeling the separation. I read the relevant passage in the LuoShenFu poem with lament, in awe with the poet's distillation of his life's imperfection, and in complemptation of the implications of this project. People from China and from other countries can both feel how deity and human uniting is like. The pain of LuoShenFu is the denial of that. Our project is the realization of that, through the combining of cultures, for music. This is our fantasy and ideal. Although there are many differences between the understanding of deity in the East and in the West, both East and West can develop themselves through music, and can corporate also to create better music. So, even though differences exist, we can understand each other.

For compositional creative conceptions, we can think deep and discuss with each other for more valuable in-depth understanding, for example, on the simplest questions of why we compose music, and for what we compose music. From the perspective of modern music, the answers can be because of exceedingly traditional

music in the past, or for changes in compositional techniques, or for the demands of Chinese instruments. In the last 20 years, Chinese composers are constantly studying Western modern music, but seldom ancient Pipa pieces. Actually, the soil of language culture influences Chinese people from young to old. What they lack is the means and technique to process musical development. Take, for example, Goddess of Luo River: its inborn quality and its feeling are of China, but its means of composing is Western. Unlike composers in Western countries, Chinese composers have the advantage of their unique culture, one which most Westerners have not gotten to know as clearly yet. The project this time can be regarded as a way for composers to make up for a missed lesson. The infusion of Chinese culture in contemporary composition produces a new artistic force. The effect of this project for composers of both East and West is to concentrate understandings and to fuse other cultures in the world into their own work, which is a continual learning in world history culture.

Chinese are learning Western culture, just like many Westerners are trying to understand the culture of China. That is the purpose of this project: to build a bridge for both Chinese and Westerners and offer chances for them to know each other better. People who are literate should know something about other countries, because there are obstacles in the modern development of Western culture.

I have a score by a famous Canadian composer and his music is very innovative. I am also very familiar with music by modern German composers. The regrettable result of what composers sought in the past is that each individual finds breakthrough in their own culture difficult because all composers are a small part of their cultural soil. For example, after they combine notes into music, contemporary composers seldom consider the effect on more people who need music. That is because they have their own narrow circle, just working hard on their own thing, resulting in all composers in the same circle often doing the same thing. Something being sought is not necessarily something in demand. Although I admire this kind of academic attitude, I think what needs to be solved still requires our facing up to.

For me, regardless of what means I uses to compose, I hope my music to face the requirements of common people's needs for music, with good artistic effect and quality. I have written a piece [XuanHuang] which is both very modern and Chinese. The German composer Helmut Lachenmann, after listening to it, have written me a letter to say that, with respect to addressing both academic and common people's needs with music, he thinks I have done a better job than himself or their avant-garde composers. His words has not made me feel myself to be really that good. I feel his words as an attitude of recognition toward music, in the face of history, in the face of common people, and in the face of modern composers. Professors in music academies often pay more attention to rationality and logic,

rather than in the needs of the mass. I understand this. In teaching, I teach my students not only about how rational this kind of means to musical ends are, but also about how to get better effect and feeling out of music.

As a professor in the music academy, I focus more on reasoning and logic when teaching students. This is the general understanding. However, it is not all like this. There has been many people attend to breaking through the rigidity of rationality. For me personally, creative and pedagogical ideas should be to use the most abstract dogmas to seek the richest music. Of course we need theories to guide our composing work but there are also many things that cannot be achieved by the theories only. It is like we know that $1+1=2$, but many situations are not that. Such situations produce many fundamentals and differences through certain means. The compositional methods of Bethoven, Mozart and Tchaikovsky may be the same, but they produce different music. This changing of specific means is the most important thing that composers should learn.

The first thing we should deal with is language, that is to say, whether the listeners will like it or not. A musical language, with compositional techniques, is musical material.

Every composer is different from others. For me, I am more familiar with musical structure, especially the concept of development of musical language, musical imagery, and musical material. I can use various technical means, since Western music is not only one way of development like Bethoven's, but many various elements like

sonatas and variations. Each work's organizing of material cannot use the same method. In composing, sudden inspirations are involved in decisions. For example, Goddess of Luo River is not planned as variations, but in the process of composing, I gradually feel whether to contrast the change of subject of material through non-stop development, or through something else. I organize it, from a beginning of musical language with individualistic quality, to gradual blending of materials.

The second problem is time. For the success of a piece of music, time is more important than musical language. Most Chinese composers can easily find China-listic stuff; however, it takes only a few seconds to know whether someone is professional or amateur. It is matter of organization of time.

Musical time is, from beginning to end, the handling of when to leave the material already there, when to make something new, when to make a climax, and when to subside emotions. Music is an art of time. Without this art, a piece is just the same melody all the way through, and that is not so good. There must be suitable development and comparison. The length of music and the suitable time to end are to be well decided. New inspirations should integrate, perforate and undertake the passage before.

Each section of Goddess of Luo River is realized upon control of time and some new inspiration, like looking for new clothes that fit. Therefore, in organizing music, what is first and foremost is the making of each new piece of material. Every composer has rational and logical thinking, which is the focus to judge musical material and the ability to control musical material. If the ability is sufficient but the material is insufficient, get help by listening others' works, or by CaiFeng (folk songs collecting).

By that I do not mean doing field work in person. The information age now allows the use of network computer search to laterally come up with solutions. We cannot do CaiFeng by returning to ancient times to find songs.

However, we can be influenced by societal culture and we can habitually read ancient poems. The amazing thing about composers is that philosophers can describe things better than us, but they cannot put things into music, like we do with the appropriately musical notes. Composing music, most importantly, is a kind of awareness.

I think awareness is more about the impression of music at the cultural level. For example, there are many people who have written the theme of Goddess of Luo River before, but they have different awareness, from different eras. Some think of it as is the condition of the country in ancient times, while I think of it as sediments of Chinese culture in ancient time. You can hardly expresses it through language and you know not how to picture it. In fact, meaningful life is around us. You cannot experience it unless you are spiritually aware. For example, so many have been to

the Grand Canyon, but only Ferde Grofe has composed music in its name because he has his own special awareness.

Actually, it is hard to explain the reasoning part and the feeling part in the composing process of a composer. The fast part of the music needs logic, however, this is based on the emotion in return. It is just like the ancient poems, because they are both based on the natural emotion however needs logic to let them be expressed. But in another aspect, the logic and the emotion are linked with each other. However, nowadays, modern composers seem to consider the logic only and neglect the effect of the music. Pure logic is helpful in the study of the music, but not good for the mass to appreciate the music.

For this piece, I do not hesitate in my decisions on making new sections because the piece is easy and abstract, deep in people's heart and without specific programs. Music with a program is actually deeper and more difficult because those with distinctive image are easy to decide upon first appearance. It is like I may not tell your profession just from your appearance, but if you are wearing a uniform, then I can tell easily. So, I think of this material in this piece as belonging to some profession. My composing of it went smoothly since the pursuit is clear. Sometimes, I am frustrated by being unable to determine a definite image because I know not what to compose without a clear pursuit. 76

I am not sure if my understanding is one-sided. Anyway, when I decide to use something as my material, I am more like feeling it and moved by it. Otherwise I cannot make judgments, or I know not what to judge. The difficulty in composing sometimes is having no idea on what to write, and sometimes it is having so many ideas that you do not know what it is, like there are five people in front, one feeling this way and another that way: which one should it be?

Actually, often too many choices means no choice. This is because you do not have your unique understanding of the subject. For example, you are asked to write about a camera. Even though you have listened to many popular music and classical music, you still do not know how to write. This is because you have too many choices, not knowing or unable to judge which is better, thus no way to write better music. So it is important for one to know why are you composing. I've composed a very meaningful piece of music named HouTu (The Deity of Earth), in which I know not why I should write all these modern music. Although there are many ideas come out at that time, I still have no idea which to use. I started with the intent to use all the modern techniques I can handle, but ended up unable to convince myself. And then I think of this title Hou Tu and why use modern techniques on it. One can write about the sea because it makes sounds. However, Hou Tu is land and land doesn't make a sound. If so, what should I write about then? That means I have no idea then. That was when I feel a deepest realization. After a complicated process for a month, I feel I should break through philosophically, that is, having an awareness and understanding myself. I ask myself everyday what land is and what earth is. Then through an accidental opportunity I suddenly realize my concepts in the past are wrong and utterly not solutions to my conceptual problem.

Why is Hou Tu not just called the land? That is because Hou Tu is the land in the mind of ancient people, a subjective notion, not something objective. It does not refer to the real land in nature but the land in the hearts and eyes of ancient people. That is why HuangTian HouTu [cosmic-deity earth-deity] is often spoken of by the people. It is history, living lives and social feeling! I soon finish composing this highly praised piece of music, with this awareness that I have been taking about. So much is in this awareness. Without it, music cannot reach a higher level. So the final breakthrough is in philosophy. The earth here does not mean the land or the sea or the mountains, but it means the Chinese people, Chinese culture and the history that has brought us here.

To be more specific, this has to do with how modern composers and modern culture are in order to face more people. I am able to write that piece, as a scholar and technician, and I find myself unable to accept it, as an audience. Scholars in music academies, however, usually do not pay attention to this. They care about the techniques mostly, but not the reaction of the listeners. This piece turns out to be

very modern, in its sound, in its instruments. Yet, it is also emotional and historical. People can understand it and accept it, without ancient poems or folk music in it.

What I know about this matter is that there are many cultural exchange programs nowadays, between two countries, among composers. This is because every country in this world is not satisfied with just looking at itself and not other countries. In this sense, it is a good thing. We also have this kind of projects with Korea, Japan and Germany before. What we've done before is both similar and different from what we are doing now. For example, in Japan and Korea, composers bring their own works to perform. The project with Japan is bigger; the one with Korea the event lasts longer but it is more limit to academia. More projects are inter-school ones, or for students in the academies. That is to say, the social spheres that they touch are very small, and their influence is limited. A few years ago, we [the Central Conservatory of Music] have invited a few famous German composers to see what smash may result from collocating the oldest East and the purest Austro-Germanic system. In terms of cultural exchange, that project is in common with this project. However, there is also something unique this time. People from China and from Canada doing the same thing, having lived many years in the Western cultural system, are effecting influence in the realm of Canadian compositions; otherwise they would not be doing this project. Their effects are showcased. Their understanding of Chinese Eastern culture are taken by musicians and 77

composers to be a forward-looking perspective in the development of music. This is significant, especially as Canada is so far from China and it is hard for both to have regular culture exchange.

Canada is a relatively far away, and it indeed belongs to culture and system of Europe. We have less contacts due to the inconvenience in communications. I remember being in Canada in 2004. During the six years in between, we seem to not have much cultural exchange. So I hope this project can help us communicate with each other, and hope to see if we can compose some good music together. I believe if we keep at these projects, as time goes by, good effects will result. I thought about writing some avant-garde music for this project. Then, I think I should let people know what Chinese composers are probably like. How are Chinese composers different from Canadian composers? The difference can be seen through their compositions.

Canadian composers are influenced by the Western system and the Chinese composers are influenced by the Chinese system. We are not judging which as better. It is just the difference between two cultures.

As a composer, you can tell just from the score whether it is written by a Western composer or a Chinese composer.

This is very simple and clear. Chinese composers pay more attention to the relation between the element of language and Chinese culture. For example, if a hundred students of yours stand here, you can recognize each of them but I cannot because they are not familiar to me. For me to see these works, I just know it as Chinese when I see it. I have also studied Western music so I can tell what is Western. Chinese music attaches importance to language roots and cultural source, which you can feel by looking at its tune, its tone, and choices of instruments. Of course, a foreigner well studied in Chinese music can also make the distinction. In that case, it is hard to say.

Actually, saying that to be Austro-Germanic may not be accurate. A German composer many not agree with me. The West has traditionally polyphony, harmony, classics and Romanticism. Polyphony emphasizes the correspondence of time. Harmony is the effect of acoustics and sound which includes making tone colors of compositions. These, you know when you see, put less emphasis on creating an ethnic style within two or three tones, but more instead on the combination of tones. We can feel these things.

We can therefore only attribute some music as Chinese according to the basic character of their musical language. The structuring of music is often rooted at the subject of the music and the style that the musical materials themselves possess, which can be Chinese. Without such style or subject, I can still know who someone is. My student gets good results from composition competitions in Europe. They

[judges] might think: is this your student? That is because I know how to hide Chinese things, or how to let European Western music possess Chinese characteristics; that is, where in a time process to make Chinese style appear. Chinese composers often put Chinese style up front, but Western composers can infuse Chinese style into the inside, buried more deeply. This is achievable, like the kind of thinking I put into my nonet entitled XuanHuang (Colors of Sky and Earth) or my duet for one violin. Where to say "listen, this rhythm is like China" is a matter of experience.

The reason why I choose the subject of Goddess of Luo River is very simple. That is, I like the goddess' image, so I compose it to make people feel that image instead of merely a similarity in name. I do not think much about whether to characterize it as modern music or traditional music. If there is one issue I wish to address in this project, it is mutual understanding. Chinese composers have developed themselves a lot, especially during the last five to ten years, to know not just the Western music that arrived China thirty years ago or the twentieth-century-modern music that did since then. In understanding modern music, the amount of information or degree of refinement may not be match that of the West, but in handling information, all the basics are known. In terms of combining and fusing, the Chinese may be even more outstanding. Using techniques of the West to create style is a deepest characteristic of Chinese people: the ability to fuse and combine, like the people from Wenzhou looking at famous brands and making something better than famous brand of others, or Chinese making better airplanes from looking at American ones. The originality of Chinese is often a bit weaker, but the ability to fuse and combine is especially strong, because that is what Chinese has always being doing: integrating and adding 78

up to. China has its own root of five millennia, its own soil, and its own material. If Canadians are to do that kind of adding up, they may not know from whom they are to do so.

I think modern composers should have their own ideals and concepts, even composing music which the entire world do not understand or like is okay. I admire people like that because they are true to themselves, to their ideals, and to art, with a good understanding of art. We should respect that and learn that. Considering this from another perspective, however, if everyone does that, the implication can only be fearful and not beautiful. This world therefore has popular music with stars like Michael Jackson, who are also great and liked by the public. The key is to choose one's own goals. Composers hold their own cultural background in facing the public. Chinese society is very different from that in the West. It has no circle of modern composers, though many modern composers are there, they mostly do not form an academic circle around a school of thought for innovating. In a circle like this, pure academic music often gets not much opportunity. The society at large which Chinese composers face is wider. For example, As a professor of a music academy, I am to respect these music and to study innovations and pioneering with my students, but I am responsible for composing this amount of music today and that amount of music tomorrow in my dealings with many ideologies in Chinese society every time. The idea of composing in China cannot be understood by many composers in other countries. Many who succeed in China accept ideology that is of a societal nature, because projects they invest in are especially many. A local government investing would not let you do something that everyone do not like. You put your ideal in that of the others, with a need to do what is liked by the public and what is with actual return.

That requires you to change yourself, to have the ability to be liked by the public, to become with our government needs. Composing in a process like this, I also realize my own goals. This conceptually is like film composers in America, just making what is not film music. For example, I work on a dance drama named FengZhongShaoNian (Youth in the Wind) that tours the world; the music is very practical. Also, in making Genghis Khan for our academy, I merely apply some techniques that I am good at.

I believe a Canadian composer would like to do a project like this too. Why do many musicians like such projects? Also getting good payments is a very good thing for composers. It is just that many such projects are in China, so there is much experience of that there. Knowledge cannot be said to not exist in such processes. Normal studies in our academy deem these to belong there compositionally, with much unexpected knowledge. In creating images for characters, the reason behind some characters being liked or not is knowledge. Such knowledge is often unseen,

but is methodical. Because I work on things like that a lot, I can quickly find the path through which I should go in every project. This confirmation of what one can do is self-actualization. The dance drama you finish is still a work of art. It is just that it is not something purely inside academia, like *Swan Lake* by Tchaikovsky, which can be taken to be abstract music, but still music that I really respect. Therefore, there are opportunities worthy of your self-actualizations, and worthy of your ceaseless self-improvements. In my composing of music of any different kind, I feel myself to not have changed. I merely gain another hand, another way to doing, at the cost of less pure academic compositions.

This is to put national style deeper rather than on the surface.

Speaking Chinese in Canada is being Chinese on the surface. Being Chinese at a deeper level is speaking English but not forgetting Chinese feelings in your heart, or to wear a Canadian suit while still loving to eat Chinese cuisine. In terms of composition, this kind of style is what successful composers in the West have. The techniques we study are all the same, but each successful composer has one's own style. Greig, Liszt and Chopin are from different countries, but we recognize them as composers growing in Austro-Germanic system their own cultural roots. Look at the development and cadenza sections in Greig's concerto and his clever use of every bit of variation technique to build his national style: by highlighting his style, he weakens dogma-like things.

So, he gets it right, and people feel him to be not like Beethoven. Viewed from the dogmas established from works by Beethoven, Greig's problem is his lack of rigor, but in stylistic and in humanistic terms, he gets ahead. 79

Chopin is really ahead in the textures he gets from his fingerings on piano. To create his mazurka and polonaise styles, his harmonic progressions utilize not the classical I IV V but I II I. His weakening of harmonic functions strengthens his style. Chinese can also put their style very deep, in time, in timbre and in melody. Even as the simplest method is used, we can still hear clearly the music sounding Chinese. After the appearance of this kind of substantial change, many little things may beget even more changes. It is hard to put your finger on all these little changes all at once.

Let us talk about this in both general and in narrow terms. I feel Chinese dogmas to be more ideological for first year university students, and less concerned with the level of practical compositional techniques, like how to write a movement in Sonata Form. The sections named SanJuPo (dissipate, gather, break) in classical Chinese music seldom relate to concrete compositional specifications in writing, such as how a San dissipates or how a Po breaks. This is unlike the specific requirements of fugues, or the clear dogma in sonatas to recapitulate the tonic, a dogma of context in Western music's stronger scientific character. Things like that in Chinese music are fewer, because I cannot possibly just instruct you today on how Chinese music is to be composed. The analysis of each Chinese piece can only say things about every feeling in the music, but not abstract rules or dogmas. Such things, however, are there in Western music, which are what I feel to be a kind of thinking after industrial civilization: the domination of the scientific, the logical, the rational, and within those, the search for feeling and expression of emotion. Without saying early Chinese music as something forward or backward, I see in it the habit of thinking as giving out feelings, without requiring you to pass through certain profession training like in the Western system, a rigorous technical training system; thus its scores are not definite. This is not my judgment of Chinese culture as good or bad; it is an objective description. What you get in touch with more is the acceptance of these feelings and musical language elements. So now, we take dogmas to resolve these issues.

There has been many arguments on this topic. Like, Beethoven's fifth is generally acknowledged to be a summit among symphonies because its every motive has precise origin. But can symphonies progress even further, continuously or disruptively? Because as the music goes, it has been as precise as possible. You can't even create something better than this. And if you can, then you make a great innovation. So you must be not as precise as him. You can be more lyricism. The beginning of his music is very soft and it doesn't sound like a symphony. He tries to be better, however, he must make more efforts than before since he has been so successful. And he didn't follow the rules to compose the music. This is exactly the breaking through I was talking about.

You must be very familiar with the rules, though, since you do not know when it will help you. It does not mean that you cannot try to write a better song than Beethoven just because he is so great. On the contrary, this courage to challenge him is the breaking through I am talking about. You can imitate him first and use his materials. And then you can be better and better. It is just like you have a camera with great condition and it depends on you for how to use it. Maybe you want to have a dim light when you take a picture. That is not a traditional good way to take a photo, however, it can have good effects. That means good technique is not everything. What you learn from it is the most important. I can name a lot of musicians who use the same method with Beethoven to compose a song. However, the music created by them are totally different from each other. This is the same when we talk about the situation Chinese composers. We may have the same way of thinking, but we come out with different music. So it is you who decide how to compose a song, even when you use the same materials with others.

This is my understanding and it may be not so comprehensive. I think composers should not only study the music after the 20th century, but also the music created before. In China, the situation is even more so. And I've noticed that people in western countries care much about the music before. Students may care more about the modern music and this situation should be changed. That is to say we should closely follow the new music and also the music in 200 years ago. We should know the music by the feeling of it, the culture inside it, the technique of it and the form it, with the help of the textbooks. I myself didn't know what is the rational elements in

western music until a few years ago when I were studying the western classical music. I knew only the emotional elements of the music. And then suddenly one day I realized that the rational part of western music is so easy to understand. Isn't the harmony and the polyphony both the expression of ration? The music of Bach is one of the most rational music in the world. And thus Beethoven didn't have that rational parts in his music since he wanted to make some break-through. Let alone the music of Brams, which is also very rational. And then you know how the logic and the emotion work together with each other. It is very important for us to understand this.

So that's why I want to study the music of Brams, since I can understand the relation between logic and emotion by doing this. That means I try to know how he did it, but not the rules in his music. And after that, I gradually create my own style. I couldn't have create my own style without studying his music. That's why I think modern composers should not only study the classical music, which will not benefit their ability. You won't learn anything if you regard him as an idol or a world-class composer only. He has his unique way of composing music. You can find many great composers in China like Li Gaiqi. The String Quartet of his is so well composed and you can see from it that he has a good command of classical music. Thus I think he has made a big break-through. He didn't use only a few simple melody to compose it. Otherwise, the music won't be so amazing.

Dr. Jian-Ping Tang

Jian-Ping Tang (1955-), Director of Composition at the Central Conservatory of Music, is the first musical composition doctorate holder trained entirely in China. He is also a Director of the Chinese Musician Association and the Director of the Composition Committee. In 1970, Tang studied percussion instruments at Jilin Art Academy under the Philippine percussion master musician Santos. In 1978, he began composition study with Professor Zhang Shouming and Huo Cunhui in Shenyang Conservatory of Music. After studies with Professor Su Xia, he graduated with a Master and Doctoral degree from the Central Conservatory of Music in 1980.

Tang is one of the most active and leading composers. He has composed a large number of works and received many awards in China including the distinguished Composer Prize by Beijing Municipal Government. His works are presented in significant music festivals in Germany, Austria, England, France, America, Canada, Japan, Korea, Egypt, Eastern Europe as well as Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan.

Tang has written numerous articles in international music journals in America, Hong Kong and Taiwan. He has attended international conferences, juried of music competitions, gave lectures in music festivals and universities, including America Columbia University, Manhattan Music College, Hong Kong Performance Institute and in Korea and Japan. For two years, he organized modern music festivals entitled

"Friendship between China and Japan" and "Friendship between China and Korea" with great success.81