CHINOISERIE OR CHINESE? CHINESE-INSPIRED PIANO WORKS FROM THE LATE NINETEENTH TO THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY

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INTRODUCTION

Reasons for this Study

From time to time, Eurocentric composers have written works for the piano that allude to China and evoke or recreate the Chinese musical style. Musical references to China started as early as the Baroque period when François Couperin wrote his *Les Chinois* and continued, in our own time, when John Adams wrote his rather well-known *China Gate*. Some of these works, such as Abram Chasins' *Three Chinese Pieces*, gained tremendous popularity on concert stages worldwide in the 1920s and 1930s through performances by such noted pianists as Josef Lhevinne, William Kappell, Shura Cherkassky, Josef Hofmann, and Benno Moiseiwitsch.[1]

Western musical works based on Chinese inspiration have received attention in academic writing, but most of these writings have focused on operatic, symphonic, or vocal works. Puccini's opera *Turandot* and Mahler's song cycle *Das Lied von der Erde* are prime examples of Chinese inspiration in important Western musical works. In *Turandot*, Puccini adapted the famous Chinese folksong *Jasmine Flower*, or *Molihua* (茉莉花), while Mahler based his *Das Lied von der Erde* on ancient Chinese poetry.[2] Chinese inspiration specific to piano compositions has not received attention in academia. Scholarly writing on operatic and vocal works often focuses more on texts, stage settings, and other extra-musical elements.

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[1] Abram Chasins, *Three Chinese Pieces for the Piano* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred, 2013), 3; Manabu Ken Takasawa, "Abram Chasins: A Spokesman for Music" (DMA diss., University of Maryland, 1998), 3, accessed August 2, 2019, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

[2] Julian Budden, "Turandot(ii)," in *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deanne Root, accessed August 9, 2019. http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com; Peter Franklin, "Mahler, Gustav," in *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deanne Root, accessed August 15, 2019, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

The purpose of this essay is to examine selected piano compositions by Eurocentric composers, analyzing stylistic features and elements that are indicative of Chinese inspiration. I will also contextualize the different types of Chinese inspiration by referring to the general phenomenon of Chinese inspiration in Western art music, the understanding of Chinese music in Europe, or lack thereof, and the cultural backgrounds and musical aesthetics of specific composers.

Scope of this Study

In my analyses, I will include piano pieces written by Anton Arensky, Abram Chasins, Bohuslav Martinů, Cyril Scott, and Alexander Tcherepnin (each is a European or American composer). All the pieces that I have chosen were composed between 1890 and 1950 and incorporate musical *chinoiserie*, genuine Chinese musical style, or both.

I had reasons for limiting the timeframe of the compositions that I selected. Piano pieces with Chinese references existed before the late nineteenth century, but most of them evoked the Chinese culture only by means of an exotic title, without adopting any relevant musical features. François Couperin's *Les Chinois* and John Adams' *China Gate*, which I referred to above, constitute two of such examples. On the other hand, the post-1890 works that I select exhibit systematic use of specific gestures, devices, and idioms in evoking or recreating Chinese style. Beginning in the 1910s, Chinese composers in China began to compose piano music in Chinese style. The first known piano composition in China is Zhao Yuanren's (趙元任) *March of Peace*

(和平進行曲), which he composed in 1914.[3] By the 1950s, Chinese composers had produced many piano pieces in the genuine Chinese musical style.

As I explored piano works by Eurocentric composers, I found that piano works between 1890 and 1950 provide enough representative examples for me to illustrate a spectrum of Chinese inspiration.

Objectives of this Essay

This essay will show that Eurocentric composers vary greatly in their understanding and interpretation of Chinese-inspired stylistic elements. My examination of selected piano pieces will reveal a spectrum of Chinese inspiration in Western piano music.

On one end of the spectrum is *chinoiserie*, which refers to the European idea of the Chinese style.[4] Artists did not intend works of *chinoiserie* to authentically reproduce the Chinese style; *chinoiserie* represents the European interpretation of the Chinese style.[5] *Chinoiserie* is the artistic manifestation of how Westerners understand China. In other words, while *chinoiserie* represents a type of Chinese inspiration, it does not necessarily result from actual Chinese influences. A popular style in various forms of European art and architecture, *chinoiserie* is also made manifest through the medium of music. I will illustrate the stylistic elements contributing to Chinese inspiration and identify compositional techniques that make these piano works still European art music at their core.

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[3] Liu Ching-chih 劉靖之, ed., *Zhongguo Xinyinyueshi lun ji* 中國新音樂史論集 [History of New Music in China 1946-76: Collected Essays] (Hong Kong: University of Hong Kong, 1990), 31.
[4] Oliver Impey, *Chinoiserie* (New York: Scribner's, 1971), 9.
[5] Hugh Honour, *Chinoiserie: The Vision of Cathay* (London: John Murray, 1961), 7-8.

On the other end of the spectrum are piano works that assimilate genuine Chinese musical style. Composers of these piano works studied Chinese music, recreated Chinese musical style in pieces written for the piano, and, in one case, acquired a thorough understanding of that style. These composers managed to faithfully reproduce the timbre, texture, tonality, and idiom of Chinese musical style on the piano. I will explain the stylistic features of genuine Chinese music and illustrate how a composer could incorporate such features into compositions for the piano.

I place the above two distinct forms of Chinese inspiration on two ends of a spectrum because musical styles do not normally constitute a dichotomy. Certain composers, having acquired an understanding of genuine Chinese musical style, incorporate it into parts of their works, instead of writing a piece entirely in that style. In this case, the composer uses the style as part of his musical language to write a piece that is a conglomerate of different musical styles the composer has mastered. Chinese style becomes a compositional tool instead of a creative goal.

The objective of such stylistic analyses is to provide the tools for examining any Western musical works with Chinese allusions. Identifying the stylistic features constituting different types of Chinese inspiration will help us analyze and understand whether the composer of a specific piece simply evokes Chinese style without much intention of authenticity or understands and assimilates it into the piece. In the latter case, my analyses in this essay will also help us examine to what extent the composer incorporates Chinese style. We will be able to tell whether the composer recreates the style as a creative goal throughout the entire piece or uses it as a compositional technique that he or she mixes freely with other musical styles.

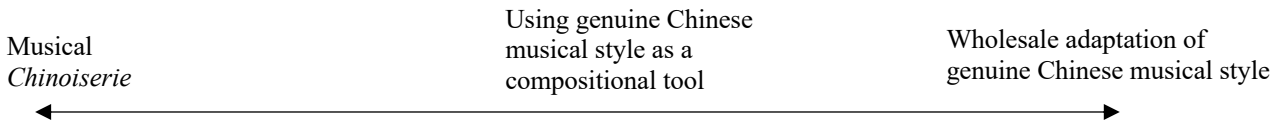

Figure 1. Spectrum of Chinese inspiration in Western musical works

Structure

The first chapter will focus on the phenomenon of *chinoiserie* as a general style in Western art and how Western art music exhibits *chinoiserie*. I will use the piano works of Arensky, Scott, and Chasins to illustrate the style of musical *chinoiserie*. My analysis will show that, while *chinoiserie* pieces evoke the Western imagination of China using certain musical gestures or melodies, composers of such pieces still use European compositional techniques to drive the structure of the pieces.

In the second chapter, I will explain what constitutes genuine Chinese musical style. I will examine the function and significance of pentatonicism in Chinese music. Modulation within the pentatonic paradigm is an important structural and coloristic device in Chinese music. I will use three piano works by Tcherepnin to show how a composer can recreate Chinese style in piano compositions.

In the third chapter, I will show how a composer, having an understanding of genuine Chinese musical style, may not write a work entirely in Chinese style. Instead of recreating the style throughout the entire piece, a composer can use and juxtapose the style with various other musical styles to create a "hybrid" work. Using Bohuslav Martinů's *The Fifth Day of the Fifth Moon* as an example, I will illustrate that such other musical styles can include diatonicism, non-functional harmony, bitonalism, and planing. A conglomerate of such varied styles produces a work of distinct originality.

CHAPTER 1: *CHINOISERIE* AND ITS USE IN WESTERN ART MUSIC

1.1 *Chinoiserie*: the Western Vision of China

Chinoiserie signifies the artistic expression of the Western vision of China.[6] The style began at a time when exchanges between the East and the West were scarce. The notion of Cathay, the old name for China, has existed since the Middle Ages.[7] The few traveling merchants who had the opportunity to go to China returned with products, including silk, porcelain, tea, and lacquer, unknown and fascinating to the Europeans at that time, and tales of what they saw in this fabled land.[8]

The Western fascination with China began to flourish when Marco Polo came back from Asia in 1295 and *The Travels of Marco Polo*, which detailed what he saw and heard in different Asian countries, including China, was published in the early fourteenth century.[9] In the centuries following Polo's visit to China, as merchants and travelers continued to bring Chinese goods and objects of art back to Europe, the European acquisition of Chinese material culture became fashionable. The popularity of Chinese objects in Europe grew to such a point that imports of Chinese objects could not meet European demand. Artists and craftsmen in Europe soon began to make objects evoking products of China as alternatives to Chinese imports. Such evocation of Chinese material culture is known as *chinoiserie*.[10] Interest in Chinese objects reached new

[6] Ibid. The definitions of *chinoiserie* are legion. I adopt Honour's definition because he emphasizes the idea of *chinoiserie* being an "expression" of a European vision. Any creation in the form of art is an expression of the vision of the artist. In the particular case of *chinoiserie*, an artwork represents the expression of a Western artist's vision of China.
[7] Dawn Jacobson, *Chinoiserie* (London: Phaidon, 1993), 10.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid., 12-3; Honour, 12.
[10] Jacobson, 7.

heights of popularity in the eighteenth century. Both objects imported from China and objects inspired by Europeans' imagination of China found a favorable market in Europe.[11]

Artists and craftsmen of *chinoiseries* did not intend to produce imitations of Chinese products. Instead, their works evoked China or Chinese style as Europeans imagined it. *Chinoiserie* is an entirely European style; it is the "European idea of what oriental things were like, or ought to be like."[12] Often, imported objects and travelers' written and spoken accounts served as sources of inspiration for *chinoiserie*.[13]

The intention to evoke instead of to imitate Chinese objects means that authenticity is not the principal concern in the creation of *chinoiserie*. In fact, a wide range of styles from different cultures contributed to *chinoiserie*. To produce works of *chinoiserie*, artists and craftsmen would often mix together different Eastern styles, including Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Persian. They would also mix Eastern styles with such European styles as Rococo, Baroque, and Gothic.[14] Consumers of *chinoiserie* products could not care less about knowing China; all that they wanted was to indulge in their own fantasy about a remote Eastern land.[15]

1.2 *Chinoiserie*, Exoticism, And Orientalism

The use of a mixture of different styles to represent a singular culture and the irrelevance of authenticity are not unique to *chinoiserie*. The charm of *chinoiserie* to the Europeans lies in its evocation of an exotic culture in a remote land; *chinoiserie* objects are "realizations in the West of a land of the imagination."[16] *Chinoiserie*'s evocation of a foreign land echoes the idea

[11] David Porter, *Ideographia: The Chinese Cipher In Early Modern Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 134.
[12] Impey, 9; Jacobson, 7
[13] Impey, 9.
[14] Ibid., 9-10.
[15] Porter, 134-5.
[16] Jacobson, 7.

of exoticism, which Ralph Locke defines as the "evocation of a place, people or social milieu that is (or is perceived or imagined to be) profoundly different from accepted local norms in its attitudes, customs and morals."[17] As Dalhaus puts it, whether the representation of a foreign place or culture in a work of exoticism is genuine is irrelevant; what matters is that such representation departs from the European norm.[18] In fact, we often do not even need to specify a foreign place or culture in European exoticism; the "original ethnic substance" is not the key issue. The key issue is that the exotic work differs, or deviates, from the established European norm.[19]

Both *chinoiserie* and exoticism emphasize a sense of "otherness" because they both signify a departure from the European norm. A third and related concept in European culture which shares the same emphasis on "otherness" is orientalism. Edward Said's seminal work on the topic gives illustrative definitions of orientalism as a field of study and a style. The rather neutral and universally acceptable definition of orientalism refers to the study of "the Orient" or the Eastern world. Even though the use of the term "Orient" carries a negative connotation today due to the Eurocentric nature of the term and its root in European colonialism, the Eastern world remains a field of study in academia in the West.[20]

Another definition of orientalism that Said gives is relevant to our discussion. According to Said, orientalism is

> a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident.' Thus a very large mass of writers, among whom are poets, novelists, philosophers, political theorists, economists, and imperial administrators, have accepted the basic distinction between East and West

[17] Ralph Locke, "Exoticism," in *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deanne Root, accessed December 2, 2018, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.
[18] Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, transl. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 302.
[19] Ibid., 306.
[20] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 2.

> as the starting point for elaborate theories, epics, novels, social descriptions, and political accounts concerning the Orient, its people, customs, 'mind,' destiny, and so on.[21]

Said also points out that the distinction made between the East and the West in his orientalist paradigm exists in a wide array of disciplines, ranging from politics and economics to literature and philosophy.

In discussing the "Orientalist attitude," Said's idea of the "imaginative geography" illustrates the irrelevance of authenticity in representing the East.[22] As he writes,

> Underlying all the different units of Orientalist discourse – by which I mean simply the vocabulary employed whenever the Orient is spoken or written about – is a set of representative figures, or tropes…. In other words, we need not look for correspondence between the language used to depict the Orient and the Orient itself, not so much because the language is inaccurate but because it is not even trying to be accurate. What it is trying to do, as Dante tried to do in the *Inferno*, is at one and the same time to characterize the Orient as alien and to incorporate it schematically on a theatrical stage whose audience, manager, and actors are *for* Europe, and only for Europe. Hence the vacillation between the familiar and the alien[.][23]

Derek Scott comments similarly on the use of orientalist styles in Western music. "In Western music, Orientalist styles have related to previous Orientalist styles rather than to Eastern ethnic practices…. One might ask if it is necessary to know *anything* about Eastern musical practices; for the most part, it seems that only a knowledge of Orientalist signifiers is required."[24]

1.3 Chinese Music in Europe

Another important reason that contributed to viewing Chinese musical style as an exotic "other" was the limited understanding of and appreciation for Chinese music by Europeans.

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[21] Ibid., 2-3.
[22] Ibid., 70.
[23] Ibid., 71-2.
[24] Derek Scott, "Orientalism and Musical Style," *The Musical Quarterly* 82, no.2 (Summer 1998): 309.

At first, Europeans regarded Chinese music with disdain and skepticism. Matteo Ricci was among the first to describe Chinese music that he heard during his stay in China in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In a rehearsal for an occasion to honor Confucius, Ricci saw and heard "bronze bells, basin shaped vessels, some made of stone, with skin over them like drums, stringed instruments like a lute, bone flutes and organs played by blowing into them with the mouth rather than with bellows."[25] Ricci despised the performance of these instruments because they "were all sounded at once, with a result that can be readily imagined, as it was nothing other than a lack of concord, a discord of discords."[26] Furthermore, Ricci was of the opinion that Chinese music had no harmony; it only consisted of a "monotonous rhythmic beat" and is "a discordant jangle."[27]

In his *Description … de l'empire de la Chine et de la Tartarie chinoise* (1735), Jean-Baptiste Du Halde similarly comments that Chinese music was "so imperfect that it hardly deserves the name."[28] Nevertheless, in this same work, Du Halde transcribes five "Airs chinois," three of which are in the major pentatonic mode. He describes the melodies he heard from Chinese monks as containing no semitones, but consisting only of thirds, fifths, and octaves. Du Halde seems to describe Chinese music as triadic, and his description does not accord with our modern knowledge of Chinese music as primarily pentatonic.[29] Jean Jacques Rousseau adopts one of Du Halde's "Air chinois" in his *Dictionnaire de musique* but erroneously includes an F♮ in the melody that was supposed to be in G *Gong* mode, with pitches G, A, B, D, and E.[30]

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[25] Matteo Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci: 1583-1610*, transl. Louis J. Gallagher (New York: Random House, 1953), 336.
[26] Ibid., 335-6.
[27] Ibid., 22.
[28] Jeremy Day-O'Connell, *Pentatonicism from the Eighteenth Century to Debussy* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007), 50.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid. A fuller explanation of this concept appears on pages 47 to 55 of this document.

In "Nouvelles Rêflexions sur le principe sonore," the appendix to his *Code de musique pratique* (1760), Jean-Philippe Rameau recognized pentatonicism in Chinese music and realized that both Western Pythagorean and Chinese music theories were founded upon the generation of scale pitches by perfect fifths. Rameau was the first in Europe to account for the tuning, theory, and practice of Chinese pentatonicism.[31] Abbé Roussier followed up on Rameau's examination of Chinese pentatonicism but differed from Rameau in that, while Rameau believed that the Western and Chinese systems developed independently, Roussier proposed that both Chinese pentatonicism and Western diatonicism found their roots in the twelve-tone scale.[32] Joseph Marie Amiot recognized that the Chinese heptatonic scale uses two "auxiliary" tones and, unlike Roussier, he believed the Chinese system had traveled to and influenced Western music in ancient time.[33] Similar to the opinions of Ricci, Amiot derided the Chinese music that he heard in China as boring and "enormously little advanced" compared to contemporary French music.[34] Throughout the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, while the understanding of Chinese music and the Chinese scales varied greatly in Europe, most Europeans shared a contempt for Chinese music.

Even in the nineteenth century, understanding of and appreciation for Chinese music was far from common. Hector Berlioz admitted that he had little understanding of the Chinese scales.[35] While François-Joseph Fétis discovered the anhemitonic nature of the Chinese scales as their distinguishing feature, he regarded the lack of semitone as a defect because the semitone

[31] Ibid., 50-1.
[32] Ibid., 52.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid., 53.

was necessary for the emotional and modulatory function of music; music without a semitone is monotonous.[36]

Such limited understanding and appreciation for Chinese music throughout the centuries explains how pentatonicism and the evocation of Chinese music entered the realm of exoticism in Western art music. The lack of appreciation made Chinese music a perfect topic for cultural otherness. Also, with limited and often inaccurate knowledge of Chinese music in Europe, any possibly genuine attempt to assimilate the Chinese musical style would be futile. Musical *chinoiserie*, with clichéd gestures and devices alluding to what Europeans perceived as the Chinese style, satisfied the orientalist sensation of Europeans in ways similar to other *chinoiserie* objects.

1.4 *Chinoiserie* in Music

The emphasis on "otherness" and the irrelevance of authenticity common among *chinoiserie*, exoticism, and orientalism apply to our analysis of *chinoiserie* in music. In evoking China in their works, Eurocentric composers of musical *chinoiserie* incorporated musical elements that were not necessarily unique to *chinoiserie*; in fact, generic musical devices of orientalism and exoticism abounded in their works. What is important is the invocation of the sense of "otherness" in musical works by incorporating these musical devices, which suffice as a departure from the European musical language, corresponding to *chinoiserie* in other art forms where *chinoiserie* comprises a mixture of different and dissimilar styles.[37]

In accepting the overlap of elements among *chinoiserie*, exoticism, and orientalism in musical analysis, I find support in Angela Kang's thesis, *Musical Chinoiserie*, where Kang

[36] Ibid., 53-4.
[37] Dahlhaus, 306; Impey, 10.

agrees that academic writings about exoticism and orientalism in music are relevant to the examination of *chinoiserie* in music.[38] Accepting the common ground among *chinoiserie*, exoticism, and orientalism is important not only because such common ground indeed exists, but also because writing on *chinoiserie* in music has been scarce. Most scholars made passing reference to it in music only when discussing exoticism in Western art music, without discussing *chinoiserie* specifically in historical or analytical terms.[39] The abundance of writing about orientalism and exoticism in music forms part of the foundation for my examination of *chinoiserie* in music.

While the line between orientalism and *chinoiserie* is thin, and the two overlap in their evocation of the remote East and share musical devices, the purposes of the two are different. Orientalism evokes the East as opposed to the West. The East encompasses the Middle East, including North Africa, Turkey, Arabia, and Persia, as well as the Far East, including India, China, and Japan.[40] *Chinoiserie* is the Western imagination of China specifically, whether the Eurocentric artist actually knows about China or the cultural or geographical distinction among different Eastern countries.

Kang offered another distinction between orientalism and *chinoiserie* in political terms. She refers to Said's third definition of orientalism as a "Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."[41] In plainer words, orientalism was a historical product of imperialism.[42] China does not fall into this historical paradigm because it "was never a colonialist

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[38] Angela Kang, "Musical Chinoiserie" (PhD thesis, University of Nottingham, 2012), 17-9, accessed September 10, 2018, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
[39] Ibid., 16-7.
[40] Ralph Locke, "Orientalism," in *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deanne Root, accessed December 2, 2018, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.
[41] Said, *Orientalism*, 3.
[42] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), 336.

enterprise, and relations with the West were instead focused around exploration, trade, and eventually immigration to the West."[43]

Therefore, the distinction between musical orientalism and *chinoiserie* lies not in the devices that composers use, but rather in whether the composers are trying to evoke specifically China or the larger Eastern world. The use of common generic musical devices in the evocation of both China and the East conforms to the principle that authenticity is not a concern. A departure from the European musical norm is sufficient.

Since I will focus on *chinoiserie* in piano pieces in this chapter, all the pieces I selected have titles or subtitles that refer specifically to China.

There are two parts to our analysis of a piece of musical *chinoiserie*. First, we need to identify the musical devices that represent the Chinese sound as the Eurocentric composers and the Western audience have imagined. Second, we need to identify the elements that make this piece a work of European art music written exclusively for a Western audience.[44]

The second part is important because to qualify as a work of *chinoiserie*, the work needs to be a departure from the established European musical norm.[45] *Chinoiserie*, orientalism, and exoticism are not wholesale adaptations of the language or traits of another culture to the exclusion of the European norm; as Dahlhaus puts it, they "add a musical dimension to a depiction" of a different land or culture. The norm of European art music should remain central to the piece; otherwise, the piece would be an emulation or even a reproduction of a Chinese musical work instead of a work of *chinoiserie*.

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[43] Kang, 21-2.
[44] An important aspect of *chinoiserie* to understand is that European consumers are the target market of any object of *chinoiserie*; musical *chinoiserie* should, presumably, also cater to the demand of a European audience. See, for example, Porter, 134-5.
[45] Dahlhaus, 302.

One of the distinguishing features of Western art music is its emphasis on harmony.[46] The norm of Western art music, within the pieces I have selected, is the use of harmony and European tonality as the structural backbone and driving force of each work. The majority of these pieces use functional harmony and diatonicism as the fundamental musical language; even when a piece belongs to the realm of pantonality at the dawn of modernism, the composer still uses harmony to define and drive the structure of the piece. In all these works, composers incorporated *chinoiserie* devices only as ornamentations on the surface level to signify a departure from the European musical norm.

To identify the musical devices that represent the Chinese sound as the Eurocentric composers and the Western audience have imagined, I have compiled a list of musical devices that composers used in evoking a Chinese sound, following those devices that Kang and Axford provide in their writings.[47] To facilitate my analyses of the selected pieces, I have categorized these devices according to their influences on melody, tonality, harmony, rhythm, and timbre.

<u>Melody and motif:</u>

Thin-textured line
Melodic development evoking color and delicacy
Repetitive ostinato figures
Cyclical repetition of pentatonic motifs
Arabesques and excessive ornamentation

<u>Tonality:</u>

Atonality
Bitonality and polytonality

<u>Scales and Modality</u>

Pentatonic scales and influences

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[46] Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne, *Tonal Harmony: With an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), ix.
[47] Kang, 32-3; Elizabeth Axford, *Traditional World Music Influences in Contemporary Solo Piano Literature: a Selected Bibliographic Survey and Review* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1997), 71-3.

Whole-tone scale
Modal passages
Chromatic scales
The use of only white keys

Harmony and Counterpoint:

Dissonance
Parallel fourths and fifths
Quartal and quintal harmonies
Non-tonal harmonization
Half-step exploitation

Rhythm:

Cross-rhythm, especially 3:2

Timbre:

Soft sound
Use of long pedals to produce special timbres
Chime-like chords
Imitation of the sound of the cymbals and gong
Drones

1.4.1 Anton Arensky: *Etude (on a Chinese Theme)*, opus 25, number 3

Anton Arensky wrote this *Etude (on a Chinese Theme)* as the third of his *Four Pieces*, opus 25, in the 1890s.[48] The piece is in ternary form with a coda. Arensky wrote the A and A' sections in Common-Practice Period tonal harmony, with many chromatic notes adding coloristic effects to the harmonies. Such rich chromaticism is typical of European art music in the late nineteenth century. Arensky did not allude to anything Chinese in the A and A' sections.

[48] Jacqueline Waeber-Diaz, program notes to Jenny Lin, *Chinoiserie*, recorded February 4-6, 2000, Grammofon AB BIS CD-1110, 2000, CD, 5; David Brown, "Arensky, Anton [Antony] Stepanovich," in *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deanne Root, accessed July 16, 2019, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.

Arensky gave the B section the subtitle *Thême chinois.* The Chinese theme he incorporated is "Jasmine Flower," or *Molihua* (茉莉花), an extremely popular pentatonic tune in China known to all households and people of all ages.[49]

Table 1. Structure of Arensky's *Etude*, Op.25, No.3

Section	A	B	A'	Coda
Measure	1-49	50-89	90-136	137-183
Tonality	G♭ major (ending in B♭ minor in measure 49)	B♭ major	G♭ major	G♭ major
Chinese Feature	None	Use of Chinese tune *Molihua* throughout in the key of B♭ major	None	Use of Chinese tune *Molihua* in measures 137-158 in the key of G♭ major

[49] Frederick Lau, "'Molihua': Culture and Meaning of China's Most Well-Traveled Folksong," in *Traveling Musics in Hawai'i, Asia, and the Pacific*, ed. Frederick Lau and Christine R. Yano (Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018), 82.

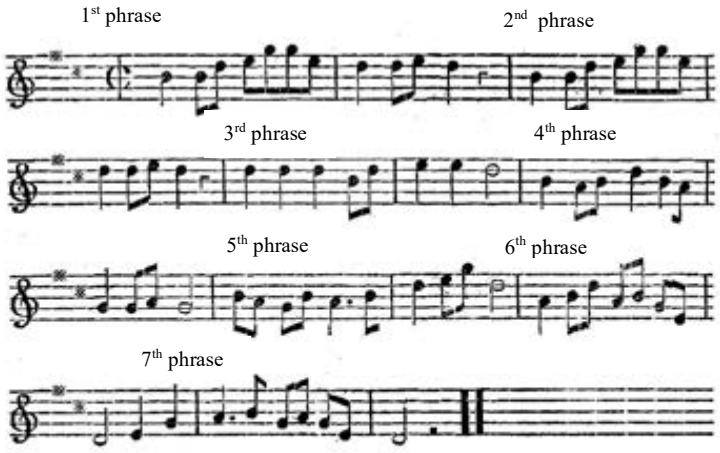

Figure 2. The Tune of *Molihua*[50]

Arensky adopted the *Molihua* theme in the left-hand part and harmonized the theme with traditional functional harmonies. The right hand provides the accompaniment in rapid sixteenth-note triplets. If we look only at the right-hand triplets in measures 50 to 57, they appear to be pentatonic, with the pitches B♭, C, D, F, and G. However, if we look at the entire B section and examine the right-hand triplets in the context of the tune and chords in the left hand, we will see that the triplets form triadic harmonies that are in conformity with the harmonies in the left hand.

[50] John Barrow, *Travels in China: Containing Descriptions, Observations, and Comparisons, Made and Collected in the Course of a Short Residence at the Imperial Palace of Yuen-Min-Yuen, and on a Subsequent Journey Through the Country from Pekin to Canton* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davis, 1806), 316.

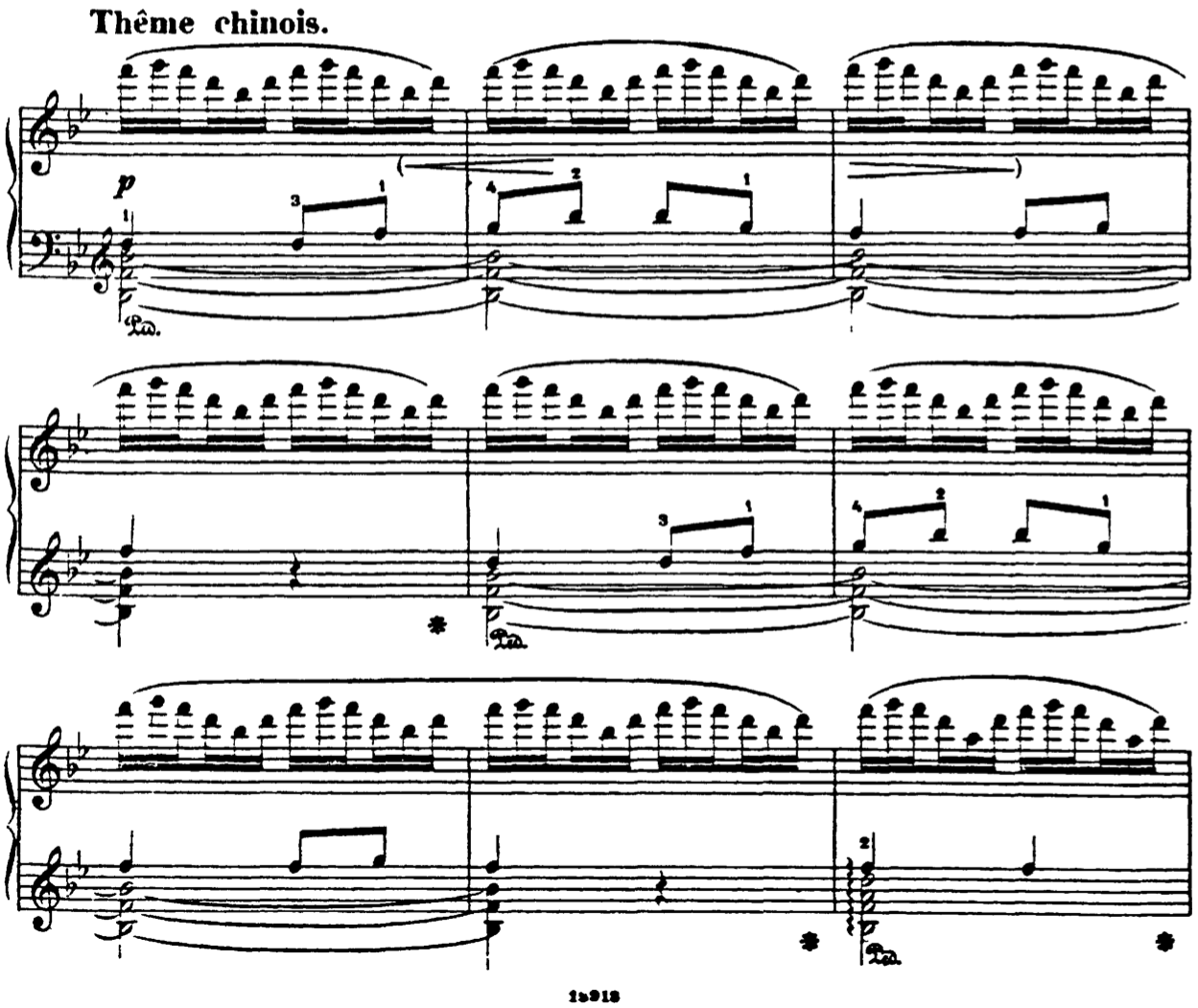

Figure 3. Excerpt of Arensky's *Etude*, Op.25, No.3, measures 50 to 58[51]

The harmonic progression of the B section conforms to the paradigm of the functional hierarchy of harmony in the Common Practice Period. Under the functional hierarchy of harmony, each harmony serves a structural function in a piece of music. The tonic serves as the "ultimate harmonic goal" as well as the "goal of many of the formal subdivisions" of a piece.[52] Composers often end a piece with the tonic harmony to assert its structural primacy. The

[51] Anton Arensky, *4 Morceaux, Op.25* (Moscow: P. Jurgenson, 1893), accessed March 8, 2019, http://conquest.imslp.info/files/imglnks/usimg/9/90/IMSLP02722-Arensky_op25.pdf.
[52] Kostka and Payne, 102.

dominant is the other important harmony, which often precedes the tonic to form an authentic cadence that marks the end of a piece or a section of a piece.[53] The tonic and dominant harmonies form the two major poles that control the structure of music. Harmonies other than the tonic and the dominant serve supportive roles in controlling the structure of music. The circle-of-fifth progression determines their respective roles. The supertonic harmony normally progresses to the dominant; the submediant often precedes the supertonic. The mediant harmony, which shows up occasionally and, when it does, usually in the minor mode, comes before the submediant. The leading-tone harmony sometimes shares the dominant function and resolves to the tonic as a substitute of the dominant harmony. The subdominant harmony sometimes replaces the dominant in preceding the tonic, thereby forming a plagal cadence which, similar to the authentic cadence, signifies the end of a piece or a section of a piece. Subdominant can also either substitute for or precede supertonic and progresses to dominant.[54] The use of chromatic tones produces harmonies outside of the key which the harmonies are in. Such chromatic harmonies are either ornamental or serve a secondary function: they tonicize a key other than the original key. Harmonies with secondary functions are often secondary dominant or leading-tone harmonies.[55]

In this *Thême chinois* section, the harmonies are mostly tonic, subdominant, and dominant. Authentic and plagal cadences always mark the end of the phrases of the tune, turning an originally Chinese tune into the vehicle for a typical harmonic progression of European art music. The entire B section is in B♭ major.

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[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid., 103-8.
[55] Ibid., 245-6.

Among the right-hand triplets, the highest note in each measure is invariably an upper auxiliary note and does not form part of the harmony. While the bass of the chords stays at B♭ throughout the section, B♭ does not always form part of the harmony; when it does not, it functions as a pedal point in tonic. Examples would be when the harmony is a dominant, such as measure 63 and the second half of 67.

We can trace a counter-melody within the chords under the melody in the left hand from measures 50 to 65, starting with the B♭ in measures 50 to 57, going to A in measure 58, A♭ in measure 59, G in measure 60, F in measure 61, E♭ in measures 62 and 63, and D in measure 64 and 65. Having an inner melody within a harmonic progression in addition to an overt melody is a common compositional device in Western art music.

An implication of this secondary line is that, viewed within the context of the harmonic progression, measure 58 serves as a passing harmony that connects the tonic in measures 50 to 57 and the dominant seventh of subdominant in measure 59, which consists of B♭, D, F, and A♭.

Table 2. Harmonic progression of Arensky's *Etude*, Op.25, No.3, measures 50 to 65

Measures	50-57	58	59	60	61	62-63	64-65
Harmonies	I	Passing	V7/IV	vi	I	V7 (with a 4-3 suspension)	I
						Authentic Cadence	

Table 3. Harmonic progression of Arensky's *Etude*, Op.25, No.3, measures 66 to 87

Measures	66	67	68-69	70-71	72-73	74-75	76-77	78-87
Harmonies	I	IV-V7	I	IV	I	IV	I	I
		Authentic Cadence		Plagal Cadence		Plagal Cadence		

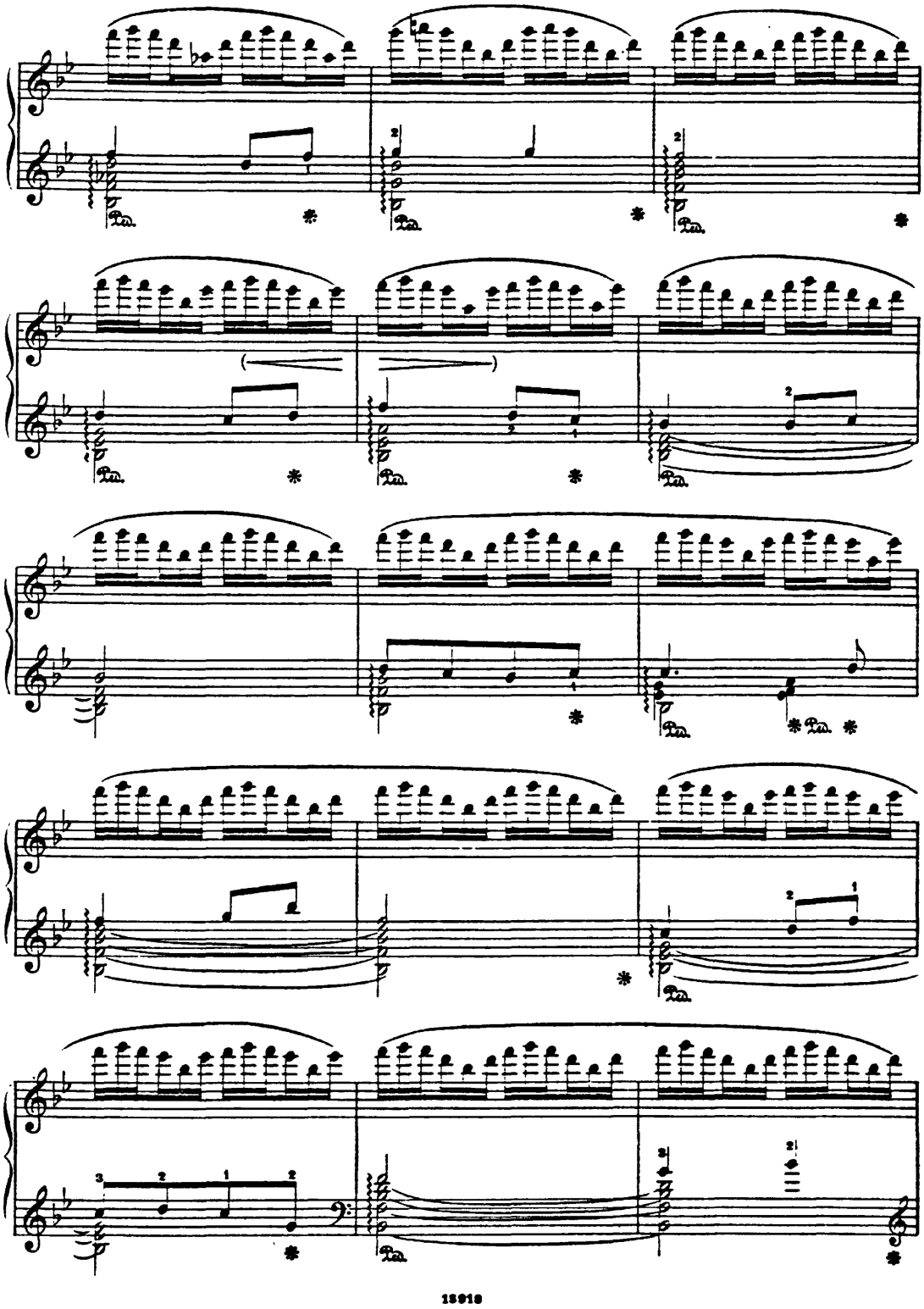

Figure 4. Excerpt of Arensky's *Etude*, Op.25, No.3, measures 59 to 73[56]

[56] Arensky.

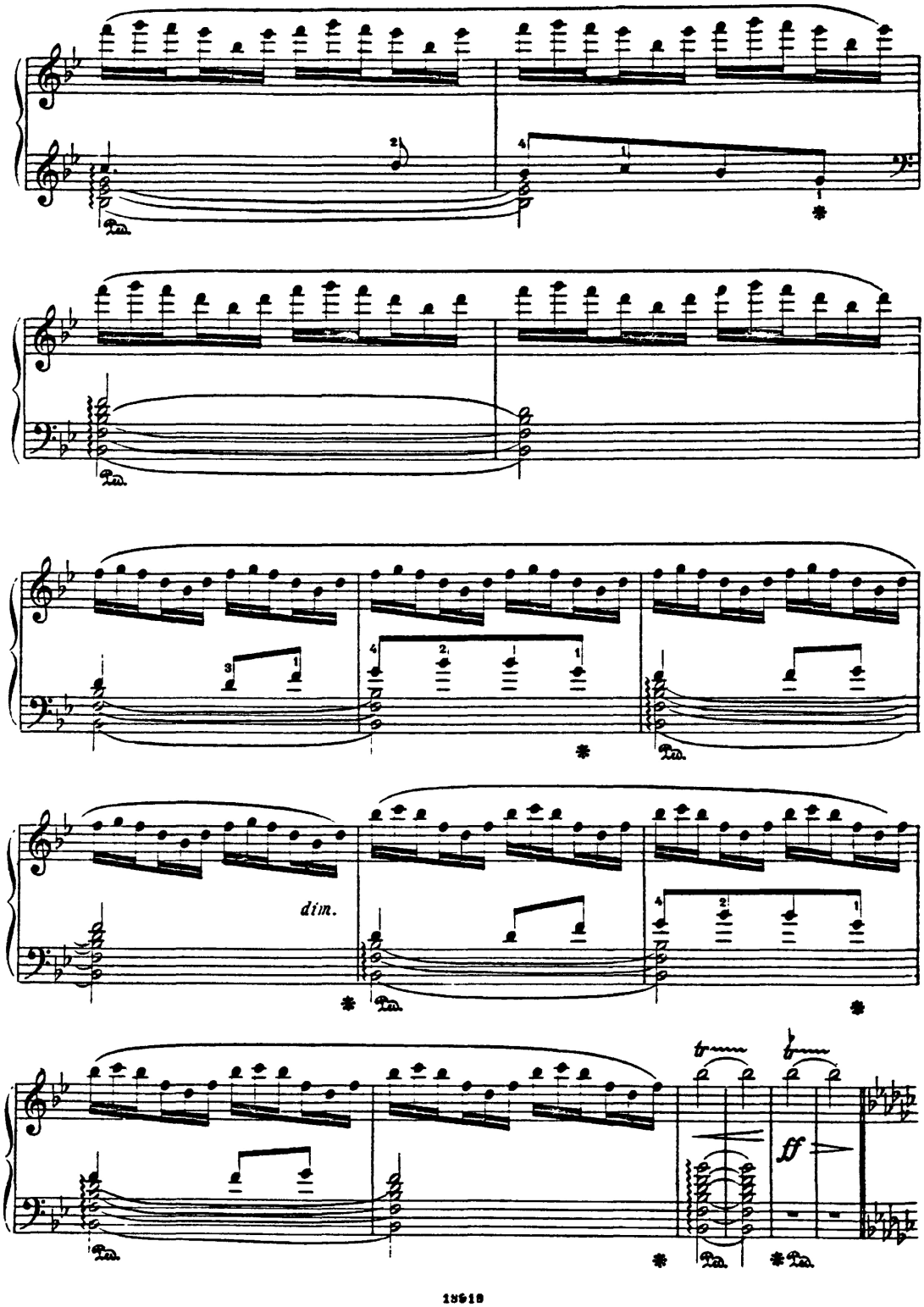

Figure 5. Excerpt of Arensky's *Etude*, Op.25, No.3, measures 74 to 89[57]

[57] Ibid.

Table 2 indicates the harmonic progression of the *Thême chinois* section. Arensky harmonizes the first two phrases in measures 50 to 57 entirely with the tonic. He uses authentic cadences to end the fourth phrase in measures 62 to 65 (V7-1) and the fifth phrase in measures 66 to 69 (I-IV-V7-I.) He uses plagal cadences to end the sixth phrase in measures 70 to 73 (IV-I) and the seventh phrase in measures 74 to 77 (IV-I). The primacy of the tonic, and the use of the opposing polarity of the tonic and the dominant or the subdominant by dividing the phrases with the authentic and the plagal cadences, show that the harmonic language of the *Thême chinois* section conforms to the paradigm of the functional hierarchy of harmony in the Common Practice Period.

The first half of *Thême chinois* returns at the beginning of the coda, this time in the home key G♭ major. The texture and harmonic progression remain identical, despite being in a different key. The only difference is that the tune ends on the dominant in measure 158, before resolving to tonic in the following *Più vivo* section that completes the music. The use of an authentic cadence to create a sense of finality towards the end of a piece again falls within the paradigm of the functional hierarchy of harmony.

Arensky creates a different sound world to distinguish the *Thême chinois* materials from the rest of the piece. In the A and A' sections, the dynamic levels stay between *mezzo forte* and *fortississimo* for the most part; the *Thême chinois* sections stay within *piano*. Both the tune of *Molihua* in the left hand and the triplets in the right hand remain in the higher register on the piano; with a very soft sound, the materials evoke the sound of chimes. The texture is also considerably thinner. All these contribute to a very soft and sonorous timbre in the *Thême chinois* section and are clichéd devices for musical *chinoiserie*. Moving from the loud A section

to the soft and contrasting sound world in the *Thême chinois* section also evokes the imagination of traveling to a different world.

The harmonization of a traditional Chinese pentatonic melody using progressions and cadences of the Common Practice Period shows Arensky's attempt to mix the European and Chinese styles, similar to what artists and craftsmen would do in other *chinoiserie* art forms. The pentatonic melody and distinctive timbre, together with the subtitle *Thême chinois*, evoke the remote land of China while still adhering to European musical norms. The fundamental aesthetic of this piece is still that of European music, with functional harmonies and diatonicism forming the structural backbone of the piece.

Molihua as China's Cultural Icon

Arensky's adaptation of *Molihua* in his *Etude* gives us a glimpse into the possible significance of incorporating a foreign cultural icon in a work of art. We can contextualize Arensky's use of *Molihua* by examining the history of this Chinese song and the journey that it took to travel to the Western world.

Molihua, or "Jasmine Flower," is a Chinese folksong that has traveled far and wide both within and outside China. While scholars have not traced a definite origin of *Molihua*, we know that it is a folksong of the Han Chinese and first appeared in East Central China sometime in the *Qing* dynasty (1644-1911), the last imperial dynasty in Chinese history. The song gained such popularity that most Chinese people have heard its title and its tune.[58] The popularity of *Molihua* spread to other regions throughout China and received modifications to adapt to the musical styles of specific regions.[59] Due to its association with the Han Chinese, the cultural majority in

[58] Lau, 84.
[59] Ibid., 84-5.

China even during the *Qing* dynasty when the Manchus ruled China, *Molihua* became a national icon, which the Han Chinese used to uphold their ethnic dominance.[60]

Molihua appeared in score in Europe when John Barrow published his *Travels in China* in London in 1804. Barrow was an assistant to George Macartney, a diplomat whom the British empire appointed to visit China in 1792 to promote trade with the Chinese government.[61] *Travels in China* contains descriptions of what Barrow witnessed during this trip. He denigrated the Chinese music that he heard in China. He thought that it consisted of "the intenseness of the noise brought out of the different instruments" and did not find any of the Chinese instruments "tolerable to a European ear."[62] Nevertheless, Barrow recognized the tune of *Molihua* as "one of the most popular songs in the whole country."[63] He included the music and text of the first stanza in his *Travels in China*, with the words in both transliterated and translated forms, thus providing the tune and words in written form for the first time in the Western world. The publication of *Molihua* enabled its dissemination and, in time, led to its rise in popularity in countries outside China. *Molihua* came to the peak of its international recognition when Puccini adapted it in *Turandot* in 1926, because *Turandot* remains in the core of opera repertoire to this day.[64]

With *Molihua*'s dissemination in Europe through Barrow's publication, it is not surprising that Europeans would become aware of the song's cultural significance during the nineteenth century. *Molihua*'s iconic importance received its official affirmation when Chinese officials in Europe used it as China's temporary national anthem in 1896.[65] Therefore, an

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[60] Ibid., 85.
[61] Ibid., 86.
[62] Ibid., 87.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Budden.
[65] Lau, 90.

adaptation of *Molihua* in a work by a Western composer, as Arensky did in this *Etude*, carries a cultural meaning more significant than a simple allusion to the Eastern world; when a composer adapts *Molihua*, he or she is adapting the most important Chinese musical icon.

Conclusion

From a compositional point of view, Arensky did little in his musical language to evoke China beyond incorporating the melody of *Molihua* and creating a soft and sonorous timbre in *Thême chinois*, thereby making the *Etude* blatant *chinoiserie*. Nevertheless, Arensky chose a melody that was among the most popular in China and, more importantly, the most iconic in its representation of the culture from a European point of view in the 1890s.[66] While Arensky did not provide written reasons for choosing this melody, or the popularity of *Molihua* in Russia at that time, one could reasonably speculate that he chose the song because of its iconic value. Future research may cast light on Arensky's intention in incorporating *Molihua* in his work and its perception and popularity in Russia during the late nineteenth century.

1.4.2 Cyril Scott: *Lotusland*

The English composer Cyril Scott (1879-1970) composed *Lotusland* (1905) early in his compositional career.[67] In Scott's own words, he was thinking of "nothing more pretentious than to compose a piano piece with an Eastern flavor" when writing the work.[68] He admitted that "when Europeans write 'Chinese' music, we write music which sounds Chinese, but which is no

[66] Waeber-Diaz, 5.
[67] Sarah Collins, *The Aesthetic Life of Cyril Scott* (Suffolk, United Kingdom: Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 193, accessed July 18, 2019, JSTOR.
[68] Cyril Scott, "Musicality: V," *The Sackbut* (July 1928): 375, accessed July 18, 2019, ProQuest British Periodicals.

more Chinese in reality than we ourselves are. If it were, it would probably be unbearable."[69] Scott never traveled to any Eastern countries and did not hear much Eastern music.[70] He regarded his own works with "faux-Eastern titles" simply as "musical curiosities" that were fashionable for his time and did not intend his works to represent Eastern cultures with any authenticity.[71] In addition to *Lotusland*, Scott composed many other works with titles evoking the Eastern world in his early years, such as "Chinese Serenade," "A Song from the East," "Eastern Lament," "Soirée japonaise," and "Danse orientale."[72] With such works, the composer sought to satisfy the huge demand for anything "oriental" in Britain in the early twentieth century.[73]

While no written records account for the origin of the title *Lotusland*, the lotus has a significant symbolic meaning in Chinese culture. The lotus is a symbol of purity and perfection because its flower has to rise out of the mud in order to bloom.[74] Metaphorically, the lotus represents the ancient Chinese gentlemen living a life of integrity and modesty, resisting the trends of corruption common among the government officials, which the mud denotes. These Chinese gentlemen constantly praised the lotus in their poetry and prose as a means to assert themselves as individuals of integrity.[75] In addition, the lotus is an important symbol in Buddhism. The flower is the throne for the Buddha and is one of the "Eight Auspicious Symbols" of Buddhism.[76] Iconography often depicts the Buddha sitting on a lotus flower.

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[69] Collins, 196.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Ibid., 6.
[72] Ibid., 193-4.
[73] Ibid., 194.
[74] The symbolic significance of the lotus is unequivocal in Chinese culture. For English references, see, for example, British Museum's website: https://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/Chinese_symbols_1109.pdf, accessed July 18, 2019.
[75] For English references, see, for example, *The Lotus Flower in Chinese Culture*, https://antiquities.co.uk/blog/imagery-symbolism/the-lotus-flower-in-chinese-culture/, accessed July 18, 2019.
[76] Ibid.

Scott's pre-World War I compositions were in the language of the "new harmony" that departed from the Common-Practice Period diatonicism and functional harmony and put him in the camp of modernist composers.[77] Scott acquired the nickname the "English Debussy" for his use of harmonies that were unusual during his time and reminded people of the harmonies of Debussy.[78] Nevertheless, while Scott met Debussy during the years preceding the First World War, their relationship was one of acquaintance rather than discipleship; Scott developed his harmonic language through his own discoveries instead of imitating the older composer.[79] In fact, in his autobiography, Scott recalled asking Debussy if he saw any resemblance between their music, and Debussy's "answer was unequivocally in the negative."[80]

Debussy would put chords in unrelated keys next to one another; while one note or two in these chords would remain unchanged, most of the other notes would move, often by a half step, to create harmonic motion. Even though music with this harmonic language lacks the typical tonic-dominant polarity in diatonic music, we can still expect one of the harmonies to serve as the "home sonority" to which the music will return eventually.[81]

Scott used a similar harmonic language in much of *Lotusland*. The complex and unusual harmonies result in rich coloristic effects and suggest an "esoteric atmosphere" that is common in Scott's early mature works.[82] However, a closer examination of *Lotusland* reveals that Scott used his unusual harmonies for more than coloristic effects; instead, the work is harmonically

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[77] Richard Price, "Cyril Scott, Debussy and Stravinsky," in *The Cyril Scott Companion: Unity in Diversity*, ed. Desmond Scott, Lewis Foreman, and Leslie De'Ath (Suffolk, United Kingdom: Boydell & Brewer, 2013), 39, accessed July 18, 2019, JSTOR.
[78] Ibid., 43.
[79] Ibid., 39-41; Collins, 83.
[80] Cyril Scott, *My Years of Indiscretion* (London: Mills and Boon, 1924), 103.
[81] Price, 41.
[82] Ibid., 44.

conceived and harmony drives the structure of the entire work. Among the many unusual harmonies, one of them served as the "home sonority," as the following analysis will reveal.

Lotusland is in ternary form (ABA'), with a short introduction, a retransition between the B section and the A' section, and a coda. Scott demarcates the sections of this piece clearly. Both the harmony and the use of *chinoiserie* devices contribute to the delineation of this structure.

Table 4. Structure of Scott's *Lotusland*

Section	Introduction	A	B	Retransition	A'	Coda
Measures	1-2	3-17	18-35	36-43	44-60	61-67

<u>Harmony and the use of harmony in delineating structure</u>

In measures 1 to 17, all the chords share the same bass note E♭ or D♯. Scott asserts E♭/D♯ in the low register at the beginning of every measure. In re-voicing the chords so that they appear in close positions, with E♭/D♯ as the bass, I discovered that measures 1 to 17 consist of four different harmonies:

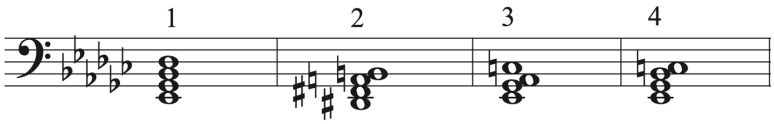

Figure 6. The four basic harmonies Scott used in *Lotusland*, measures 1 to 17

I have designated numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 to the four harmonies as indicated in Figure 6. The harmonic progression of measures 1 to 17 follows:

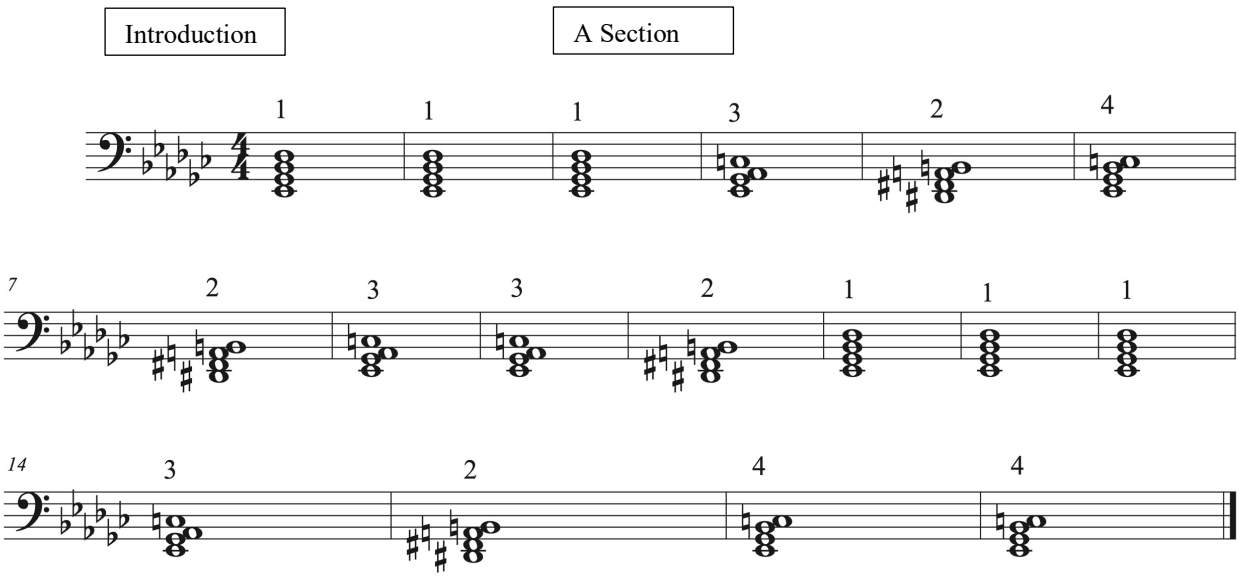

Figure 7. Harmonic progression of Scott's *Lotusland*, measures 1 to 17

In measures 4 and 9 in the music, the top F in the left-hand chords is a non-harmonic tone, resolving to the E♭. Similarly, in measure 10, the top C♯ in the left-hand chords resolves to the B♮ and is a non-harmonic tone.

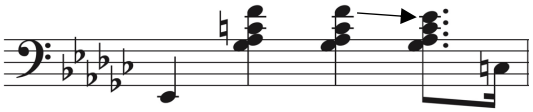

Figure 8. Resolution in the left-hand part of Scott's *Lotusland*, measure 4

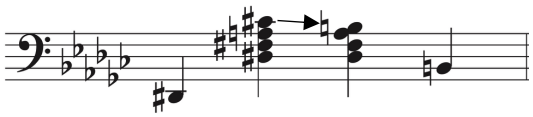

Figure 9. Resolution in the left-hand part of Scott's *Lotusland*, measure 10

Measures 1 and 2 serve the function of an introduction by presenting harmony “1” without a melody on top, establishing the “home sonority” before any melodic material enters. With the exception of measures 14 and 15, harmony “2” always resolves to harmony “1.” Harmonies “1” and “2” define the harmonic polarity, similar to the tonic-dominant polarity in diatonic music. Harmonies “3” and “4” always resolve to harmony “2.” Harmonies “3” and “4” function similarly as subdominant or supertonic harmonies do, as harmonies “3” and “4” often resolve to “2,” or the “dominant.”

An analysis of the harmonies in the A’ section shows that the section uses all the four harmonies and includes a new harmony, which I will designate as harmony “5.” Similar to the others, harmony “5” also has E♭ as its bass. The A’ section also confirms the “home-sonority” status of harmony “1” by ending with harmony “1” and reasserting it through repetition in the last four measures (measures 57 to 60.)

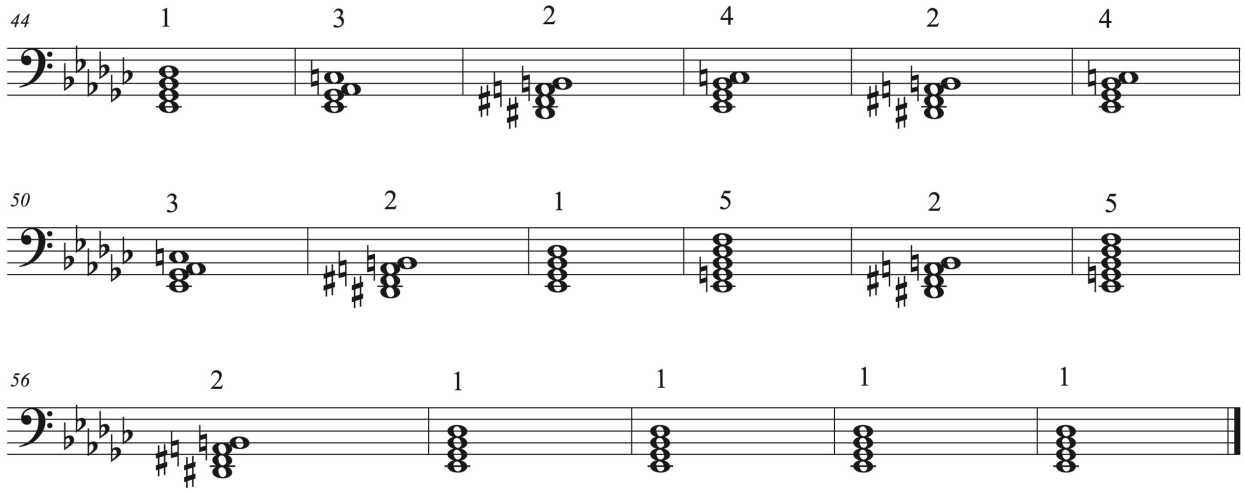

Figure 10. Harmonies and harmonic progressions of Scott's *Lotusland*, measures 44 to 60

Measures 18 to 34 constitute the B section. Contrary to the A and the A' sections, E♭/D♯ does not dominate the bass. Compared to the static bass in the A and the A' sections, constant bass movement in the B section creates a stronger driving force in the music. The bass motion delineates the phrases by always having an E♭ in the bass when the right-hand melody is at the end of a phrase.

Table 5. Bass motion in Scott's *Lotusland*, measures 18 to 29

Measures constituting a phrase in the right-hand melody	18-20	21-23	24-29
Bass motion	A♭ - B - E♭	A♭ - B - E♭	A♭ - B – D - A♭ - G♭ - E♭

In fact, Scott uses harmony "1" in measures 20 and 23, both of which are at the end of phrases, reasserting the "home-sonority" importance of harmony "1."

<u>*Chinoiserie* devices and the use of *chinoiserie* devices in delineating structure</u>

Scott employs a variety of timbral and melodic devices to evoke an exotic Eastern sound in this work. The constant quarter-note chords and bass notes in the left hand evoke the sound of gongs. The *con pedale* at the beginning indicates the continuous use of the damper pedal to create reverberance and amplify the effect of the "gongs." The melody in the right hand has arabesque ornamentations in sixteenth- and thirty-second notes.

Scott uses both whole-tone and pentatonic gestures throughout the piece. Most of the whole-tone gestures consist of only a few sixteenth or thirty-second notes and are very short and fleeting, producing coloristic effects in otherwise tonal melodies. The pentatonic passages are all

cadenza-like. They appear as continuous sixteenth notes and *glissando*. Such pentatonic passages act more as strands of sound than melodies.

A closer look at the music reveals that Scott's choice of *chinoiserie* devices corresponds to the structure of the piece.

Table 6. *Chinoiserie* devices corresponding to the structure of Scott's *Lotusland*

Chinoiserie Device	Whole-tone gestures	Pentatonic gestures
Section (Measure)	A (5,8,9,15) Retransition (36-43) A' (46,49,50)	B (29-31,34-35) Coda (61-62)

Whole-tone gestures signify the A and the A' sections and pentatonic gestures signify the B section. Scott also uses a few notes from the whole-tone scale in measures 22 and 28, both of which belong to the B section. However, in each of these instances, the partial whole-tone scale forms part of a much longer melody, instead of standing alone as an individual gesture as it does in all the instances in the A and the A' sections.

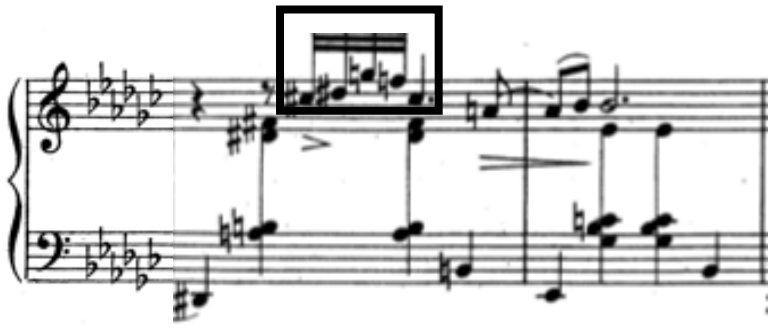

Figure 11. Example of whole-tone gesture in the A section of Scott's *Lotusland* (measure 5)[83]

[83] Cyril Scott, *Lotus Land, Op.47 No.1* (London: Elkin & Co., 1905), 3, accessed November 29, 2018, http://petruccilibrary.us/scores/Scott_Cyril_1970/Scott_-_LotusLand_Op.47No.1_piano.pdf.

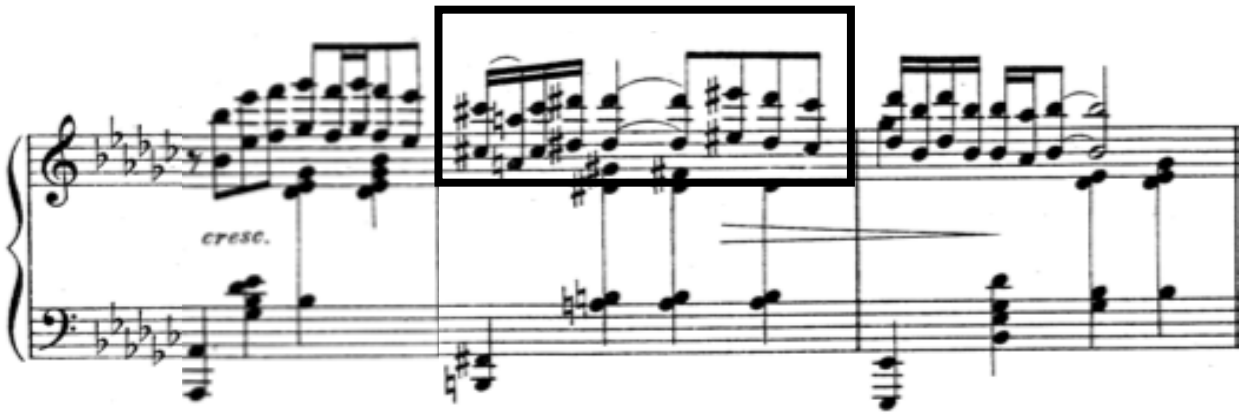

Figure 12. Example of the whole-tone scale as part of a longer melody in the B section of Scott's *Lotusland* (measures 21 to 23)[84]

Synthetic Functions of the Retransition Through Harmony and *Chinoiserie* Devices

The entire Retransition is a whole-tone arabesque with the accompaniment of three sparse chords with a descending bass line. With whole-tone gestures being a feature of the A section and chords in the moving bass being the feature of the B section, this Retransition bridges the B section with the A' section by synthesizing the important features of the A and the B sections.

Synthetic Functions of the Coda Through Harmony and *Chinoiserie* Devices

Following the A' section, the Coda immediately brings back a pentatonic *glissando* starting from a low E♭ in measures 61 and 62. E♭ is the only bass note in the A and the A' sections, while pentatonic gestures belong to the B section. Scott synthesizes the bass note in the A and the A' sections with the *chinoiserie* device in the B section in measures 61 and 62 of the Coda.

Scott synthesizes the A and the B sections in measures 63 to 67 by using harmonies from both the A and the B sections in the coda.

[84] Ibid., 4.

Table 7. Origins of harmonies in Scott's *Lotusland*, measures 63 to 67

Measure in Coda	63	64	65	66-67
Origin of Harmony	19	26	1 Same pitch-class set as harmony "1" of the A section	1 Harmony "1" of the A section

While the harmony in measure 65 does not exist in any other places of the piece, an analysis using the theory of pitch-class set reveals that it has the same pitch-class set as harmony "1": 0,2,5,9. The two harmonies are a tritone apart.

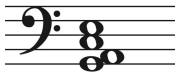

Figure 13. Harmony in measure 65 of Scott's *Lotusland* in best normal order

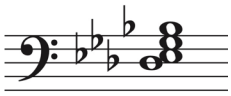

Figure 14. Harmony in measure 66 of Scott's *Lotusland* in best normal order

Scott's use of harmonies from both the A and the B sections is another method of synthesizing his previous materials in the Coda. The use of an apparently novel sound in the penultimate harmony, which derives from the "home sonority," but a tritone away, before resolving immediately back to the "home sonority," creates a sense of polarity in the last two

harmonies appropriate for a final resolution and exhibits Scott's ingenuity in the use of harmony and harmonic relationships for structural purposes.

Conclusion

Scott drives the musical structure of *Lotusland* using the modernist harmonic language. One harmony serves as the "home sonority" which other harmonies interact with, following a specific hierarchy of functional importance. He employs various timbral and melodic devices, many of which other composers commonly use, to evoke an Eastern sound, making *Lotusland* a classic example of musical *chinoiserie*. He uses whole-tone and pentatonic gestures both as *chinoiserie* devices and also corresponding to the structure of the piece. The Retransition and the Coda perform synthetic function by including harmonies and *chinoiserie* devices used in both the A and B sections.

1.4.3 Abram Chasins: "A Shanghai Tragedy," from *Three Chinese Pieces*

"A Shanghai Tragedy" is the first of Chasins' *Three Chinese Pieces.* Chasins wrote his *Three Chinese Pieces* "with all the authority of someone who has never been to the Orient."[85] The titles of the three pieces, "A Shanghai Tragedy," "Flirtation in a Chinese Garden," and "Rush Hour in Hong Kong," evoke geographical and cultural curiosities.[86] The musical characters and *chinoiserie* devices of these pieces contribute to the creation of an Eastern sensation.

[85] Charisse Baldoria, "Review of Three Chinese pieces for the Piano by Abram Chasins," *American Music Teacher* 63, no.1 (August/September 2013): 62, accessed November 21, 2018, https://www.jstor.org/stable/43543650.
[86] Abram Chasins, *Three Chinese Pieces for the Piano* (Van Nuys, CA: Alfred Music Publishing, 2013), 2.

The Use of Harmony to Delineate Structure

"A Shanghai Tragedy" is in ternary form. Chasins fills "A Shanghai Tragedy" with coloristic extended-tertian harmonies typical of much music in the early twentieth century. With the use of a functional bass line and the paradigm of the traditional tonic-dominant polarity, these harmonies contribute to the delineation of the overall harmonic and tonal structure of the piece.

Table 8. Structure and tonal areas of Chasins' "A Shanghai Tragedy"

Section	Introduction	A	Transition	B	Retransition	A'
Measure	1-4	5-32	33-45	46-59	60-67	68-96
Tonal area	V of G minor	G minor	Modulation	E minor	Modulation	G minor

The introduction establishes the key of G minor as it leads into the A section. The bass line of measures 1 to 5 moves from D to G. The four notes in measures 1 and 2 are E♭, A, D, and G. If we only look at measures one and two, these notes seem to form the following quartal harmony:

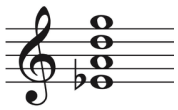

Figure 15. Quartal harmony used in Chasins' "A Shanghai Tragedy," measures 1 and 2

However, as the same figurations repeat in measures three and four, Chasins adds a high F in measure 4. The addition of F and re-voicing turn what originally seems to be a quartal harmony into an extended tertian harmony with D as the bass, resolving to G in measure 5. Both the bass line and the harmonic progression establish G minor with a dominant-tonic motion as

the music moves from the introduction (measures 1 to 4) to the beginning of the A section (measure 5.)

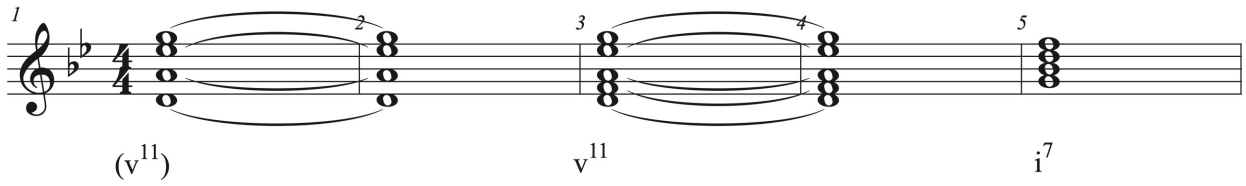

Figure 16. Harmonic progression of Chasins' "A Shanghai Tragedy," measures 1 to 4, establishing G minor

The theme measures 5 to 10 in G minor will repeat in F minor in measures 11 to 16, in C minor in measures 17 to 22, and in D major in measures 23 to 28. The music returns to G minor in measure 29. This tonal scheme works in such a way that C minor functions as the subdominant that resolves to D major, which functions as the dominant and resolves to G minor in an authentic cadence. The left hand would play a low octave or chord at the beginning of each key change to affirm the new key. The dynamic level increases at each key change, so the music intensifies until it approaches the tonic for the last time in the A section.

Table 9. Dynamic, tonal and harmonic schemes of Chasins' "A Shanghai Tragedy," measures 5 to 32

Measures	5-10	11-16	17-22	23-28	29-32
Dynamics	*pp*	*cresc. poco a poco*	*mf*	*f*	*cresc.*
Tonality	G minor	F minor	C minor	D major	G minor
Function of Harmony	Tonic	Subtonic	Subdominant	Dominant	Tonic
				Authentic Cadence	

Transition from the A section to the B section starts at measure 33, where modulation begins. Chasins uses the whole-tone scale to construct both the melody and the harmonies from the third beat of measures 35 to 40 to obscure the key center, before landing on a low B in measure 41. Chasins then prolongs B from measures 41 to 45 as the music erupts into rapid intervals and chords that alternate between two hands, a virtuosic technique that Liszt uses frequently in his compositions. The note B eventually resolves to E minor in measure 46, which is the beginning of the B section. Dominant prolongation is a common device for modulation in Western tonal music.

The motif of two eighth notes followed by a quarter notes tied to another eight note dominates the B section:

Figure 17. Motif of the B section of Chasins' “A Shanghai Tragedy”

The music stays firmly in E minor from measures 46 to 57. Measure 60 is the beginning of the retransition to the A section. In measure 60, Chasins retains the use of the motif above while modulating back to G minor, thereby synthesizing the tonality of the A section with the motif of the B section. The bass reasserts the key of G from measures 60 to 63. The bass line moves from A in measure 65 to D in measure 67 and resolves to G in measure 68, reinforcing the return to G minor in the A section with the typical supertonic-dominant-tonic progression.

Table 10. Movement and functionality of the bass notes in Chasins' "A Shanghai Tragedy," measures 65 to 68

Measure	65	67	68
Bass note	A	D	G
Functionality of Bass Note (in G minor)	Supertonic	Dominant	Tonic

Chinoiserie Devices

"A Shanghai Tragedy" incorporates many of the most common *chinoiserie* devices in its evocation of a Chinese milieu that matches its title. The most obvious feature is the use of quartal, quintal, and secundal intervals and harmonies. Chasins fills this piece with the intervals of seconds, fourths, and fifths to avoid the sonority of triadic harmonies typical in Western art music and to evoke an exotic sound. He also combines octaves and chords, often in the low register, with continuous damper pedal to emulate the timbre of gongs.

Low bass notes and quartal harmonies define measures 1 to 4. While the analysis above shows that Chasins uses extended tertian harmonies in the guise of quartal harmonies in these measures, stacking notes in intervals of fourths and using these quartal chords successively produce a distinct and evocative sonority. With the support of a low octave and the damper pedal, these four measures replicate the timbre of gongs and begin the music with the exotic sound of a remote place.

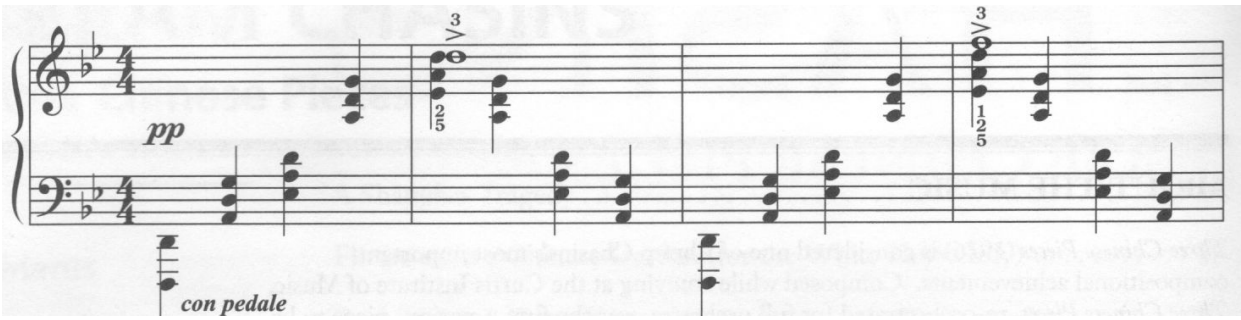

Figure 18. Low octaves, quartal harmonies, and damper pedal replicating the timbre of gongs in Chasins' "A Shanghai Tragedy," measures 1 to 4[87]

As the thematic material enters in the right hand in measure 6, fourths and seconds construct both the vertical and melodic intervals of the gesture, again avoiding the sonority of triadic intervals.

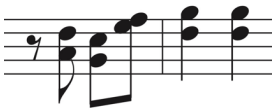

Figure 19. The use of fourths and seconds in constructing the thematic material in Chasins' "A Shanghai Tragedy"

The left hand plays octaves with open fifths and fourths in the low register when the music moves to a different harmony, such as in measures 5, 11, 17, 23, and 29, again evoking the timbre of gongs. Measures 29 and 30 reiterate the thematic material above, this time in open intervals of fourths and fifths.

[87] Chasins, 4.

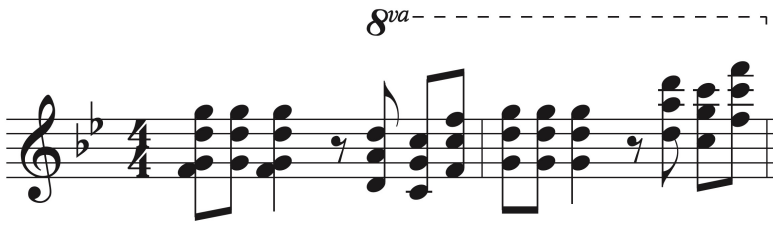

Figure 20. Reiteration of the thematic material in Chasins' "A Shanghai Tragedy," measures 29 to 30

As the music modulates in the transition, Chasins uses the whole-tone scale to construct both the melody in measures 37 and 38 and the harmonies from measures 35 to 40. He uses open fourths and fifths and gong-like chords in countless instances throughout "A Shanghai Tragedy," giving the piece a distinct sonority in evoking the sound of the remote East.

Conclusion

Chasins uses traditional functional harmony to drive the structure of "A Shanghai Tragedy." While extended tertian harmonies fulfill the functional goal of contributing to the structure of the piece, these harmonies disguise themselves as exotic quartal, quintal, and secundal intervals and harmonies so as to create a sound evocative of a non-Western musical world. The use of gong-like chords and the extra resonance that the damper pedal creates add to the exotic sound of the piece.

CHAPTER 2: GENUINE CHINESE MUSICAL STYLE AND ITS INCORPORATION IN PIANO MUSIC

2.1 Genuine Chinese Musical Style

Chinese music has a long history and encompasses a wide variety of styles. This variety results from the diversity of ethnic groups in China. Broadly speaking, Chinese musical style refers to all the music that came into being over the course of the development of Chinese culture.[88] Chinese musical style evolved with the development of Chinese culture.[89] It is impossible to precisely define a single Chinese musical style with a few exclusive features or to provide an exhaustive list of features of Chinese music.

Nevertheless, an examination of Chinese musical language will point us to a few fundamental features of Chinese music. I will identify and explain these features below. Before analyzing any music with Chinese influences written by a Western composer, I should point out that none of these features conclusively indicates that the composer has successfully assimilated genuine Chinese music into a particular piece; instead, we have to examine how these elements interact with one another and how the composer uses them in the context of the music.

In discussing the style and features of Chinese music in this document, I refer to the traditional music originating from and evolving in China from prehistoric times, before 2000 BC, until the end of imperialism in China in 1911. The concept of traditional Chinese music stands

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[88] Liu Ching-chih 劉靖之, *Zhongguo Xinyinyueshi lun* 中國新音樂史論 [A Critical History of New Music in China] (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2009), 686.

[89] Peng Jingwen 彭静雯, "Qi Erpin《Five Concert Etudes》de 'Zhongguo fengge' tantao yu jiaoxue yanzou" 齐尔品《Five Concert Etudes》的 "中国风格" 探讨与教学演奏 [A Study of the Chinese Style and Performance Pedagogy of Tcherepnin's "Five Concert Etudes"] (Master's thesis, Shanghai Normal University, 2013), 5, accessed November 30, 2018, China National Knowledge Infrastructure 中国知网, www.cnki.net.

in contrast to that of "New Music" in China, which started to take root and become mainstream Chinese music during the first half of the twentieth century and continues to influence the music of China today.[90]

"New Music" in China refers to "the works which result when a composer applies the compositional techniques, styles, forms and musical language of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century-Europe to Chinese musical source material."[91] The tonality, harmony, performance, and aesthetics of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European music forms the basis of "New Music" in China; in fact, "New Music" has "no direct link to traditional Chinese music."[92]

Chinese intellectuals in the early twentieth century advocated for the westernization of everything Chinese. After China's multiple defeats in wars with other nations in the nineteenth century, Chinese intellectuals were aware of the military and economic weaknesses of China compared to the Western powers. Chinese intellectuals thought that only foreign ideas and knowledge could save the nation. As a result, westernization took place across politics, science, and various disciplines of art, including music, in China. With westernization being a synonym for modernization at that time, musicians in China believed that total westernization was the best way to develop their music. Such wholesale westernization resulted in "New Music."[93]

Since "New Music" is essentially music in the European style, my examination of Chinese music in this document will focus on Chinese music that predates "New Music" or any westernization. I will, from time to time, refer to music from China predating westernization as "traditional Chinese music," since it is the product of thousands of years of musical tradition in

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[90] Liu Ching-Chih, *A Critical History of New Music in China*, trans. Caroline Mason (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2010), 16-7.
[91] Ibid., 9
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid., 13

China. I will limit my discussion of the style, pitch-centricity, and aesthetics of Chinese music to those of traditional Chinese music.

2.1.1 The Linear Quality and Lack of Polyphony and Harmony in Chinese Music

One of the major differences between Chinese and Western music is that the former is largely monophonic and linear in construction, while one essence of Western music since the ninth century is polyphony and harmony.[94] With a developed system of counterpoint and harmony in Western music, the construction of melody often follows the harmonic framework of the music. In 1936, John Hazedel Davis went so far as to comment that "the Western musical system, with all its great development in other directions, contains no such thing as an art of melody."[95]

Chinese music is mostly linear without any harmonic progression. The monophonic nature of Chinese music means that musical expression relies on the melody.[96] While harmony and polyphony had very little development in the history of Chinese music, the construction of melody became a well-developed art in itself.[97] Melodic movement in Chinese music demonstrates a high level of sophistication.[98] As Alexander Tcherepnin correctly observed when he visited China in the 1930s:

> Even in the more complicated instrumental music, no deliberate attempt is made at harmonizing the melody or at building up a contrapuntal combination of any kind. In native Chinese music, there is no harmony or counterpoint, as we understand it….The

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[94] Tian Ming 田明, "Qiantan Zhongguo minzu yinyue yu xifang yinyue de yitong" 浅谈中国民族音乐与西方音乐的异同 [A Brief Discussion of the Differences and Similarities between Chinese Folk Music and Western Music], *Qingnian wenxuejia* 青年文学家 8Z (2014): 171, accessed May 23, 2019, China Academic Journals Full-text Database 中國期刊全文數據庫.
[95] John Levis, *Foundations of Chinese Musical Art* (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp, 1964), 7.
[96] Tian, 171.
[97] Levis, 8-9.
[98] Tie Jun 铁军, Diaoshi yanjiu yu xuanlü xiezuo 调式研究与旋律写作 [Studying Tonality and Writing Melody] (Shenyang, China: Chunfeng wenyi chubanshe, 1981), 73.

> form of a native tune consists in perpetual variation of the same melody; a musical phrase is never repeated exactly, the melody always progresses, a change in the fundamental tone replaces modulation. Ingenuity in melodic invention seems never to cease, and when, towards the end of a piece, the movement grows faster and faster, the melody adapts itself to the new rhythm. There is a fascination to this type of 'everlasting' melody.[99]

To ornament or enrich the melody of a composition, Chinese musicians often add slides and grace notes or improvise variations on the melody.[100]

2.1.2 Chinese Pentatonicism

Fifty-six different ethnic groups exist in China currently. Fifty-four of these, including the Han Chinese who constitute the majority of the Chinese population, use pentatonicism as the fundamental language in their music.[101] Chinese pentatonicism has existed for more than two thousand years.[102] A huge corpus of existing Chinese musical works are pentatonic. The prevalence of pentatonicism in Chinese music makes it the primary identifying feature of Chinese music.[103]

In the West, Pythagoras discovered that the simple ratios of 2:1, 3:2 and 4:3 would generate consonant intervals of the octave, fifth, and fourth respectively.[104] Coinciding with the acoustic ratios that Pythagoras discovered, the Chinese also recognized that the perfect fifth was

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[99] Alexander Tcherepnine, "Music in Modern China," *The Musical Quarterly* 21, no.4 (October 1935): 394.
[100] Tian, 171; Dongfang Yinyue Xuehui 東方音樂學會, *Zhonguo minzu yinyue daxi: minzu qiyue juan* 中國民族音樂大系：民族器樂卷 [Chinese National Music Series: National Instrumental Music] (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 1989), 10.
[101] Fan Zuyin 樊祖荫, *Zhongguo wushengxing diaoshi hesheng de lilun yu fangfa* 中国五声性调式和声的理论与方法 [Pentatonic-mode Harmony in Chinese Music: Theory and Practice] (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 2017), 1.
[102] Ibid., 15.
[103] Ibid., 2.
[104] J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude Palisca, *A History of Western Music* (New York: Norton, 2006), 160.

the "natural harmony." Pentatonic mode pitches result from four consecutive perfect fifths.[105] Or, as Jean-Philippe Rameau puts it in the appendix "Nouvelles Réflexions sur le principe sonore" to his *Code de musique pratique*, the common foundation for both Pythagorean and Chinese music theory is the *progression triple*: the ratio 3:1 produces the interval of a compound perfect fifth, and 3:2 makes the perfect fifth. Rameau uses the term *progression triple* to refer to the generation of pitches in a scale with perfect fifths.[106]

The Pentatonic Modes

Using C as the starting note, the five notes produced by means of "giving birth" to a perfect fifth above would be C-G-D-A-E.[107] Rearranging these five notes so that they are in ascending order within an octave, they would be C-D-E-G-A.

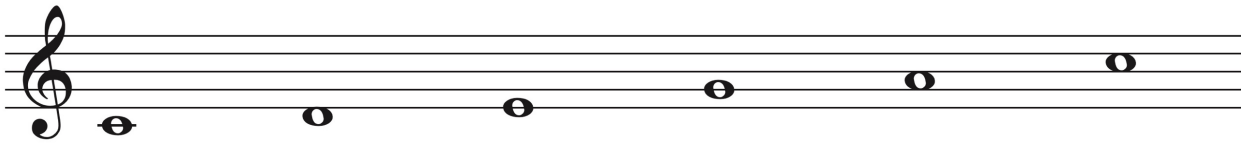

Figure 21. The five notes produced by generating perfect fifths above C

Similar to scale degrees of a diatonic scale, a nomenclature exists for the mode degrees of a Chinese pentatonic mode. The common English-language names of the scale degrees are transliterations of their Chinese names.

[105] Levis, 64.
[106] Day-O'Connell, 50.
[107] Levis, 64.

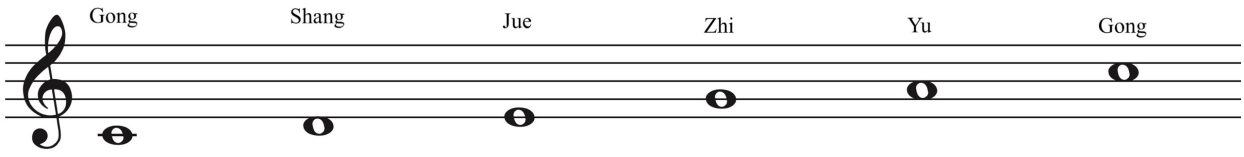

Figure 22. Nomenclature for the mode degrees of a Chinese pentatonic mode

A pentatonic mode produced by invoking the *progression triple* four times is anhemitonic, or without semitones: the intervals between adjacent pitches are either a major second or a minor third. *Gong* and *Jue* form the only major third in the mode. All these are the specific features of the Chinese pentatonic mode.[108]

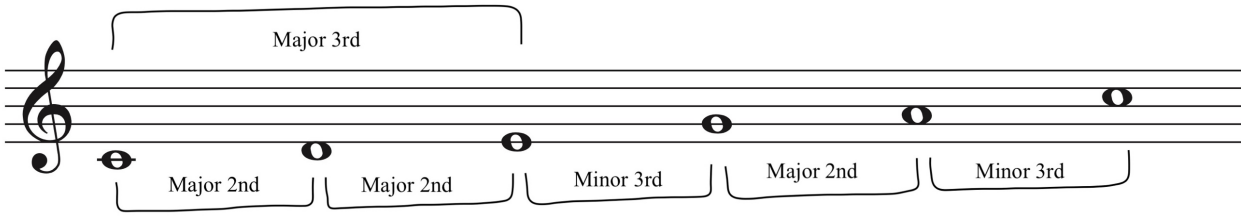

Figure 23. Intervals within a Chinese pentatonic mode

By reordering these five pitches, thereby varying the combination of intervals among the pitches, we can form the other four Chinese pentatonic modes. The five different modes that C, D, E, G, and A generate are:

C *Gong*:

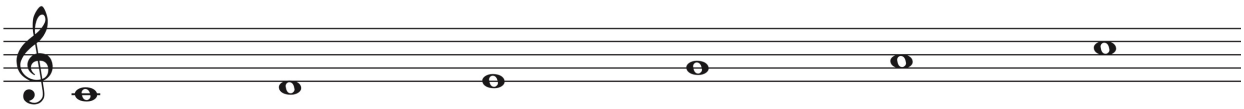

Figure 24. C *Gong* mode

[108] Tie, 14-5.

D *Shang*:

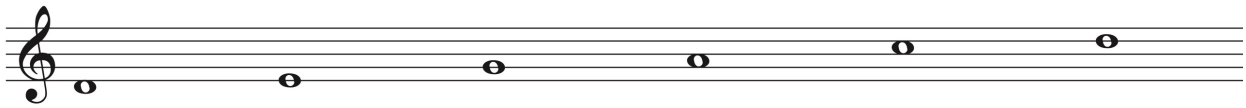

Figure 25. D *Shang* mode

E *Jue*:

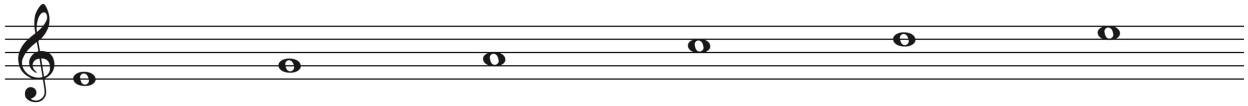

Figure 26. E *Jue* mode

G *Zhi*:

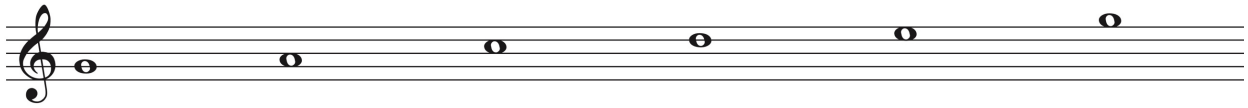

Figure 27. G *Zhi* mode

A *Yu*:

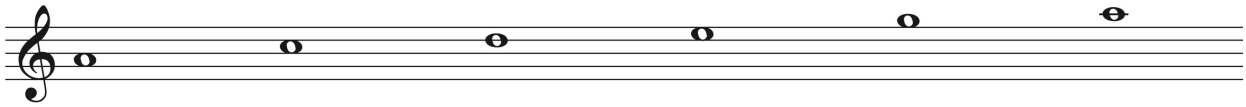

Figure 28. A *Yu* mode

The figures above also show the most common way to name a Chinese pentatonic mode, which is to indicate both the pitch and the transliterated name of the main note of the mode.[109] Any of these five modes can modulate to any of the twelve possible pitches. The pitch of the main note determines the letter name, and the combination of intervals among the pitches determines the Chinese-transliterated name. Some examples with their respective names are:

E *Gong*:

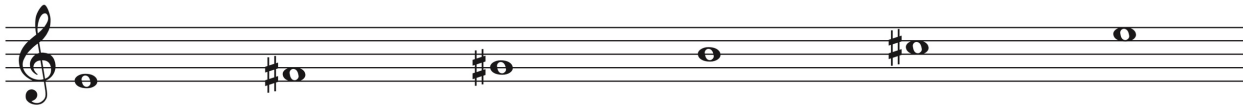

Figure 29. E *Gong* mode

F♯ *Shang*:

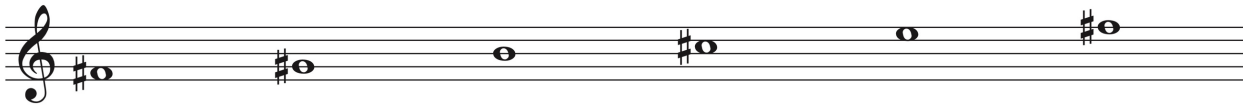

Figure 30. F♯ *Shang* mode

G♯ *Jue*:

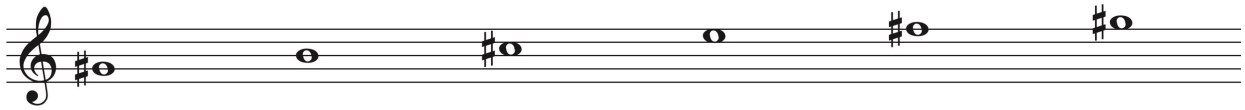

Figure 31. G♯ *Jue* mode

[109] Ibid., 18.

B *Zhi*:

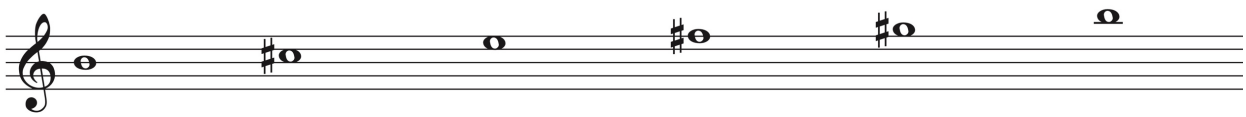

Figure 32. B *Zhi* mode

C♯ *Yu*:

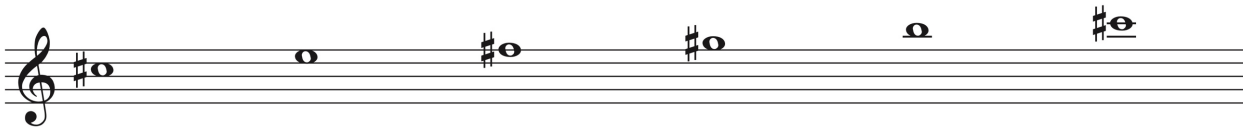

Figure 33. C♯ *Yu* mode

The fact that the *progression triple* produces the Chinese pentatonic mode has three implications. First, not every mode with five pitches is a Chinese pentatonic mode. It is a Chinese pentatonic mode only when a pentatonic mode has major seconds and minor thirds between adjacent pitches and, more importantly, contains a major third formed by two major seconds.[110]

Second, when analyzing a piece of music from China, one must realize it is possible that the piece uses a Chinese pentatonic mode even when the piece utilizes fewer than five pitches. So long as a major third exists between any of the two pitches, with a pitch in between that forms major seconds with the other two pitches, does one have conclusive evidence that the piece uses

[110] Ibid., 14-6.

the Chinese pentatonic mode. After all, a major third exists in a scale or mode only when one invokes the *progression triple* four times.[111] The following excerpt is a tune from China.

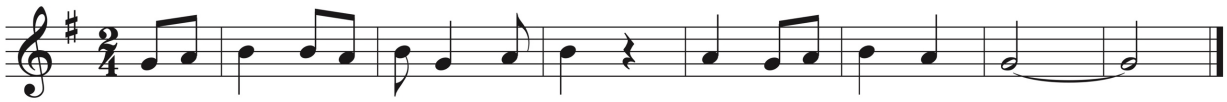

Figure 34. A tune from Shanxi, China, *Da San Yan Diao*, using the Chinese pentatonic mode even having only three pitches[112]

The tune above only uses three different pitches, G, A, and B. G and B form a major third. A stands between G and B, forming major seconds with both pitches. These intervals provide conclusive evidence that the three pitches in the tune constitute part of the Chinese pentatonic mode resulting from invoking the *progression triple* four times.[113]

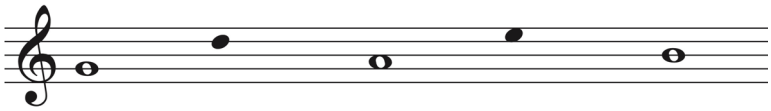

Figure 35. The five pitches produced by generating perfect fifths above G

However, if a piece has fewer than five pitches and no two pitches of the piece form a major third, then the piece may not necessarily be the product of a Chinese pentatonic mode. The following tune offers an example.

[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid., 15.
[113] Ibid.

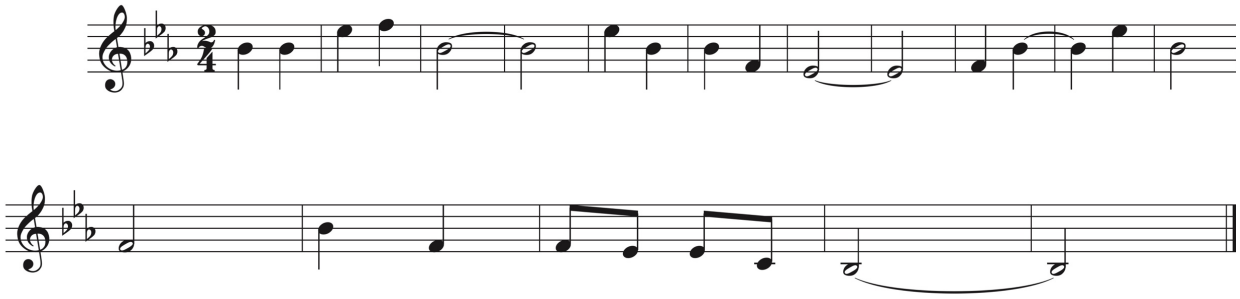

Figure 36. A tune from Shaanbei, China, *Xiu Hebao*, utilizing four pitches and not necessarily using the Chinese pentatonic mode[114]

The four pitches that this tune uses are E♭, F, B♭, and C. None of these can form a major third with another pitch. Also, these four pitches result from invoking the *progression triple* only three times. The pitch G, which would complete the pentatonic mode, is missing:

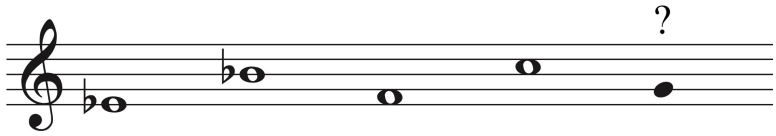

Figure 37. The five pitches produced by generating perfect fifths above E♭

Therefore, it is possible but not certain that these four pitches constitute a Chinese pentatonic mode.[115]

The third implication of the production of the Chinese pentatonic mode using the *progression triple* is that *gong* and *jue* form the only major third possible in any such mode. Identifying the major third in a Chinese pentatonic mode, melody, or piece will help us identify the *gong* of the mode, melody, or piece: the lower of the two pitches that form the only major

[114] Ibid., 16.
[115] Ibid., 15-6.

third in the Chinese pentatonic mode is always the *gong* of that particular mode.[116] For example, in a pentatonic mode or a piece consisting of the pitches C, D, E, G, and A, C and E forms the only major third. Therefore, C is the *gong*.

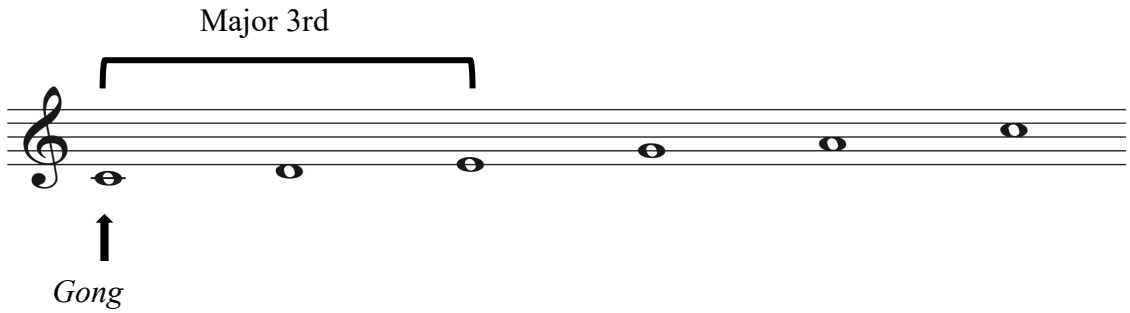

Figure 38. Identifying the *gong* of a pentatonic mode

The Heptatonic Modes

The earliest use of heptatonic modes in China occurred sometime between the sixth and eleventh centuries.[117] Chinese heptatonic modes find their origins in the Chinese pentatonic modes. Each of the Chinese pentatonic modes consists of three major seconds and two minor thirds. The two minor thirds occur between *Jue* and *Zhi*, and *Yu* and *Gong*. A heptatonic mode results from adding a pitch between each of these two minor thirds, thereby creating a heptatonic mode consisting of whole steps and half steps. In other words, the Chinese heptatonic modes result from modifying the Chinese pentatonic modes.

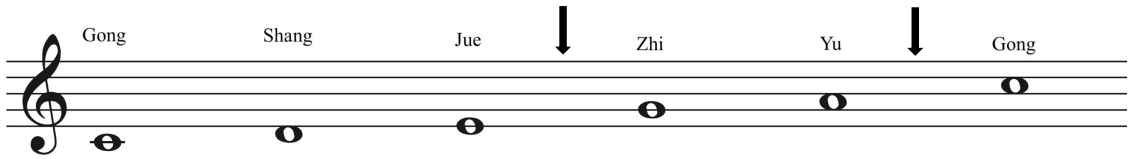

Figure 39. Insertion of pitches between *Jue* and *Zhi* and between *Yu* and *Gong*, forming the Chinese heptatonic mode

[116] Fan, 21.
[117] Tie, 46.

Many different names for these heptatonic modes have existed since their invention. As of today, musicians and theorists in China have not reached a consensus as to a single name for each of these modes.[118] For the sake of clarity in my discussion, I adopt names that specify the musical characteristics of the modes.[119]

There are three types of Chinese heptatonic mode, each having different pitches between *Jue* and *Zhi* and between *Yu* and *Gong*. Using C *Gong* as an example again, the three heptatonic modes with the names that I will use in this essay are as follows:

C Natural Heptatonic Mode:[120]

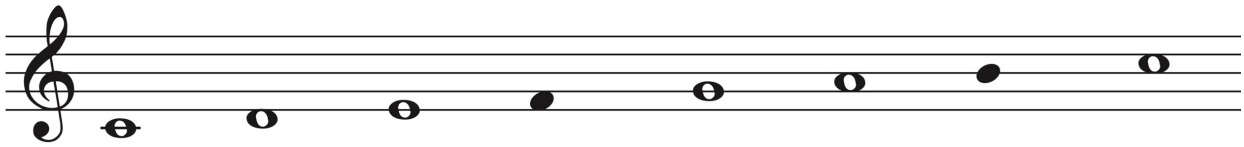

Figure 40. C Natural Heptatonic Mode

C Heptatonic Mode with a ♯4:[121]

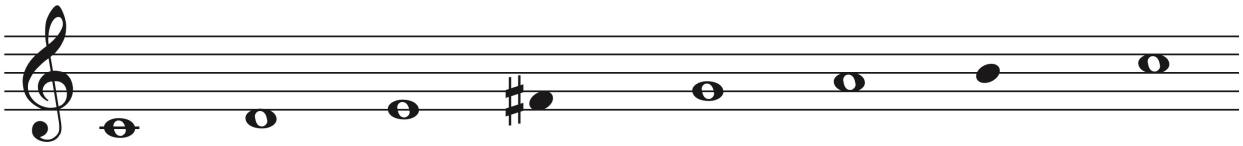

Figure 41. C Heptatonic Mode with a ♯4

[118] Fan, 25.
[119] Tie, 48.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.

C Heptatonic Mode with a ♭7:[122]

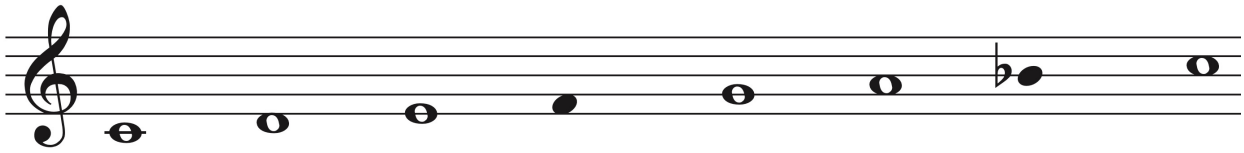

Figure 42. C Heptatonic Mode with a ♭7

Since these Chinese heptatonic modes derived from the Chinese pentatonic modes, pitches in a heptatonic mode follow a hierarchy. The five pitches belonging to the original pentatonic scale are the "main pitches," and the two additional pitches are the "auxiliary pitches."[123]

The hierarchy of main pitches and auxiliary pitches have two implications in Chinese music. First, in a piece of music using Chinese heptatonicism, the auxiliary pitches ornament the main pitches and add colors and expressiveness to the music. These auxiliary pitches seldom occur at structural points in the music, such as the beginning, cadential points, or the end.[124] In other words, a piece of Chinese music comprising seven pitches often uses pentatonicism as its skeleton. The two auxiliary pitches between the minor thirds do not belong to the pentatonic mode the music uses. These auxiliary pitches in Chinese music are comparable to the idea of chromatic pitches in a piece of Western diatonic music.

Second, depending on which five of the seven pitches constitute the main pitches of a heptatonic mode, different possible pentatonic modes underlie any particular heptatonic mode.

[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid., 50-1.
[124] Ibid., 50.

Below, I use the C natural heptatonic mode as an example. If we use C, D, E, G, and A as the five main pitches, and F and B as the two auxiliary pitches, we can see that the natural heptatonic mode in C finds its origin in the C *Gong* mode.

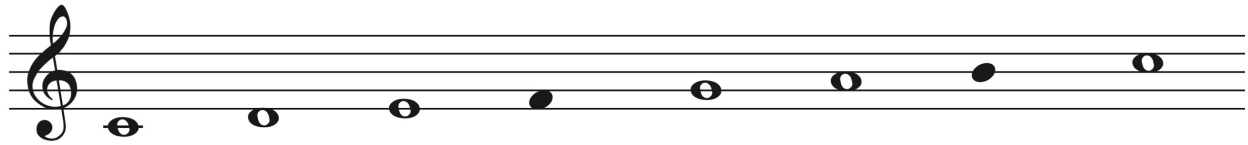

Figure 43. C *Gong* mode within the C natural heptatonic mode

If we use C, D, F, G, and A as the five main pitches, and E and B as the two auxiliary pitches, the natural heptatonic mode in C finds its origin in the C *Zhi* mode.

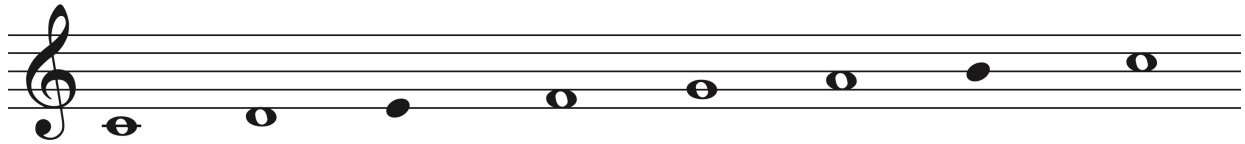

Figure 44. C *Zhi* mode within the C natural heptatonic mode

If we use D, E, G, A, and B as the five main pitches, and C and F as the two auxiliary pitches, the natural heptatonic mode in C finds its origin in the D *Zhi* scale.

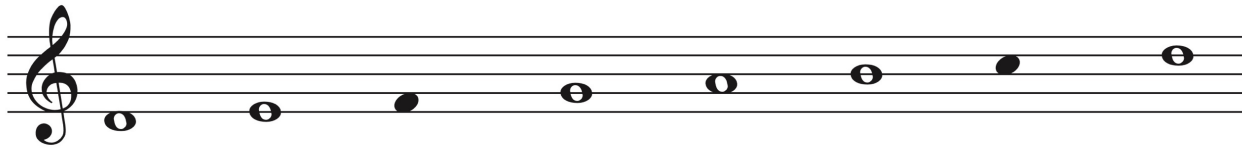

Figure 45. D *Zhi* mode within the C natural heptatonic mode

The existence of three major thirds, C-E, F-A, and G-B, means that this heptatonic mode can be a derivation of three different pentatonic modes, depending on which pitches constitute the main pitches and which pitches constitute the auxiliary pitches.

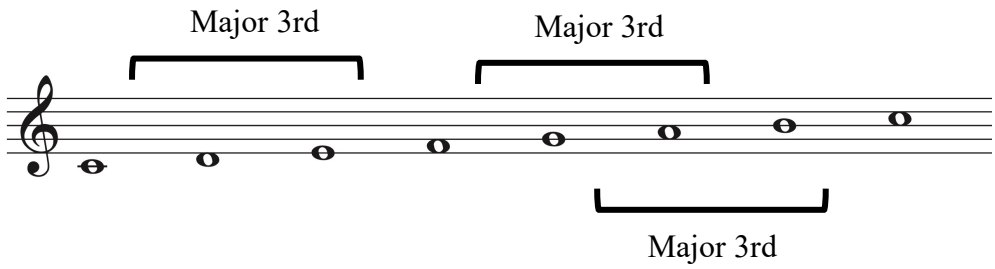

Figure 46. Three major thirds existing in a C natural heptatonic mode

Another example will be the heptatonic mode with a ♭7. Below, I use the C heptatonic mode with a ♭7 to illustrate:

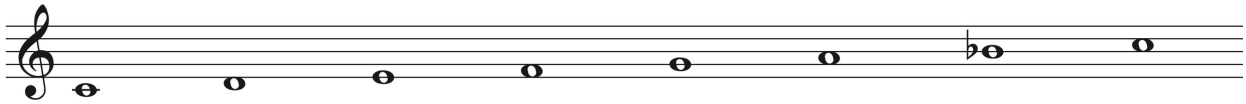

Figure 47. C Heptatonic mode with a ♭7

Similarly, this mode contains three major thirds: C-E, F-A, and B♭-D. A heptatonic mode with a ♭7 can therefore result from three different pentatonic modes: C *Gong* (C-D-E-G-A-C), C *Zhi* (C-D-F-G-A-C), and C *Shang* (C-D-F-G-B♭-C).[125]

[125] Ibid., 57-9.

C *Gong*:

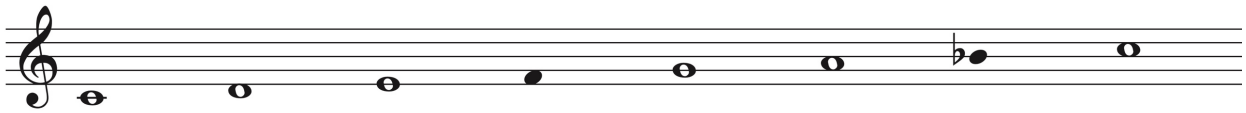

Figure 48. C *Gong* mode within the C heptatonic mode with a ♭7

C *Zhi*:

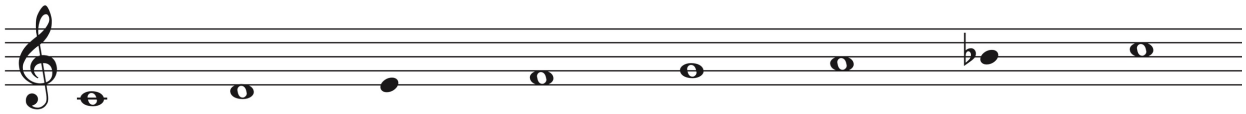

Figure 49. C *Zhi* mode within the C heptatonic mode with a ♭7

C *Shang*:

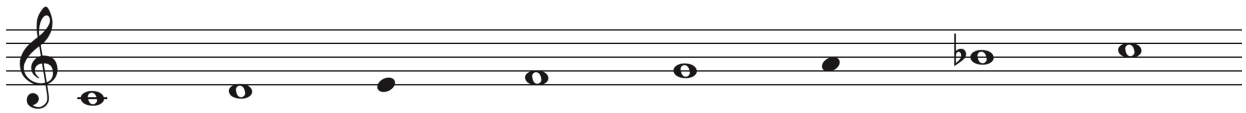

Figure 50. C *Shang* mode within the C heptatonic mode with a ♭7

The hierarchy of pitches in a heptatonic mode and the possibility of different pentatonic modes underlying a heptatonic mode form the conceptual basis for modulation in the Chinese pentatonic system. Using a particular heptatonic mode as a conceptual backbone, a piece of music can modulate between at least two pentatonic modes freely by adding and deleting pitches in the heptatonic mode. This form of modulation is both common in and unique to Chinese

music.[126] The following tune, *Man Ban* (慢板), which translates to *Adagio*, provides an example of such modulation:[127]

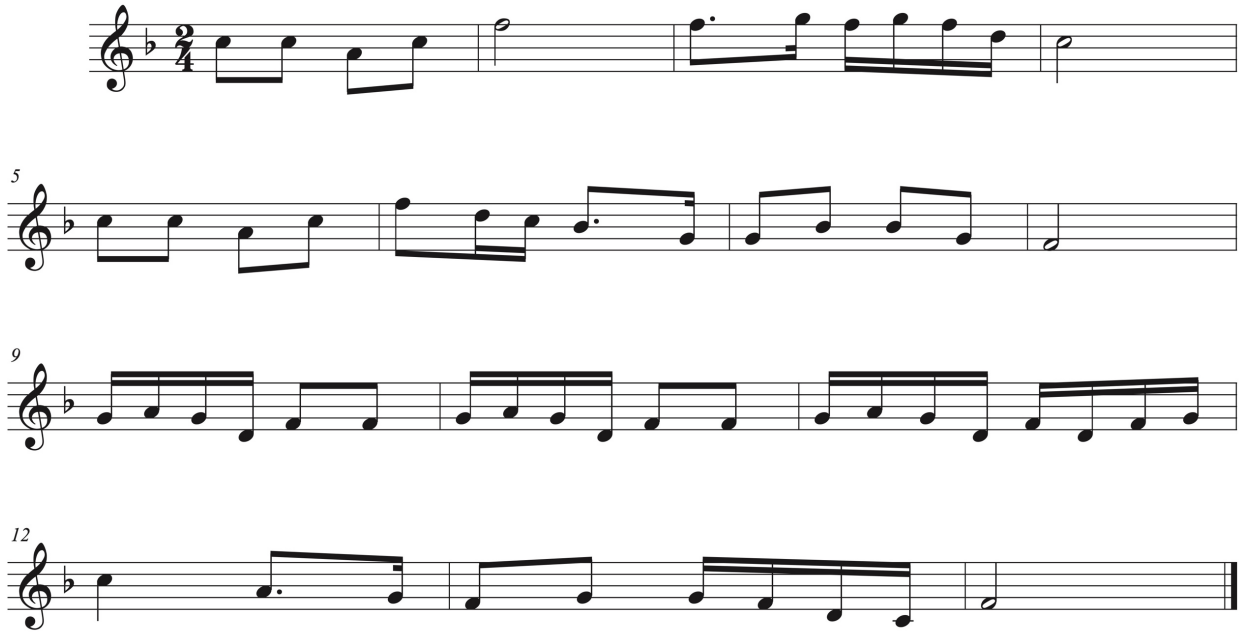

Figure 51. Chinese tune, *Man Ban*, illustrating modulation between two pentatonic modes

Man Ban uses the pitches F, G, A, B♭, C, and D. These pitches belong to the F natural heptatonic mode.

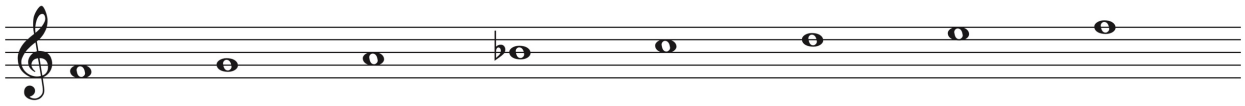

Figure 52. F natural heptatonic mode

Measures 1 to 5 is in F *Gong* and use F, G, A, C, and D.

[126] Ibid., 60.
[127] Ibid., 69.

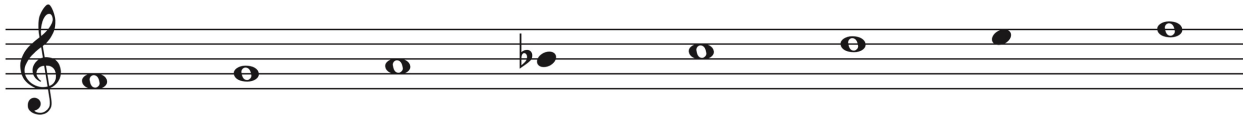

Figure 53. F *Gong* mode within the F natural heptatonic mode

Measures 6 to 8 is in F *Zhi* and use F, G, B♭, C, and D.

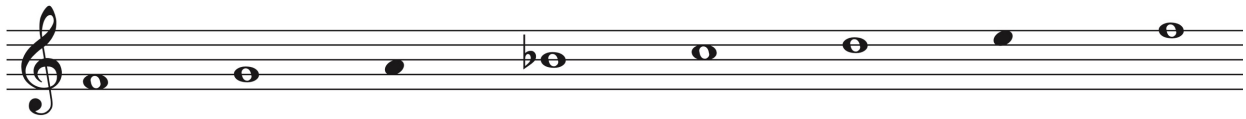

Figure 54. F *Zhi* mode within the F natural heptatonic mode

Measures 9 to 14 return to F *Gong* and use F, G, A, C, and D.

Short and simple as it is, *Man Ban* demonstrates how pentatonicism typically works in Chinese music. The pentatonic modes are the building blocks of the Chinese melody. Modulation takes place in the sense that the music goes through different pentatonic modes. In other words, pentatonicism is the structural musical language of Chinese music and is distinct from diatonicism in European Common Practice Period. Since Chinese music is mainly linear in its construction, the use of harmony is rare, let alone the idea of harmonic progression and functional harmony.

2.1.3 The Idioms of Chinese Musical Instruments

Chinese musical instruments have existed as long as Chinese music has. Many of these instruments, even in their modern form, comprise natural materials such as wood and bamboo. Most Chinese instruments are capable of creating very subtle timbres because of their natural

materials. Examination of the structure and qualities of each of the many Chinese instruments is beyond the scope of this document; instead, I will discuss aspects of some of these instruments as they relate to the Chinese-inspired piano pieces in the sections below.

2.2 Alexander Tcherepnin's Compositional Development Through Chinese Folklore And His Eurasian Theory

Tcherepnin followed the path of assimilating and applying the style and language of Chinese music when, in 1934-5, he composed his *Étude du Piano sur la gamme pentatonique*, opus 51, number 3; *Five Concert Studies*, opus 52; and *Technical Studies for Pianoforte on the Five Note Scale*, opus 53. Guy Wuellner refers to these three works as the "Chinese Mikrokosmos."[128] The association with Chinese music belongs to a natural stage in the evolution of Tcherepnin's compositional style.

Born as the only child of the great Russian composer Nikolai Tcherepnin, Alexander received his formative training in traditional European harmony at Petrograd Conservatory.[129] In his early years, he developed and used his devices of the nine-step synthetic scale and Interpoint.[130] In his constant search for new compositional techniques, he wanted a breakthrough from these technicalities and to look for new musical materials.[131] In the late 1920s, Tcherepnin found his new direction through the use of folklore. He felt that folklore is as important to a composer as the anatomy of the human body is to a painter.[132] When Tcherepnin traveled to China in 1934, where he stayed until 1937, he found the music of China fascinating and

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[128] Guy Wuellner, "A Chinese Mikrokosmos," *College Music Symposium* 25 (1985): 131-3.
[129] Alexander Tcherepnin, "Alexander Tcherepnin: A Short Autobiography (1964)," *Tempo* 130 (September 1979): 12-4.
[130] Ibid., 14-5.
[131] Ibid., 16.
[132] Enrique Alberto Arias, "Alexander Tcherepnin's Thoughts on Music," *Perspectives of New Music* 21, no. 1/2 (Autumn 1982 - Summer 1983): 140.

immersed himself deeply in the country's culture.[133] In addition to teaching, performing, and promoting musical education in China, he devoted himself to rigorous study of the style of traditional Chinese music. He described what led to his discovery and fascination with Chinese music in his own words:

> A long time ago, when I was still a child, I remember listening to village singing with my father, true national song in which the national soul is so clearly reflected. In this simple, innocent singing there is something that can endlessly inspire our work. In it is the source, the beginning, the basis of any music. Unfortunately, such simple music is almost impossible to find today, when composers don't write how they feel but only how they were taught, when layer upon layer of artificial culture obliterates the essence of our spirit…. I wanted to find a place where people still sing in their own way, with the internal voice of the soul. I believe that I will be able to do this here, in the Far East, where I have arrived in pursuit of a dream.[134]

Tcherepnin's fascination with Chinese culture led him not only to study Chinese music but also to adopt the Chinese name *Qi Erpin* (齊爾品) and learn to play the Chinese instrument *pipa*.[135]

He promoted Chinese music within the country through setting up a competition for piano compositions that incorporate Chinese traditional music styles and publishing contemporary compositions of Chinese music.[136] He also performed piano compositions of Chinese composers worldwide in the ensuing years.[137]

Looking to the East for cultural and musical inspirations conforms to Tcherepnin's development of the Eurasian theory about the Russian race in the 1920s. According to him, the modern Russian race is the result of assimilation between the Mongols and the Russians. Russia

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[133] Tcherepnin, "Alexander Tcherepnin: A Short Autobiography (1964)," 17.
[134] Ludmila Korabelnikova, *Alexander Tcherepnin: The Saga of a Russian Emigré Composer* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 108.
[135] Yeou-Huey Luo, "The Influence of Chinese Folk and Instrumental Music on Tcherepnin's 'Chinese Mikrokosmos,' a Lecture Recital, Together with Three Recitals of Selected Works of J.S. Bach, W.A. Mozart, C. Debussy, S. Rachmaninoff, D. Shostakovich, and Others" (DMA diss., University of North Texas, 1988), 10 and 66, accessed June 22, 2019, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
[136] Korabelnikova, 109.
[137] Ibid., 110.

is both a European and an Asiatic country and is "as much at home in the West as in the East."[138] He finds his "affiliation with the East" natural for him and that the Eastern culture is not exotic to Russians.[139]

Tcherepnin's Eurasian theory led to his looking to the East for folklore as inspirations for his compositional development. His intention to incorporate Chinese musical style is different from that of composers such as Abram Chasins and Cyril Scott, who wrote musical *chinoiserie* which had nothing to do with Chinese style. Tcherepnin was the first European composer who genuinely assimilated Chinese musical style into his compositions, rather than alluding to China using clichéd exotic devices.[140]

The three pieces I will examine below show that Tcherepnin understood and assimilated the style of genuine traditional Chinese music.[141]

2.2.1 *Shadow Play*, opus 52, number 1

Imitation of the Chinese Shadow Play

In the course of studying traditional Chinese music, Tcherepnin developed keen interest in Chinese Opera and felt that European opera composers could learn from Chinese Opera.[142] In one particular type of traditional Chinese theater performance, performers would control puppets behind the curtain.[143] This type of puppet show normally took place in outdoor theaters. Artists would cut hard paper or leather into the shapes of people and objects and decorate them, making

[138] Tcherepnin, "Alexander Tcherepnin: A Short Autobiography (1964)," 17.
[139] Ibid., 17.
[140] Korabelnikova, 112.
[141] Luo, 90-1.
[142] Chi-Jen Chang, "Alexander Tcherepnin, His Influence on Modern Chinese Music" (EdD diss., Columbia University, 1983), 52, accessed August 22, 2018, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.
[143] Luo, 56.

puppets out of them. Performers would then produce the play by moving the puppets and projecting shadows of these puppets onto a screen; hence the name of this type of performance *Piyingxi* (皮影戲), or "Shadow Play."[144]

Chinese theater synthesizes different disciplines of performing arts, incorporating "elements of the opera, the ballet, the drama, and the circus. It is the music that holds these elements together, and the orchestra accompanies the action all through the performance."[145] The impression of the Chinese Shadow Play, especially its musical elements, inspired Tcherepnin to compose "Shadow Play."[146]

Producers of Shadow Play use the Chinese gong-and-drum ensemble, or *luogu* (鑼鼓) (literally "gong-drum"), and a small group of wind and string instruments to perform music for the play.[147] The *luogu* typically consists of a large gong, a small gong, a drum and a cymbal, producing a wide variety of timbres.[148] The *luogu* plays a central role in Chinese theater music.[149] In the piano piece *Shadow Play,* Tcherepnin reproduces the sound and the spirit of the *luogu* and makes this piece a recreation of the music for a Chinese Shadow Play.

Measures 1 to 8 serve as an introduction in the "Play." The indication *animato* at the beginning suggests an animated mood and rather fast tempo.[150] A jaunty melody in eighth and quarter notes in the top line finds support in the perpetual sixteenth notes underneath, which alternate between pitches A and B and between the two hands, producing a light yet intense

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[144] Luo, 57; Peng, 14.
[145] Tcherepnine, "Music in Modern China," 394.
[146] Luo, 57.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Ibid.
[149] Ibid., 57-8.
[150] Ibid., 60.

percussive effect and reproducing the timbres of the *luogu*. It is as if the music is introducing the main character of the play.[151]

In measures 9 to 13, the left hand plays the melody representing the main character of the play. The right hand plays disjunct, syncopated, *staccato* octaves with grace notes from a second above. The *staccato* octaves reproduce the percussive sound of the *luogu*, while the fast descending seconds emulate a common performance practice in Chinese instruments, especially bowed string instruments.[152]

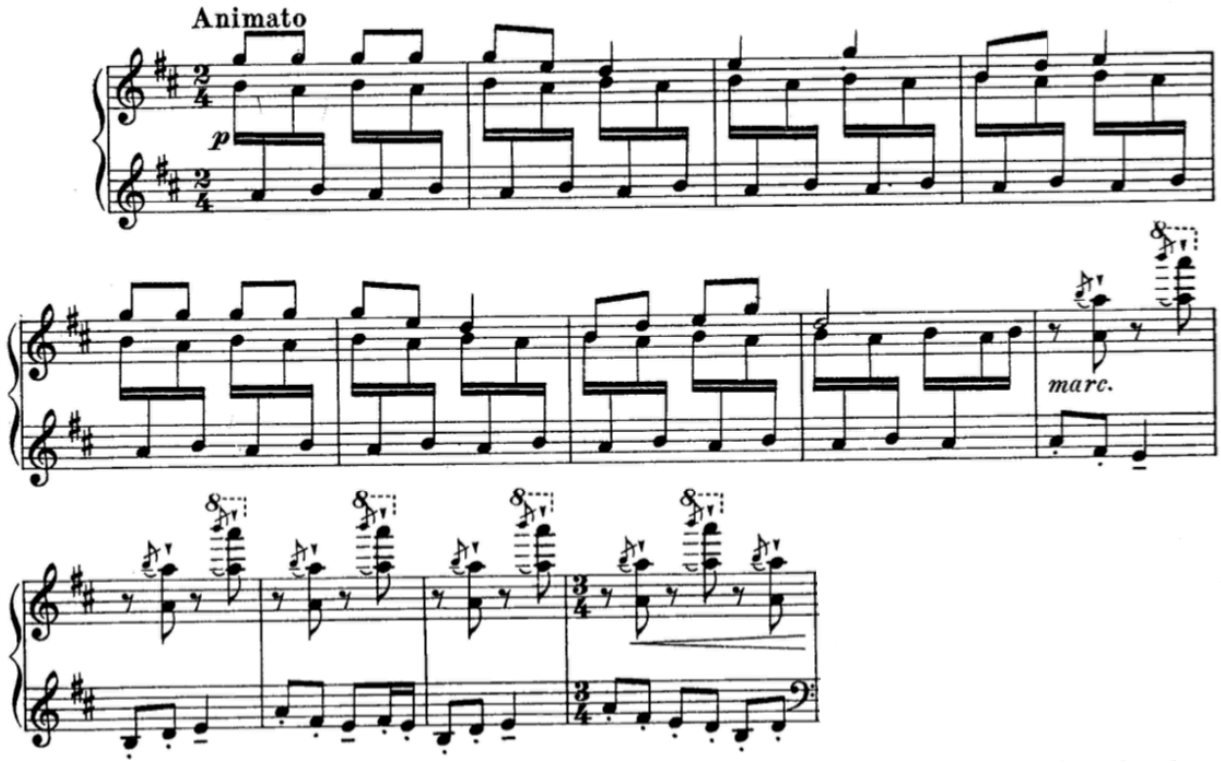

Figure 55. Except of Tcherepnin's *Shadow Play*, measures 1 to 13[153]

[151] Peng, 38.
[152] Ibid., 39.
[153] Alexander Tcherepnin, *Fünf Konzert-Etüden, Opus 52: Schattenspiel* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1964), 3.

Measures 111 to the very end form the closing section of this piece. In addition to using perpetual sixteenth notes to reproduce the *luogu* sound, Tcherepnin also gradually increases the dynamics and thickens the texture throughout the section. The dynamic levels build from *piano* in measure 111, to *forte* in measure 120, *rinforzando* in measure 126, *fortissimo* in measure 136, and *fortissimo pesante* in measure 142. The texture starts with a single-line melody and a sixteenth-note accompaniment producing a percussive sound in measures 111 to 119. Tcherepnin then doubles some of the sixteenth notes in octaves in measures 120 to 125. In measures 126 to 135, both hands play separate strands of continuous sixteenth notes, making the accompaniment thicker. The texture culminates in measures 136 to the end, where the piece ends in thick and loud chords and a *glissando*-like pentatonic passage. The culmination of sound and the constant increase in intensity at the end of the music is typical in the Chinese theater. Tcherepnin effectively reproduces a typical ending of a Chinese theater performance in this piano piece.[154]

Modulation in the Chinese pentatonic system using the Chinese heptatonic modes

Shadow Play illustrates how modulation typically takes place in the Chinese pentatonic system. Measures 1 to 8 are in the G *Gong* mode, which consists of G, A, B, D, and E. In measures 9 to 19, the music modulates to the D *Gong* mode, which consists of D, E, F♯, A, and B. Measures 20 to 22 move to the C *Gong* mode, which consists of C, D, E, G, and A. The measures that follow modulate among these three modes frequently until measure 48 when the music explores new tonalities in measure 49.

[154] Luo, 60-2.

If we look at measures 1 to 22 together, the pitches of these measures belong to the same heptatonic scale. The pitches in these measures are C, D, E, F♯, G, A, and B, which form the C Heptatonic Mode with a ♯4.

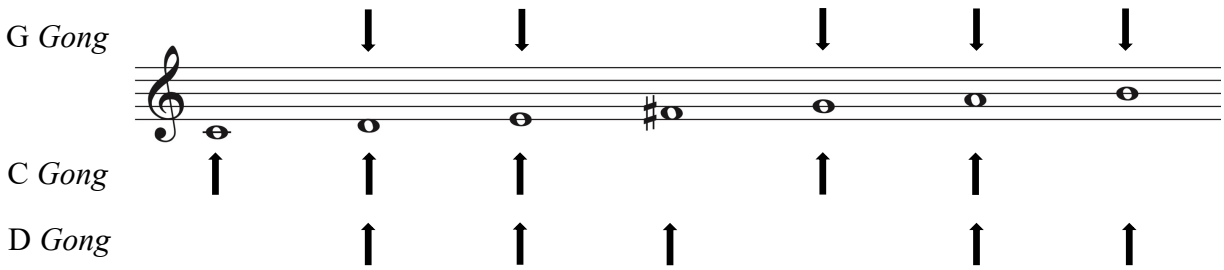

Figure 56. The C *Gong*, D *Gong*, and G *Gong* modes within the C heptatonic mode with a ♯4

By viewing these pitches, which belong to three different pentatonic modes, as belonging to the same heptatonic mode, we see that the music is capable of freely modulating among three pentatonic modes. While quite different from how modulation takes place in Eurocentric music of the Common Practice Period, when modulation often requires pivot harmonies to bridge the two tonalities, this method of modulation is very common in Chinese music.[155]

After establishing the three pentatonic modes in measures 1 to 22, the piece modulates among these three modes freely from measures 23 to 48. Alternatively, we can view the entire section from measures 1 to 48 as belonging to the C Heptatonic Mode with an F♯ and the music as modulating freely among the C, D, and G *Gong* Modes.

[155] Tie, 74.

Table 11. Pentatonic modalities of measures 1 to 48

Measures	Pentatonic Modes Used	Pitches Used
1-8	G *Gong* Mode	G, A, B, C, D
9-15	D *Gong* Mode	D, E, F♯, A, B
16-19	G *Gong* Mode	G, A, B, C, D
20-22	C *Gong* Mode	C, D, E, G, A
23-24	G *Gong* Mode	G, A, B, C, D
25-26	C *Gong* Mode	C, D, E, G, A
27-33	D *Gong* Mode	D, E, F♯, A, B
34-35	G *Gong* Mode	G, A, B, C, D
36	C *Gong* Mode	C, D, E, G, A
37-40	D *Gong* Mode	D, E, F♯, A, B
41(with anacrusis)-48	C *Gong* Mode	C, D, E, G, A

I will extend my analysis of pentatonic modality to measures 49 to 92.

Table 12. Pentatonic modalities of measures 49 to 92

Measures	Pentatonic Modes Used	Pitches Used
49-57	E♭ *Gong* Mode	E♭, F, G, B♭, C
58-62	D♭ *Gong* Mode	D♭, E♭, F, A♭, B♭
63-65	C♭ *Gong* Mode	C♭, D♭, E♭, G♭, A♭
66-67	F♭ *Gong* Mode	F♭, G♭, A♭, C♭, D♭
68-80	A♭ *Gong* Mode	A♭, B♭, C, E♭, F

81-82	G♭ *Gong* Mode	G♭, A♭, B♭, D♭, E♭
83-84	D♭ *Gong* Mode	D♭, E♭, F, A♭, B♭
85-88	G♭ *Gong* Mode	G♭, A♭, B♭, D♭, E♭
89-92	B♭ *Gong* Mode	B♭, C, D, F, G

At measures 49 to 62 together, the pitches are D♭, E♭, F, G, A♭, B♭, and C, forming the D♭ Heptatonic Mode with a ♯4. Measures 49 to 57 are in the E♭ *Gong* Mode and use E♭, F, G, B♭, and C, which are all part of the D♭ Heptatonic Mode with a ♯4. The music modulates to the D♭ *Gong* Mode in measures 58 to 62 by using D♭, E♭, F, A♭, and B♭, swhich also are all part of the D♭ Heptatonic Mode with a ♯4.

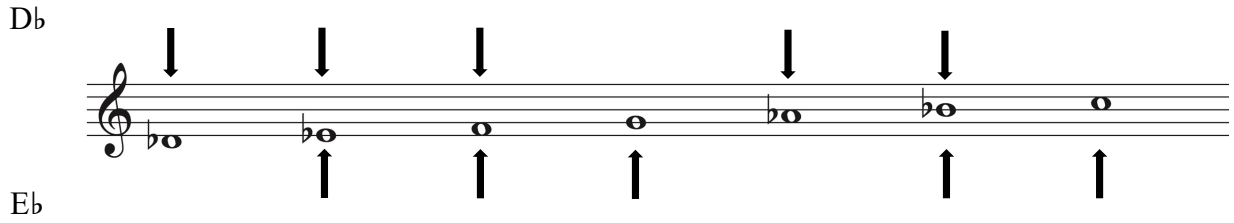

Figure 57. The D♭ *Gong* and the E♭ *Gong* modes within the D♭ Heptatonic Mode with a ♯4

Continuing with the same method of analysis, at measures 58 to 65 together, the pitches are D♭, E♭, F, G♭, A♭, B♭, and C♭, forming the D♭ Heptatonic Mode with a ♭7. Measures 58 to 62 are in the D♭ *Gong* Mode and use D♭, E♭, F, A♭, and B♭. The music modulates to the C♭

Gong Mode in measures 63 to 65 by using C♭, D♭, E♭, G♭, A♭, which also are all part of the D♭ heptatonic mode with a ♭7. The same method of analysis can apply until measure 88.

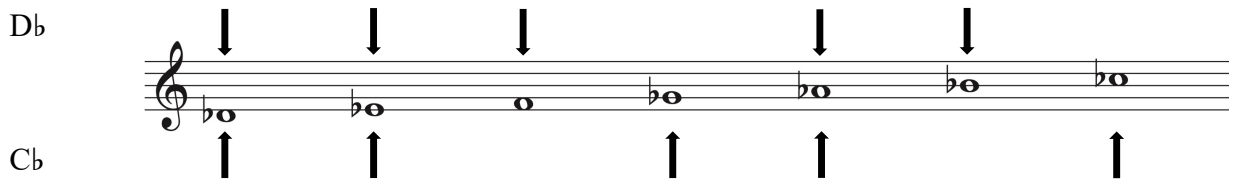

Figure 58. The D♭ and the C♭ *Gong* modes within the D♭ heptatonic mode with a ♭7

By viewing a passage with two different pentatonic modalities as belonging to the same heptatonic mode, we can see that the heptatonic modes work as convenient tools for modulation among different pentatonic modes.

2.2.2 *The Lute*, opus 52, number 2

The English translation of the title of this piece is *The Lute*. The "lute" here refers to the Chinese instrument *guqin*, directly translated as the "ancient zither," which has existed since prehistoric times in China in around 1000 BC.[156] It is a plucked string instrument with a wooden body. While having a limited volume, the *guqin* is capable of very subtle nuances and is often a solo instrument.[157]

[156] Joseph S.C. Lam, "China, People's Republic of: (IV) Living Traditions: (4) Instrumental Music: (ii) Solo Traditions (a) Qin," *Grove Music Online*, ed. Deanne Root, accessed June 18, 2019, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com; Guy Wuellner, "The Complete Piano Music of Alexander Tcherepnin: An Essay Together with a Comprehensive Project in Piano Performance" (DMA thesis, University of Iowa, 1974), 243, accessed September 29, 2018, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global; Ye Zhengang 葉振綱, *Zhongguo yinyue yu yueqi* 中國音樂與樂器 [Chinese Music and Musical Instruments] (Taipei: Windmill Group, 1999), 72-3.
[157] Ye, 74.

Pentatonicism

A *guqin* has seven strings; the basic tuning is C2, D2, F2, G2, A2, C3 and D3, but the tuning of these strings can vary up or down depending on what a particular piece requires.[158]

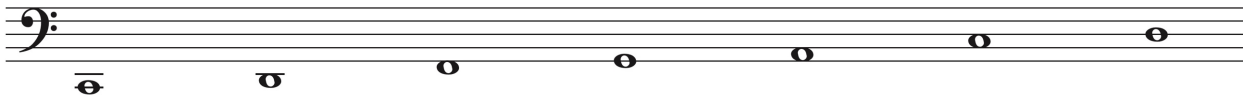

Figure 59. Tuning of the seven strings of a guqin

Tcherepnin's *The Lute* evokes Chinese music for the *guqin* in the most faithful way possible. He wrote the entire piece strictly in the F *Gong* mode. The only five pitches that he uses are F, G, A, C and D, conforming to the basic tuning of the *guqin*.

The sound and idiom of the *guqin*

The entire piece has the dynamic levels of either *ppp* or *pppp*, indicating that the tone of the piece has to remain subtle and remote and the articulation needs to be always gentle.[159] In addition, Tcherepnin indicates holding down the damper pedal from the beginning to the end of the piece, thereby allowing all the strings of the piano to vibrate throughout the piece. The combination of very soft dynamics and free vibration of the piano strings creates rich overtones throughout the performance of the piece and resembles the nuances of the *guqin*.[160]

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[158] Li Minxiong 李民雄, *Minzu qiyue gailun* 民族器乐概论 [Introduction to National Instrumental Music] (Shanghai: Shanghai Music Publishing House, 1997), 23.
[159] Wuellner, "A Chinese Mikrokosmos," 141.
[160] Peng, 17-8.

After the introduction in free rhythm, the first *Moderato* section of the piece starts in measure 3. The two hands alternate to play a single-line melody in eighth notes. This technique of hand alternation simulates how a performer typically plucks the strings of the *guqin*. The effect of gentle plucking continues as the left hand plays detached and disjunct eighth notes in measures 13 to 35, supporting the continuous eighth notes by the right hand. Measures 51 to 81 repeat the technique of hand alternation and detached eighth notes by the left hand.

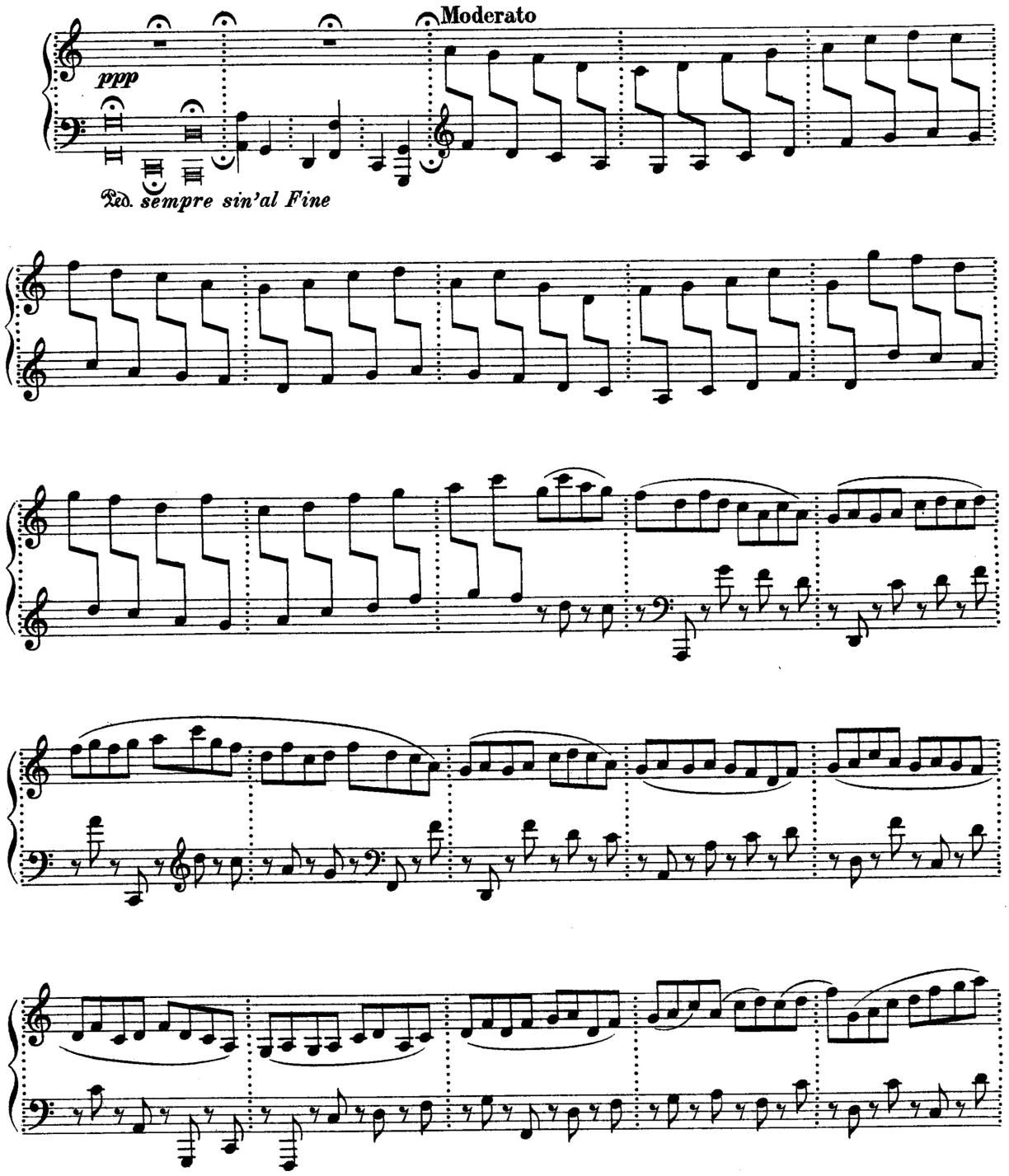

Figure 60. Excerpt of Tcherepnin's *The Lute*, measures 1 to 25, demonstrating very soft dynamic indications, the use of long damper pedal, an introduction in free rhythm, and hand alternation to reproduce the sound and idiom of the *guqin*[161]

[161] Alexander Tcherepnin, *Fünf Konzert-Etüden, Opus 52: Die Laute* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1964), 2.

Tcherepnin uses a rapid arpeggio in the F Gong mode that descends and then ascends in measure 40. He uses a similar arpeggio that descends in measure 86. These arpeggios simulate *glissando* on the *guqin*. On a *guqin*, the player would sweep his or her nails through all the strings, sometimes in one direction and sometimes in both directions repeatedly, to create the effect similar to *glissando* in Western music. Since the strings are tuned to the pitches in the F *Gong* mode, a *glissando* on the *guqin* would produce only pitches in the F *Gong* mode.[162]

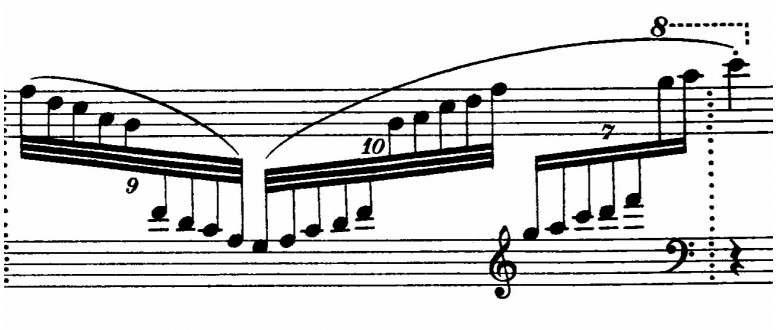

Figure 61. Excerpt from Tcherepnin's *The Lute*, Op.52, No.2, measures 40 and the first beat of measure 41[163]

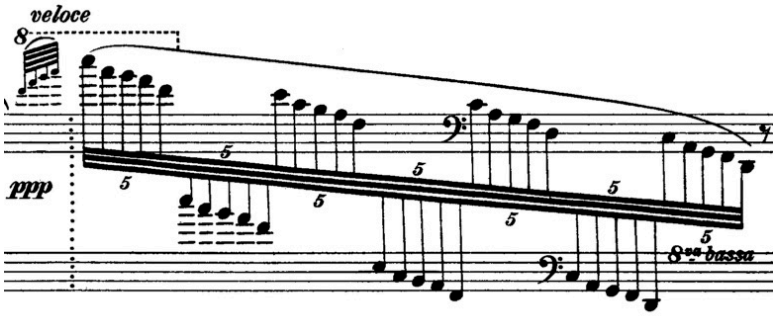

Figure 62. Excerpt from Tcherepnin's *The Lute*, Op.52, No.2, measures 86[164]

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[162] Xu Qong 徐聪, "Qi Erpin 'Zhongguo fengge' zuoqu jifa yanjiu" 齐尔品 "中国风格" 作曲技法研究——以两部作品为例 [A study of the "Chinese Style" in Tcherepnin's Compositional Technique] (Master's diss., Shanghai Conservatory of Music, 2014), 40, accessed November 30, 2018, China National Knowledge Infrastructure 中国知网, www.cnki.net.

[163] Tcherepnin, *Fünf Konzert-Etüden, Opus 52: Die Laute*, 3.

[164] Ibid., 4.

Rhythmic Fluidity

A typical Chinese *guqin* piece has three sections: a slow opening section, a fast middle section, and a slow ending section. Within this *tempo* framework, the performer of a Chinese *guqin* piece has much freedom in his or her use of *tempi*, so long as the performance adheres to the slow-fast-slow scheme. Such freedom often results in vastly different interpretations of the same piece by different performers. The *tempi* and the proportions among the *tempi* of the three sections are meant to be approximate.[165] In designing the *tempo* scheme of *The Lute*, Tcherepnin follows the structure of a Chinese *guqin* piece. He controls the pace of the piece not by changing the *tempo*, but by varying the rhythms of the piece.

Measures 3 to 25 are in constant eighth notes; measures 26 to 39 are all in sixteenth notes; and measures 51 to 80 are in eighth-note triplets. With these three sections all staying within *Moderato*, as Tcherepnin indicates, varying their rhythmic elements achieves the same goal of adhering to the slow-fast-slow scheme.[166]

Tcherepnin recreates the improvisatory nature of a *guqin* piece in sections with free rhythm in *The Lute*. The first two measures evoke a typical introduction to a *guqin* piece. Tcherepnin places fermatas on the first three long notes in measure 1, as well as on the rests in both measures and on both bar lines. Also, these two measures are unmetered. All these features contribute to the improvisatory nature of an introduction to a *guqin* piece and give the performer ample flexibility of interpretation.

Measures 44 to 50 function as a bridge between the middle section with sixteenth notes and the last section with triplets. Measures 82 to 87 conclude the piece. Tcherepnin wrote

[165] Luo, 80-1.
[166] Ibid., 81-83.

slower tempo markings, *Lento* and *Meno mosso* respectively, and many *fermatas* in these two sections. These two sections allow the performer similar flexibility in interpreting the rhythm.[167]

In addition to the techniques just described, Tcherepnin uses various other ways to contribute to the rhythmic fluidity of the piece. In measures 13 to 25, the left hand invariably has an eighth note on the second half of every quarter beat, with an eighth rest always on the first half of every quarter beat. By placing eighth notes on the second half of every beat, Tcherepnin weakens the metrical implication of a strong beat. In fact, the piece lacks a time signature or any indication of meter. Bar lines are all dotted instead of solid lines. The "meter," if any, changes among duple, triple, and quadruple times freely throughout the piece. Together, these features create a strong sense of rhythmic fluidity typical of music for the *guqin*.

Linear quality of the music

Another important indication of Tcherepnin's intention to make this piece as genuinely Chinese as possible is its purely linear construction. The introduction and the beginning measures of the *Moderato* section are monophonic. When the left hand plays notes that support the melody in the right hand, it does so for coloristic effects without any implication of harmonic progression.

To summarize, Tcherepnin showed his mastery of the Chinese musical style of the *guqin* in this piece through the use of the F *Gong* mode (which corresponds to the tuning of the *guqin*), the simulation of performance technique of the *guqin*, the rhythmic fluidity created by syncopated notes, the absence of meter and solid bar lines, and the purely linear construction of the piece without any hint of harmony.

[167] Ibid., 83.

2.2.3 *Homage to China*, opus 52, number 3

Idiom of the *pipa*

In *Homage to China*, Tcherepnin overtly evokes the Chinese instrument *pipa*, an instrument that first appeared in China in around 350 BC.[168] A standard contemporary *pipa* is a "lute with a bent neck," four strings, thirty frets, and a "pear-shaped wooden resonator."[169] A performer would hold the instrument vertically and "strum the strings with right hand actions moving towards or away from their torsos, while stopping and plucking the strings to produce specific pitches/tones by pressing on the required frets with the left hand fingers."[170]

Upon hearing a performance on the *pipa* during his visit in China, Tcherepnin liked the instrument for its color and effect. A performance by the *pipa* virtuoso, Miss An Ho Tsao, impressed Tcherepnin so much that he decided to take *pipa* lessons with her to gain a deep understanding of the instrument and assimilate the idiom of the instrument in his own compositions.[171]

The basic way of making a *pipa* sound is by simply plucking one of the strings.[172] By nature, each note played on a plucked-string instrument has a clear articulation but weak sustain. In order to produce the effect of playing a long note that sustains, a *pipa* player would pluck the same note repeatedly and continuously by rapidly rotating the right-hand fingers on the strings, producing an effect similar to a *tremolo* on the same note.[173] English scholars sometimes

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[168] Wuellner, "The Complete Piano Music of Alexander Tcherepnin," 243; Ye, 80.
[169] Lam, 29.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Wuellner, "The Complete Piano Music of Alexander Tcherepnin," 239.
[172] Lam, 30.
[173] Ibid., 29-30.

translate this technique as "rolling," referring to the rotation or rolling of the fingers on the strings.[174] A third technique is "strumming," where the player would sweep his or her fingers through all the strings, producing an arpeggiated tone cluster.[175]

Tcherepnin dedicated *Homage to China* as a "love offering" to Lee Hsien Ming, who would later become his wife.[176] *Homage to China* shows how Tcherepnin assimilates the idiom and reproduces the tone color and sound effect of *pipa* in a piano piece. In fact, Tsao agreed that *Homage to China* exhibits Tcherepnin's understanding of the *pipa* and his mastery of the techniques of playing the *pipa* from studying with her.[177]

Tcherepnin recreates the effects of the three techniques of "plucking," "rolling," and "strumming" in *Homage to China* and makes the piece a successful evocation of the instrument.[178] The piece has mostly well-articulated notes and is largely monophonic. The monophonic, non-*legato* melody resembles the "plucking" articulation and the sound effect of a typical piece for the *pipa*.[179] Measures 1 to 24 consist mainly of rapidly repeated sixteenth notes, evoking the technique of "rolling" on the *pipa*.[180] Measures 1, 8, 9, 16, 17, and 18 have arpeggiated grace notes; measures 21 and 22 include two accented chords; measure 66 consists of arpeggiated thirty-second notes followed by three chords in different pentatonic modes.[181] All these figurations are to recreate the effect of "strumming" on the *pipa*.

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[174] Luo, 67-8.
[175] Ibid., 70; Chang, 117.
[176] Wuellner, "The Complete Piano Music of Alexander Tcherepnin," 243-44.
[177] Liang Yue 梁悦, "Xifang gangqin zuopin zhong de 'Zhongguo yuansu' yanjiu" 西方钢琴作品中的 "中国元素" 研究 [A Study of Chinese Elements in Western Piano Music] (Master's thesis, Qufu Normal University, 2015), 14-5, accessed November 30, 2018, China National Knowledge Infrastructure 中国知网, www.cnki.net.
[178] Chang, 117-8
[179] Xu, 40-1.
[180] Chang, 118.
[181] Xu, 41.

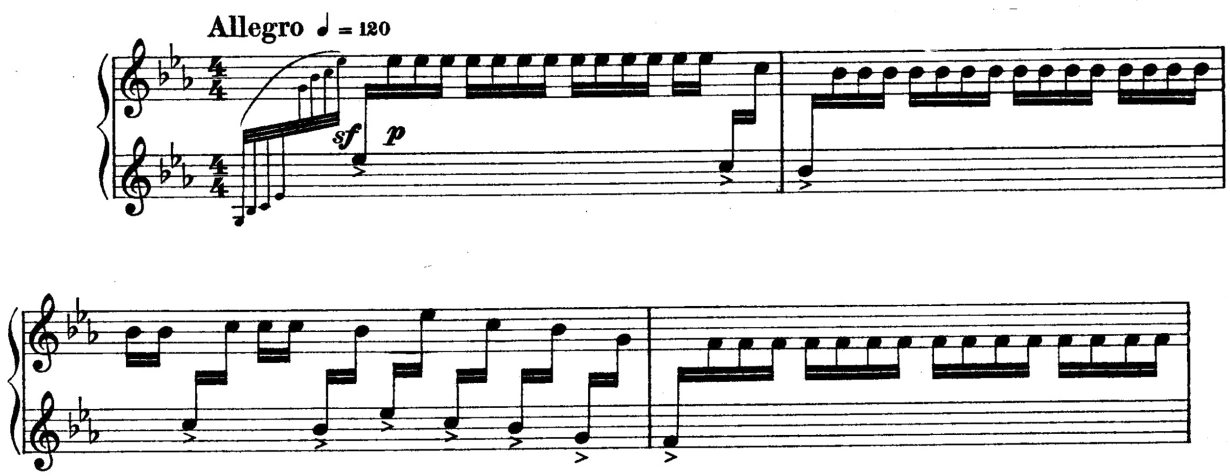

Figure 63. Excerpt of Tcherepnin's *Homage to China*, showing examples of the simulation of the techniques of "rolling" and "strumming" on the *pipa*[182]

Modulation in the Chinese pentatonic system using the Chinese heptatonic modes

Similar to *Shadow Play*, modulation takes place within the Chinese pentatonic system in *Homage to China*.

Two-thirds of the piece is in the E-flat *Gong* mode, using the pitches E♭, F, G, B♭, and C. In particular, if we divide the piece into three roughly equal sections, the first section, measure 1 to 23, and the last section, measure 47 to 66, use predominantly the E-flat *Gong* mode.

Modulations in the Chinese pentatonic system take place in the middle section. The following table shows how the music modulates starting from measure 32 until it returns to the E-flat *Gong* mode in measure 47.

Table 13. Pentatonic modalities from measures 32 to 66

Measures	Pentatonic Modes Used	Pitches Used
32-37	D♭ *Gong* Mode	D♭, E♭, F, A♭, B♭

[182] Alexander Tcherepnin, *Fünf Konzert-Etüden, Opus 52: Widmung an China* (Mainz: B. Schott's Söhne, 1964), 2.

38-39	E♭ *Gong* Mode	E♭, F, G, B♭, C
40-42	F *Gong* Mode	F, G, A, C, D
43	E♭ *Gong* Mode	E♭, F, G, B♭, C (the first note A in the left hand belongs to the F *Gong* mode in measures 40-42)
44	G *Gong* Mode	G, A, B, D, E
45-46	F *Gong* Mode	F, G, A, C, D
47-66	E♭ *Gong* Mode	E♭, F, G, B♭, C

Similar to the analysis of modulation in *Shadow Play* described on pages 64 to 67, we can again view any two consecutive pentatonic modes as belonging to the same Chinese heptatonic mode. At measures 32 to 39 together, the pitches are D♭, E♭, F, G, A♭, B♭, and C, forming the D♭ heptatonic mode with a ♯4. Measures 32 to 37 are in the D♭ *Gong* Mode and use D♭, E♭, F, A♭, and B♭, forming part of the D♭ Heptatonic Mode with a ♯4. The music modulates to the E♭ *Gong* Mode in measures 38 to 39 by using E♭, F, G, B♭, and C, also forming part of the D♭ heptatonic mode with a ♯4. The D♭ heptatonic mode with a ♯4 allows the music to modulate between the D♭ *Gong* Mode and the E♭ *Gong* mode freely.

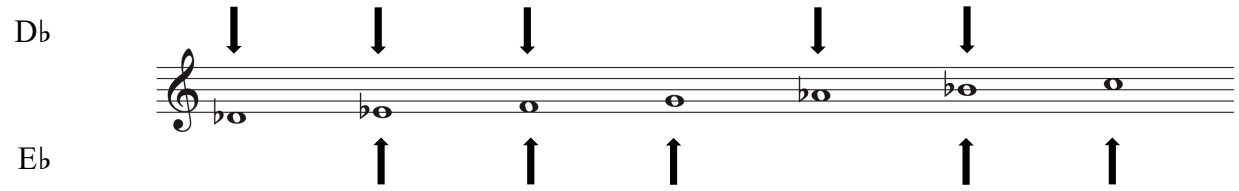

Figure 64. The D♭ and E♭ Gong modes within the D♭ heptatonic mode with a ♯4

Measures 38 to 42 demonstrate modulation between the E♭ *Gong* mode and the F *Gong* mode. We can view the pitches in these measures as belonging to the E♭ heptatonic mode with a ♯4, which consists of E♭, F, G, A, B♭, C, and D. Measures 38 to 39 are in the E♭ *Gong* mode and the pitches are E♭, F, G, B♭, and C. Measures 40 to 42 are in the F *Gong* mode and the pitches are F, G, A, C, and D. The E♭ heptatonic mode with a ♯4 allows the music to modulate between the E♭ *Gong* mode and the F *Gong* mode freely, as the modulation from the F *Gong* mode back to the E♭ *Gong* mode in measures forty to forty-three shows.

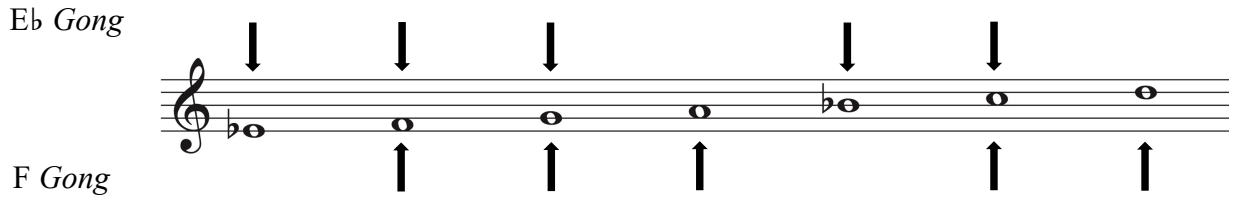

Figure 65. The E♭ and the F *Gong* modes within the E♭ heptatonic mode with a ♯4

2.3 Conclusion

Through his deep understanding of Chinese musical style, Tcherepnin recreates the style for the piano in his *Shadow Play*, *The Lute*, and *Homage to China*. Chinese pentatonicism defines the musical language of these three pieces. *Shadow Play* and *Homage to China* demonstrate how music typically modulates within the paradigm of Chinese pentatonicism. Also, each of these pieces recreates the timbre of a Chinese instrument. *Shadow Play* recreates the percussive sound of the *luogu*, which the Chinese theater uses. *The Lute* is almost a *guqin* piece transcribed for the piano. *Homage to China* assimilates the articulation and idiom of the *pipa*.

A detailed exploration of Chinese musical style in this chapter reveals how it differs from musical *chinoiserie*. Chinese musical style has a sophisticated tonal system, namely Chinese pentatonicism, that differs from the tonal language of European music. Even under the shield of clichéd evocative gestures, pieces of Eurocentric composers incorporating musical *chinoiserie* still use the tonal language, sometimes diatonicism, of European art music. Also, the idiom of each Chinese musical instrument is distinct from one another. *Chinoiserie* devices, while imitating imaginary "Eastern instruments" and evoking an exotic sound, do not relate to the sounds of traditional Chinese musical instruments.

I have defined the two ends of the spectrum of musical styles with musical *chinoiserie* and genuine Chinese musical style. In the next chapter, I will explore how a Eurocentric composer can partially incorporate genuine Chinese musical style in a piece of piano music, which, at the same time, comprises other musical styles, producing what I will call a "musical hybrid."

CHAPTER 3: CHINESE MUSICAL STYLE AS A COMPOSITIONAL TOOL: PARTIAL INCORPORATION OF CHINESE MUSICAL STYLE

A composer does not need to recreate genuine Chinese musical style throughout an entire piece, even when he or she has likely understood and mastered the style. In this chapter, I will explore how a composer can use Chinese style as a compositional technique which he or she juxtaposes with various other musical styles, creating a "musical hybrid" of distinct originality.

3.1 Bohuslav Martinů: *The Fifth Day of the Fifth Moon*

Martinů composed *The Fifth Day of the Fifth Moon* in 1948 and dedicated it to Tcherepnin's wife, the Chinese pianist Hsien-Ming Lee Tcherepnin.[183] The score includes an epigraph of the English and French translations of an excerpt of a poem by the famous Chinese poet, Su Tungpo (蘇東波).[184]

The Fifth Day of the Fifth Moon is in ternary form.

Table 14. Structure of Martinů's *The Fifth Day of the Fifth Moon*

Section	A	B	A
Measures	1-13	14-47	48-60

The piece is reminiscent of Tcherepnin's *The Lute* in its evocation of the sound of the Chinese *guqin* and the characteristics of a *guqin* piece. The bar lines are dotted instead of solid

[183] Maurice Hanson and Wesley Roberts, *Guide to the Pianist's Repertoire* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014), 661; Miloš Šafránek, *Bohuslav Martinů: His Life and Works*, trans. Roberta Finlayson-Samsourová (London: Allan Wingate, 1962), 259.
[184] Ibid.; see also Bohuslav Martinů, *The Fifth Day of the Fifth Moon* (Paris: Heugel et Cie, 1951), in which the publisher included the translations.

and the numbers of beats per "measure" change frequently throughout the piece, indicating a fluid rhythm which is a characteristic of *guqin* pieces.[185]

The piece also follows the slow-fast-slow scheme typical of a *guqin* piece.[186] Similar to the technique Tcherepnin uses in *The Lute*, Martinů varies the rhythmic pace of the piece instead of using *tempo* markings to achieve the impression of *tempo* change. The A sections consist of mostly quarter notes. Martinů uses half notes to end most of the phrases. He also uses some eighth notes, which form musical gestures in measures four and eight and produce syncopations in measures 9 to 12. The B section begins with alternation among eighth, quarter, and sixteenth notes, before developing into a continuous stream of eighth notes in measure 30 and sixteenth notes from measures 31 through 48. Quarter notes assume their rhythmic importance again once the A section returns in measure 48.

The overall rhythmic framework of *The Fifth Day of the Fifth Moon* points towards influence of the idiom of the Chinese *guqin*. However, if we examine the smaller details in the texture and tonal language of this piece, we will discover that it is a conglomerate of three distinct musical styles: the Chinese style, the style of diatonicism and functional harmony, and the style of non-functional harmony. Martinů would switch styles from one measure to the next. As the analysis below will show, most of these styles are identifiable and distinct from one another.

Measures 1 and 2 consists of the pitches F, G, A, C, and D. These pitches belong to the Chinese F *Gong* mode. In addition, these are the pitches that the strings of a Chinese *guqin* typically tune to.[187] The texture is homophonic, with disjunct bass notes supporting the fluid

[185] Luo, 80-1.
[186] Ibid.
[187] Li, 23.

melodic line. Together with a very soft dynamic, these two measures recreate the sound and atmosphere of a Chinese *guqin* piece by assimilating pentatonicism and various features of Chinese musical style.

Measures 3 to 5 are distinctly diatonic. Martinů tonicizes F major by using B♭ in measures 3 and 4 and harmonizing measure 5, resulting in an authentic cadence in F major as the music leads into measure 6. Increasing the number of voices from two to four in measure 5 results in a clear harmonic progression which in itself is a signature of Western art music and produces an unequivocal authentic cadence in F major.

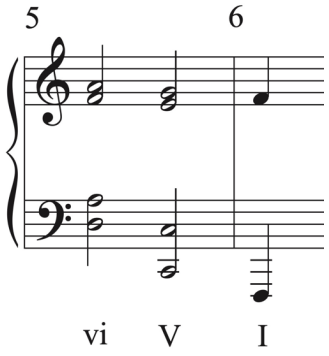

Figure 66. Harmonic progression of Martinů's *The Fifth Day of the Fifth Moon*, measures 5 and 6

At the same time, the melody traces the F major scale and leads to the tonic (F) in measure 6, again reasserting the tonality of F major.

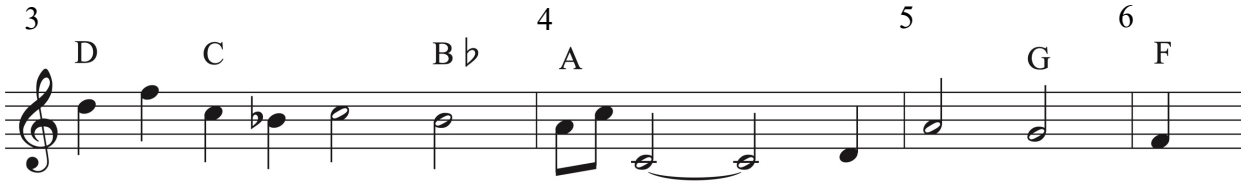

Figure 67. Melody of Martinů's *The Fifth Day of the Fifth Moon*, measures 3 to 6

Measures 6 and 7 return to homophony in the F *Gong* mode. B♭ returns in measures 8 to 12. The music comes to an authentic cadence again in measure 13, tonicizing F major.

Throughout the A section, the texture is thin and the dynamics range from *piano* to *mezzo forte*, suggesting subtle timbres that evoke the atmosphere of the *guqin*.

Table 15. Styles of the A section of Martinů's *The Fifth Day of the Fifth Moon*

Measure	1-2	3-6 (first note)	6-7	8-13
Style	Chinese pentatonic (F *Gong* mode)	Diatonic	Chinese pentatonic (F *Gong* mode)	Diatonic

In the B section, Martinů expands his musical language, using the F *Gong* mode to create not only melodies but also harmonic colors. Chromatic pitches ornament materials that sound diatonic at first, before Martinů adds pitches not belonging to the F major scale in such abundance that these obscure the tonality and harmonies become non-functional. The dynamic range in the B section is also bigger, ranging from *piano* to *fortissimo*.

The B section begins with the F *Gong* mode in measures 14 to 16. Martinů writes in the higher register of the piano and doubles the melody with octaves, distinguishing the B section in sonority from the A section. Measure 17 includes a B♭. All the voices descend either stepwise or in thirds, hinting at the use of F major. Measures 18 and 19 return to the F *Gong* mode. In measures 20 and 21, Martinů brings back the B♭ and adds an A♭ to the tonal palette. Up to this point, the purpose of the A♭ is not certain. The A♭ can lead to a modulation or simply add color to the harmony.

The texture thickens in measures 22 to 29 where both hands play thick chords most of the time. In measures 24 to 27, the parallel movements of seventh chords by the right hand and octave chords by the left hand evoke the device of planing, obscuring the diatonic functionality of these chords.[188]

The music returns to the F *Gong* mode in measures 28 and 29 where Martinů builds sonorous chords and high notes evoking the chimes. F *Gong* mode continues as the music gains motion gradually starting from measure 30. The continuous strands of eighth notes become sixteenth notes in measure 31 before developing into a long trill in the right hand starting from measure 37. The left hand supports the trill with *tremolo*-like quintuplets in fifths starting from measure 38. These quintuplets still use pitches from the F *Gong* mode. In measures 42 and 43, Martinů lowers the left-hand quintuplets by a half step, resulting in pitches C♭, D♭, G♭, and A♭. With the right hand staying in F *Gong* mode, these pitches in the left hand add a bitonal flavor to these two measures.

Table 16. Styles of the B section of Martinů's *The Fifth Day of the Fifth Moon*

Measure	Style
14-16	Chinese pentatonic
17	Diatonic
18-19	Chinese pentatonic
20-23	Diatonic
24-27	Planing
28-41	Chinese pentatonic
42-43	Bitonal
44	Chinese pentatonic
45	Diatonic
46-47	Chinese pentatonic

[188] Kostka and Payne, 492.

Martinů uses a variety of musical styles in composing *The Fifth Day of The Fifth Moon*. He treats Chinese musical style as a compositional tool to enrich his own musical language as he sees fit. The Chinese musical style that he recreates is genuine because he incorporates not only the Chinese pentatonic mode but also the timbral subtlety, rhythmic fluidity, and instrumental idiom of Chinese music. All these elements of Chinese music come together organically where he recreates Chinese musical style. Martinů's Chinese musical style is similar to Tcherepnin's and has very little in common with the *chinoiserie* of Arensky, Chasins, and Scott. As *The Fifth Day of The Fifth Moon* shows, Martinů is capable of juxtaposing genuine Chinese musical style with other musical styles to create a unique musical hybrid.

EPILOGUE

The foregoing chapters detail different types of Chinese inspiration in the piano repertoire of Eurocentric composers between 1890 and 1950. Some composers, such as Arensky, Chasins, and Scott, infused clichéd ornamental devices or melodies into the style of European art music, creating works of musical *chinoiserie*. Such works fulfilled the goal of evoking Chinese culture, as the Western artists and audience interpreted or imagined it, because the clichéd musical devices and elements served as a departure from the established norm of European art music. The departure from European musical norm put musical *chinoiserie* in the camp of musical exoticism that, starting in the nineteenth century, gained popularity in European art music. While sounding exotic to the Western ear, such *chinoiserie* pieces fell within the paradigm of European musical language because the composers used harmony to drive the structure of these pieces.

In his *Etude*, Arensky incorporated the Chinese folk tune *Molihua* but used harmonies, disguised as pentatonicism, that fell within the paradigm of functional hierarchy in the Common Practice Period to delineate the phrases of the tune. *Lotusland* demonstrated how Scott used complex and unusual harmonies to create a unique sound world. While Scott tried to give *Lotusland* an Eastern sound by including whole-tone and pentatonic gestures, he controlled the structure of the piece by establishing the "home sonority" and using it at structurally important parts of the music. In "A Shanghai Tragedy," Chasins used many extended tertian harmonies but revoiced them so they would sound like quartal harmonies. While the sonority of open fourths created exotic tonal colors, the extended tertian harmonies still fell squarely within the tonic-dominant polarity of the functional hierarchy of harmony in controlling the structure of the piece.

The popularity of exoticism, orientalism, and *chinoiserie* was part of the vogue of evoking "otherness" in European art beginning in the nineteenth century. Another factor that contributed specifically to *chinoiserie* in music was the limited understanding of and appreciation for Chinese music in the Western world. Knowing little about Chinese music, European musicians find it a perfect object of musical "otherness."

Tcherepnin took an entirely different path, studying Chinese music thoroughly and assimilating genuine Chinese musical style and instrumental idioms into piano works. His style resulted from his travels to the Far East and his development of the Eurasian theory, which stated that Russia is both a European and an Asiatic country and encompasses both Western and Eastern cultures. In particular, *Homage to China* reflected not only Tcherepnin's appreciation of Chinese music but also his deep affection for his then-future wife, to whom he dedicated this piece as a "love offering." By using and modulating within the Chinese pentatonic system and incorporating idioms of different Chinese musical instruments in his *Shadow Play*, *The Lute*, and *Homage to China*, Tcherepnin wrote piano pieces in a genuine Chinese musical style that stood in stark contrast to the musical *chinoiserie* of Arensky, Scott, and Chasins.

Martinů also mastered Chinese musical style and incorporated it in *The Fifth Day of the Fifth Moon*. However, instead of writing a piece entirely in the style, he juxtaposed it with a variety of other styles to create a "hybrid" piece. To Martinů, Chinese musical style was a compositional tool rather than a musical goal.

This essay provides the tools for analyzing different types of Chinese inspiration in Western music. The pieces I analyzed demonstrate that such inspiration can range from evoking the imaginary Chinese sound using clichéd musical devices and gestures to assimilating genuine Chinese musical style. While the spectrum of Chinese inspiration I provided is comprehensive,

the pieces I used as examples are far from exhaustive. I hope that this essay will assist scholars and musicians in identifying Chinese inspiration in any applicable piece of Western music. At least some of the *chinoiserie* features and gestures I listed will likely appear in a musical work of *chinoiserie.* Scholars and musicians will also find genuine Chinese musical style distinctive, should a composer incorporate it in a piece.

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VITA

Tak Yan Yeung has made concerto appearances with the Texas Christian University Symphony Orchestra and the Azusa Pacific University Symphony Orchestra. A prizewinner of the Los Angeles International Liszt Competition, the Music Teachers' Association of California Piano Concerto and Solo Competitions, and the Redlands Bowl Young Artist Competition, Yeung has performed extensively as a soloist and collaborative pianist in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex and the Greater Los Angeles region. Future engagements include recording and giving the world premiere of Michael Colina's Piano Concerto with The Florida Orchestra.

A Nationally Certified Teacher of Music (NCTM) of the Music Teachers National Association, Yeung currently serves on the faculty of Tarrant County College. Yeung earned a Master of Music in Piano as a student of the late Dr. Karen Shaw at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where he also taught secondary piano as an Associate Instructor, and an Artist Certificate at Azusa Pacific University under Dr. Tao Chang. Currently, he is completing a Doctor of Musical Arts in Piano Performance under Dr. Tamás Ungár at Texas Christian University. Prior to coming to the United States in 2009, Yeung obtained a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Bachelor of Laws at the University of Hong Kong.

ABSTRACT

The present document examines the different ways in which European and American composers incorporated their impression or knowledge of Chinese musical style into their piano compositions between 1890 and 1950. Chapter one explores the phenomenon of *chinoiserie* in music, where Western composers evoke their impression of China by using musical devices commonly, and sometimes erroneously, associated with Chinese musical style. Detailed analyses of works by Anton Arensky, Cyril Scott, and Abram Chasins show that such musical devices are often ornamental; the Western concept of harmony and tonality drives the structure of each work. Chapter two provides a detailed explanation of Chinese musical style and analyzes three compositions by Alexander Tcherepnin. Having lived in China between 1934 and 1937 and studied genuine Chinese musical style, Tcherepnin fully understood the style and recreated it in his piano works. Such works faithfully reproduce the timbre, texture, tonality, and idiom of the Chinese style on the piano. Focusing on Bohuslav Martinů's *The Fifth Day of the Fifth Moon*, chapter three shows how a composer can juxtapose genuine Chinese musical style with other musical styles within a composition. The analytical tools in this document will help scholars and musicians identify elements of Chinese inspiration in Western music and distinguish musical chinoiserie from genuine Chinese musical style.