

JIAO, WEI, D.M.A. Chinese and Western Elements in Contemporary Chinese Composer Zhou Long's Works for Solo Piano *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations, Wu Kui, and Pianogongs*. (2014)  
Directed by Dr. Andrew Willis. 136 pp.

Zhou Long is a Chinese American composer who strives to combine traditional Chinese musical techniques with modern Western compositional ideas. His three piano pieces, *Mongolian Folk Tune Variations, Wu Kui, and Pianogongs* each display his synthesis of Eastern and Western techniques. A brief cultural, social and political review of China throughout Zhou Long's upbringing will provide readers with a historical perspective on the influence of Chinese culture on his works. Study of *Mongolian Folk Tune Variations* will reveal the composers early attempts at Western structure and harmonic ideas. *Wu Kui* provides evidence of the composer's desire to integrate Chinese cultural ideas with modern and dissonant harmony. Finally, the analysis of *Pianogongs* will provide historical context to the use of traditional Chinese percussion instruments and his integration of these instruments with the piano. Zhou Long comes from an important generation of Chinese composers including, Chen Yi and Tan Dun, that were able to leave China achieve great success with the combination of Eastern and Western ideas. This study will deepen the readers' understanding of the Chinese cultural influences in Zhou Long's piano compositions.

CHINESE AND WESTERN ELEMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY CHINESE  
COMPOSER ZHOU LONG'S WORKS FOR SOLO PIANO  
*MONGOLIAN FOLK-TUNE VARIATIONS,*  
*WU KUI, AND PIANOGONGS*

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Musical Arts

Greensboro  
2014

Approved by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my earnest gratitude to my committee chair, Dr. Andrew Willis, for the time that he has invested in editing and assisting me on this project. His outstanding mentorship and vast knowledge of music has greatly impacted me as a musician throughout the entirety of doctoral studies.

I would also like to thank my Doctoral Advising Committee, Dr. Paul Stewart, Dr. Di Piazza, Dr. Kent Williams, and Dr. Guy Capuzzo for their exceptional effort and support in assisting me with this project and my academic endeavors. Special thanks is due to Dr. Zhou Long for graciously allowing me to interview him personally.

I would like to thank my previous piano instructors, Professor Steven Heyman from Syracuse University and Dr. Betty Ann Diaz from Columbus State University, who guided me in my undergraduate and masters studies in the United States. Special thanks to Professor Xiaoling Yang and her husband Tai Zhou for their support and inspiring me to pursue my dream of studying abroad in the United States.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, especially my husband, Jacob Hahn, who offered countless hours of advice and support throughout my study and research. I would like to thank my parents, Jiafan Zhu and Yande Jiao, who provided enormous support throughout my entire education.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

*A Brief Historical Background and Research Summary*

Starting from the 1980s, the exploration of modern music has led to a surge of new musical development throughout China. New generations of Chinese composers have been drawn into creating a new style of contemporary Chinese music. The road was not easy at first. Toward the end of the 1970s, the Chinese government gradually opened up to the Western world in all aspects including politics, culture, music, and art, while setting up new policies to rectify the mistakes caused by the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the Cultural Revolution was to attack the Four Olds—old ideas, old culture, old customs, and old habits. Traditional Chinese music was severely condemned during that time. In order to establish socialism and to prevent the return of capitalism, China isolated itself from the world for ten years, and all Western music and culture was strictly censored. After the Cultural Revolution ended in 1976, Zhou Long (周龙) was among the first students to be admitted to the Central Conservatory of Music when the Chinese government publicly restored the National College Entrance

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<sup>1</sup> The Cultural Revolution, also known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, was a social and political upheaval led by the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao Zedong, which resulted in political chaos and caused tremendous social and economic disorder in China. The Cultural Revolution was the battle of thought and culture according to Mao. The aim of the Cultural Revolution was to destroy the Four Olds (四旧), to prevent capitalism from coming back, and to establish socialism.

Examination in 1977. Many of his classmates, including his wife Chen Yi (陈怡), Tan Dun (谭盾), Chen Qigang (陈其钢), Ye Xiaogang (叶小纲), Qu Xiaosong (瞿小松), Guo Wenjing (郭文景), Zhang Xiaofu (张小夫), Su Cong (苏聪) and Liu Suola (刘索拉) are renowned composers nowadays with significant musical influence nationally and internationally. Drawing from all the conservatories in China,<sup>2</sup> the composition class of 1977 is known as the Fifth Generation of Composers.<sup>3</sup> Free from the constraints of the Cultural Revolution, this new generation of composers was gradually able to combine modern and contemporary compositional techniques along with traditional Chinese music

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<sup>2</sup> Besides the Central Conservatory of Music, there are the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, the Shenyang Conservatory of Music and then Sichuan Conservatory of Music. Composers like Ge Ganru (葛甘儒) and Bright Sheng (also known as Sheng Zongliang 盛宗亮) are contemporaries of Zhou Long, and are also significant figures of the Fifth Generation of Composers from Shanghai Conservatory of Music.

<sup>3</sup> Beijing Daily. "Leave the Truth in Sound, Chinese Musicians of the Past Sixty Years in Retrospect." [http://www.china.com.cn/culture/txt/2009-08/31/content\\_18433729.htm](http://www.china.com.cn/culture/txt/2009-08/31/content_18433729.htm) (accessed April 28, 2014). The Fifth Generation of Composers is also known as the Third Generation's Composers after the communist party established the People's Republic of China in 1949. However, previous to new China's establishment, there were two generations of forerunner musicians starting from the 1920s. The First Generation of Chinese musicians, who lived in the early 1900s, included Xiao Youmei (萧友梅), Huang Zi (黄自), Zhao Yuanren (赵元任), and Li Shutong (李叔同). This Generation was devoted to introducing Western European Classical and Romantic music to China and to establishing a westernized music education system in China. Xiao Youmei, known as the father of modern Chinese music, was the first Chinese musician to earn a Doctoral Degree in Music in Germany. The music of the First Generation featured a strong Western influence along with traditional Chinese music elements. The Second Generation included He Lüding (贺绿汀), Liu Xuean (刘雪庵), Ma Sicong (马思聪), Jiang Wenye (江文也), Xian Xinghai (冼星海) and Nie Er (聂耳) from the Liberated Zone. Influenced by Western musical form and technique, their music is full of patriotic enthusiasm. The Third Generation of Composers, including Ding Shande (丁善德), Luo Zhongrong (罗忠镕), and Zhu Jianer (朱践耳), was active from 1949 until the Cultural Revolution (1966). Influenced by Soviet music and culture, their compositions were greatly influenced by the political environment. The Fourth Generation's Composers are represented by Wang Xilin (王西麟), Jin Xiang (金湘), Wu Zuqiang (吴祖强), Gao Weijie (高为杰), Yang Liqing (杨立青), and Li Xian (李西安) among others. Their musical development was restricted early during the Cultural Revolution.



and culture. Many of them studied abroad after graduating from the Central Conservatory of Music (CCM), and the majority of them went on to gain international recognition.

Educated at the Central Conservatory of Music and Columbia University, Zhou Long is known for his distinctive musical language, which synthesizes elements from the East and the West. Zhou's music synthesizes contemporary Western compositional techniques with the sonorities and aesthetic concepts of traditional Chinese music. These traditional elements include traditional Chinese instruments, Beijing opera, and elements of folk music and dance rhythms practiced by various Chinese ethnic groups. Zhou Long's piano compositions display excellent craftsmanship. A close examination of three of his piano works, namely, the solo piano compositions *Mongolian Folk-tune Variations* (1980) and *Wu Kui* (1983), and *Pianogongs* (2007) for piano and two Chinese opera gongs (6'' & 11''), will illustrate the composer's overall compositional style and musical philosophy, as well as his influence on contemporary Chinese music and contemporary music in general. These pieces expand the contemporary piano idiom by mixing musical elements from the East and West, and by augmenting the limited spectrum of a piano repertoire that is dominated by Western music culture, they infuse new creative energy into the art of the piano.

There are currently few studies and a limited number of articles related to Zhou Long and his work. Most of the articles related to the topic have been published in China

through principal Chinese musical journals such as *People's Music*,<sup>4</sup> *Musical Works* (owned by the Chinese Musicians Association), and *The New Voice of Yue-Fu*, the academic periodical of the Shenyang Conservatory of Music. The few articles written about Zhou Long's piano solo *Wu Kui* do not explore the significance of Zhou Long's piano works in depth. One article, entitled "The first attempt to explore the piano solo *Wu Kui*," was written by Wen Wang<sup>5</sup> of the Sichuan Conservatory of Music and published in *New Voice of Yue-Fu* in 2007. It examines some historical and theoretical aspects including a short bio of the composer, analysis of form and structure, a brief analysis of harmony, tempo markings and performance practice of *Wu Kui*. Another article, "Examining the resources on the piano solo *Wu Kui* with performance analysis," was written by Jin Zhao of the Xinghai Conservatory of Music and published in *Musical Works* in 2011.<sup>6</sup> Jin Zhao's article focuses on various recordings and performance analysis. It also mentions editorial issues and corrections based on the Oxford University Press Edition. There is a doctoral dissertation titled *Voices from the East: Culture and Expression in Contemporary Chinese Piano Music*, written by Kan Chiu from the University of California at Los Angeles and published in 2009 in the United States.<sup>7</sup> This

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<sup>4</sup> A special issue of *People's Music* published in May of 2007 was dedicated to Zhou Long. It contains several articles introducing the composer and his works. Jiti Li, "Zhou Long-- A Composer Cultivating Chinese Music in the United States." *People's Music* 5 (2007): 4-7.

<sup>5</sup> Wen Wang, "The First Attempt to Explore the Piano Solo *Wu Kui*." *New Voice of Yue-Fu*. 4 (2007): 36-39.

<sup>6</sup> Jin Zhao, "Examining the Resources on the Piano Solo *Wu Kui* with Performance Analysis." *Music Composition* 3 (2011): 116-119.

<sup>7</sup> Kan Chui, *Voices from the East: Culture and Expression in Contemporary Chinese Piano Music*. Diss. University of California Los Angeles, 2009. Web.

dissertation introduces six contemporary Chinese composers: Zhou Long (周龙), Ge Ganru (葛甘儒), Zhao Xiaosheng (赵晓生), Bright Sheng (盛宗亮), and Zhang Zhao (张朝). The author dedicates each chapter to one representative piano work of these five composers. The second chapter is titled “ ‘Carnival of the Animals:’ Zhou Long’s *Wu Kui*.” This chapter includes a biography of the composer and some background related to the work. The author also discusses performance issues related to tempo, structure, phrases, harmony, dynamics, and the virtuosity of the piece.

The present dissertation is based on a personal interview with Zhou Long conducted by the author on March 3, 2013. My research summarizes relevant information available from the sources mentioned above regarding *Wu Kui*, but in addition, it provides more extensive analysis, together with relevant information about Chinese music history, ethnic folk dance and traditional music elements. In addition to *Wu Kui* it covers Zhou Long’s two other pieces for piano, his first piano solo *Mongolian Folk-tune Variations*, and the recent *Pianogongs* for piano and two Chinese opera gongs.

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<<https://libproxy.uncg.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.libproxy.uncg.edu/docview/304851808?accountid=14604>>.

*Zhou Long: An Overview of His Life and Works*

Zhou Long<sup>8</sup> was born on July 8, 1953 in Beijing, China; four years after the Communist Party of China established the People's Republic of China. He was raised in an artistic and musical family. Zhou Long's father, an artist, taught at the Central Academy of Drama,<sup>9</sup> and his mother He Gaoyong (贺高勇), a soprano and a voice professor at the Central Conservatory of Music, had great influence on his development. He spent his childhood listening to recordings of Western classical music. Zhou Long once said in an interview, "[My mother] always felt that I should become a composer. She thought composers were the superiors among all the musicians. Great performers achieve only through great compositions."<sup>10</sup> He started taking piano lessons at age five. However, as Zhou recalled: "I did not like practicing the piano, since I was very naughty at that time. So, I made a deal with my parents."<sup>11</sup> Zhou threatened to stay home from school if they forced him to continue his lessons. His parents therefore agreed that he would stop taking piano lessons once he started elementary school at age seven. He did however continue playing the piano on his own and developed a genuine interest in the

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<sup>8</sup> Zhou (周) is his family name, which according to Chinese culture goes before the given name.

<sup>9</sup> Jiayue Zhao, "Zhou Long: Some Masters in the Country May Not Sing in Tune." *Southern People Weekly*. (June 20, 2011). [http://www.nfpeople.com/story\\_view.php?id=1188](http://www.nfpeople.com/story_view.php?id=1188) (accessed September 17, 2013). Zhou Long's father was invited by Zhou Enlai (周恩来), the First Premier of the People's Republic of China, to move from Shanghai to Beijing to establish the scenography and stage design program at the Central Academy of Drama.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Long Zhou, interview by author, March 3, 2013.

instrument during the Cultural Revolution, when he worked at a rural farm during The Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside Movement.<sup>12</sup> After middle school, Zhou was sent to a state farm in the northeast region of China when he was about sixteen years old. He recalled, “I worked to grow wheat, beans, and corn. And I drove a tractor.”<sup>13</sup> Away from home, Zhou spent five years in the countryside farm and in the military troupe in Heilongjiang.<sup>14</sup> This special life experience left a powerful influence on his later compositions, especially *The Fire of Future*.<sup>15</sup> Zhou Long recalled his experience:

During the time when I was working at the military and farm village, we had to burn the grass on the wasteland. We had to run from the wasteland after we burned it, because when the strong wind came, the whole forest caught fire. It was very dangerous to put out the fire when we burned the forest at that time. We had no tools, or airplanes to sprinkle water. We were dependent on humans to extinguish the fire. Lots of people from the military died while attempting this task.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *The Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside Movement* was a policy of the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It was the result of the anti-bourgeois thinking prevalent during the Cultural Revolution. Chairman Mao declared that all privileged urban youth would be sent to mountain areas or farming villages in order to experience hard labor and learn from the work and farmers. Many middle school and high school students, known as the Rusticated Youth of China, were forced out of the cities to live with peasants and work in remote farmlands of China.

<sup>13</sup> Frank J. Osteri "He Said, She Said: Zhou Long and Chen Yi." NewMusicBox. <http://www.newmusicbox.org/articles/he-said-she-said-zhou-long-and-chen-yi/2/> (accessed May 21, 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Heilongjiang (黑龙江省) is a province located in the northeastern part of China which borders Inner Mongolia to the west and Russia to the north.

<sup>15</sup> *The Fire of Future* for the symphonic orchestra and children’s choir was commissioned by the Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra in 2001.

<sup>16</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

Later Zhou Long worked with a song-and-dance troupe in Zhangjiakou.<sup>17</sup> In 1973, towards the end of the Cultural Revolution, he resumed his musical training studying composition and music theory with the famous Chinese composers Luo Zhongrong (罗忠熔), Li Yinghai (黎英海), and Fan Zuyin (樊祖荫), and conducting with Yan Liangkun (严良堃)<sup>18</sup> as well as Chinese traditional music. After the Cultural Revolution ended in 1976, the National College Entrance Examination was restored publicly in 1977.<sup>19</sup> Zhou was admitted to the first composition program during the reopening of the Central Conservatory of Music (CCM) in Beijing that year, where he studied composition with Su Xia (苏夏). However, due to a lack of living space for the students, the first semester had to be postponed until the spring of 1978.<sup>20</sup> According to the composer himself, it

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<sup>17</sup> The Zhangjiakou song-and-dance troupe (张家口歌舞团) or Zhangjiakou City Art Ensemble (张家口市文工团) is a music and art troupe in Zhangjiakou (张家口), a city located in the northwestern part of Hebei Province, which borders Beijing, Inner Mongolia and Shanxi Province.

<sup>18</sup> Wen Wang, "First Attempt in Exploring Piano Solo Work Wu Kui." *The New Voice of Yue-Fu 4* (2007): 36-39.

<sup>19</sup> Bill Brugger, *China: Radicalism and Revisionism 1962-1979* (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes & Noble Books, 1981), 214. The college and university entrance exam was first restored in 1977 on a provincial level and in 1978 on a national level.

<sup>20</sup> The 1977/1978 Composition Class in Central Conservatory of Music is known as the "Elite Chinese Composer Class" because it produced many internationally distinguished contemporary Chinese composers. Along with Zhou Long and his wife Chen Yi, there were Tan Dun, Liu Suola, Su Cong, Zhang Xiafu, Chen Qigang, Ye Xiaogang, Guo Wenjing, and Qu Xiaosong. As the generation who attended college immediately following the restoration of the National College Entrance Exam at the end of the Cultural Revolution, they represent a new era in Chinese music history. They are the champions of the revolution in contemporary Chinese music development. All of them experienced the significant changes of China in the past fifty years and they are the explorers of the new frontier in reforming and maturing Chinese composition.

turned out that this spring semester in 1978 would not count towards his degree. Therefore, an extra semester was added to his five-year composition program. After graduation in 1983, he was appointed Composer-in-Residence with the National Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra of China, and worked there for two years. During this time, he married his fellow composition classmate and violinist Chen Yi. Married for close to thirty years now, the couple has no children. Chen Yi said in an interview: “We are too busy. Our hundreds of compositions are our children.”<sup>21</sup> Their love and partnership in life also influences their music tremendously. As she admitted in an interesting dinner conversation on the topic of criticizing each other’s compositions, “We have done that all the time, ever since we were classmates.”<sup>22</sup> Zhou Long responded: “She said there is only one day left and to do this huge revision is impossible. But I said, ‘whatever it costs you have to change it’.”<sup>23</sup> Chen Yi added, “‘otherwise you are not going to turn that in!’ So then I fixed it.”<sup>24</sup> They share the same interest and passion for composition and have comparable educational backgrounds,<sup>25</sup> as colleagues of the 1978

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<sup>21</sup> Jiayue Zhao. “Zhou Long: Some Masters in the Country May Not Sing in Tune.” *Southern People Weekly*.

<sup>22</sup> *He Said, She Said: Zhou Long and Chen Yi*. Video clip. Directed by Frank J. Oteri. Manhattan's Chinatown: NewMusicBox, 2006. <http://www.newmusicbox.org/articles/he-said-she-said-zhou-long-and-chen-yi/> (accessed May 21, 2014)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Chen Yi studied composition with Wu Zuqiang (吴祖强) from 1978 to 1986 at CCM. Chen Yi came to U. S. after she received her Master’s degree from CCM in 1986. They were both able to study composition with Chou When-Chung and Mario Davidovsky at Columbia University and each of them received their doctoral degree from Columbia University in 1993.

composition class at CCM, they both came to America to pursue further study in composition.<sup>26</sup>

Zhou Long was able to continue his studies in the United States upon receiving a fellowship to attend Columbia University in 1985, graduating with a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in 1993. He studied composition with Chou Wen-Chung (周文中), Mario Davidovsky, and George Edwards during this time. During his first couple of years in New York, Zhou had to adjust to a new culture and environment, while absorbing new information concerning twentieth-century compositional techniques, atonal composition and the work of American composers such as George Crumb and Elliott Carter. He also suffered from homesickness, and the news of his mother passing away during this time affected him tremendously. As a result, Zhou did not compose for almost two years.<sup>27</sup> He started to compose again in 1987. *Wu Ji* (无极)<sup>28</sup> was his first composition written in the United States and represents his first attempt at atonality. Zhou mentioned: "I never

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Among the Fifth Generation Chinese composers from the 1978 composition class, Tan Dun, Bright Sheng, Ge Ganru, Chen Yi and Zhou were all classmates at Columbia University.

<sup>26</sup> Green, Edward. "The Impact of Buddhist Thought on the Music of Zhou Long: A Consideration of Dhyana." *Contemporary Music Review* 26: 548. Zhou Long met with Dr. Chou Wen-chung from Columbia University when Dr. Chou came to CCM as the composer in residence in 1979. He was impressed with Dr. Chou's music and his teaching. As a result, Zhou came to the United States in 1985.

<sup>27</sup> Green, Edward. "The Impact of Buddhist Thought on the Music of Zhou Long: A Consideration of Dhyana." *Contemporary Music Review* 26 (2007): 547-567.

<sup>28</sup> *Wu Ji* (无极) is a trio for piano, *zheng* and percussion. The title *Wu Ji* means limitless in Chinese, and it was composed in 1987 in an atonal idiom. However it had originally been composed for piano and electronics. Zhou told the author, "during that time, I used tapes and synthesizers to compose that work. Nowadays nobody plays that version anymore." The piece was arranged and transcribed for a trio of piano, *zheng* and percussion in 1991, and this has become the standard version nowadays.



wrote atonal music before I came to the United States.”<sup>29</sup> While studying at Columbia University and living in Brooklyn, Zhou became the music director of the organization *Music from China*.<sup>30</sup> Zhou said during our interview that:

It was a rare opportunity to have such a great Chinese music ensemble in the US. I worked with them for over thirty years. During that time, I organized many premium works for the concerts at Lincoln Center. There was an annual best, new composition concert at the end of the year. We also commissioned different works from Chinese and American composers for Chinese instruments, solo compositions, or compositions mixing traditional Chinese instruments. I, myself, wrote for them as well.<sup>31</sup>

As the music director for *Music from China*, Zhou found more opportunities for performance in New York. He started to write a series of chamber music works to promote contemporary Chinese music in the United States. During the period from 1987 to 1994, he produced a series of compositions based on the philosophical and spiritual concepts of Buddhism and ancient Chinese philosophical ideals. Zhou himself called it his “Buddhist Period.”<sup>32</sup> Representative works of this period include *Wu Ji* written in 1987, *Heng* (恒) for *xiao*, *pipa*, *yangqin*, *zheng*, percussion and *erhu* completed in 1987,

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<sup>29</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

<sup>30</sup> Founded in 1984, *Music from China* or *Changfeng Chinese ensemble* is a chamber ensemble that performs a dual repertoire of traditional and contemporary Chinese music. Their mission, to introduce audiences to the best of Chinese musical culture, evolved into an affinity for the eclectic that embraces both traditional and new music. Dr. Zhou worked with them for over thirty years. He organized annual new composition concerts in New York and he wrote many compositions for them mixing the Western and traditional Chinese instruments together. The official website for *Music from China* is <http://www.musicfromchina.org/>.

<sup>31</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

<sup>32</sup> Green. "The Impact of Buddhist Thought." 548.

*Ding* (定) (*Samadhi*) in 1988 and 1989,<sup>33</sup> *Hun* (魂) for *pipa* and string quartet in 1992, and in 1994 *Tianling* (天灵) for *pipa* and chamber ensemble and *Xuan* (Ineffable 玄) for flute, percussion, *pipa*, *zheng*, violin and cello. With these compositions, Zhou Long began his journey of creating a unique mixture of sound that combines Chinese and Western musical elements, aesthetic concepts, and instruments. He recalls: “After I came to the United States, I did not stay away from the Chinese instruments and music; on the contrary, I got even closer.”<sup>34</sup> After spending almost seventeen years in New York, he started teaching at the University of Missouri at Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance in 1998.<sup>35</sup> In the following year, Zhou Long and his wife Chen Yi became United States citizens.

Dr. Zhou has won multiple international composition competitions and has received numerous fellowships and grants from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Guggenheim and Rockefeller Foundations, and the National Endowment for the Arts, among others. His compositions have also received numerous awards. His work *Ding* (*Samadhi*) won First Prize in 1990 in the International Chamber Music Composition Competition *Ensembliä in Mönchengladbach* in Germany; and *Chan*

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<sup>33</sup> *Ding* (*Samadhi* 定) was a trio for clarinet, *zheng* and double bass written in 1988 and 1989 and transcribed for clarinet, double bass and percussion in 1990.

<sup>34</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

<sup>35</sup> Zhou Long and his wife Chen Yi both joined the faculty of the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance in 1998. They are both distinguished Professors of Music Composition at UMKC.

*(Dhyana)*<sup>36</sup> won First Prize in the Fifth International Composition Competition in D'Avray, France in 1991.<sup>37</sup> Zhou Long was selected from over a thousand composers as one of six finalists at the First Masterprize International Composition Competition<sup>38</sup> in London, 1998. As a result of making it to the finals, the London Symphony performed his symphonic composition *Two Poems from Tang*<sup>39</sup> along with a recording produced by EMI and BBC.<sup>40</sup>

Zhou's success has not been limited to competitions. His accomplishments have won him numerous international awards and commissions including the prestigious Adventurous Programming Award from the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers in 1999. As the composer-in-residence for the Seattle Symphony's "Silk Road Project" Festival, Zhou worked with legendary performer Yo-Yo Ma in 2002. In 2003, he received an Academy Award in Music for a lifetime achievement award from

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<sup>36</sup> *Chan (Dhyana 禅)* was composed in 1989 for a quintet of flute, clarinet, violin, cello and piano. It was premiered at the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan in 1990. This remarkable work reflects the Buddhist ideology.

<sup>37</sup> Albertson, Don, and Ron Hannah. "Zhou Long." The Living Composers Project. July 19, 2014. Accessed August 23, 2014. <http://composers21.com/compdocs/zhoulong.htm>.

<sup>38</sup> In order to promote new music, the founder, John McLaren, a British novelist, former investment banker and diplomat, founded the Masterprize International Composition Competition in 1998. Austin, Sara. "Masterprize International Composition Competition." *Harmony: Forum of The Symphony Orchestra Institute* 7 (1998): 75. (accessed May 22, 2014).

<sup>39</sup> Inspired by the ancient Chinese instrument, *guzhen*, a seven-string zither, *Two Poems from Tang* merges Eastern and Western musical influences. Zhou Long composed *Poems from Tang* for string quartet in 1995. The third and fourth movements may be performed separately as *Two Poems from Tang* for large orchestra.

<sup>40</sup> Oxford University Press. Zhou Long: Full Biography. <http://www.oup.co.uk/music/repprom/zhoulong/fullbiog/> (accessed September 1, 2013).

the American Academy of Arts and Letters for his compositions that unify the East and West.<sup>41</sup> He has received commissions from all over the world including from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation in the Library of Congress, the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University, Meet the Composer, Chamber Music America, the New York State Council on the Arts, and others. His music has been commissioned, performed and recorded by many international symphonies and contemporary ensembles including the Singapore Symphony, the Tokyo Philharmonic, the New Music Consort, EMI, Teldec, and Delcos. All of his music is published by Oxford University Press.<sup>42</sup>

In addition to his success as a composer, Zhou has distinguished himself an excellent teacher. He received the UMKC "*Distinguished Professor*" title for unique and extraordinary achievements during a career.<sup>43</sup> Zhou and his wife Chen Yi balance successful composition careers and hold demanding teaching positions.<sup>44</sup> They also travel frequently between China and the United States in order to maintain a cross-cultural exchange in music and education. Both of them were awarded a Visiting Professor position at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing in May 2006, and

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<sup>41</sup> University of Missouri – Kansas City. "Zhou Long: Distinguished Professor of Music Composition." <http://conservatory.umkc.edu/faculty.cfm?r=%22%252P%20%0A> (accessed May 1, 2014).

<sup>42</sup> Oxford University Press. Zhou Long: Full Biography. <http://www.oup.co.uk/music/repprom/zhoulong/fullbiog/> (accessed September 1, 2013).

<sup>43</sup> University of Missouri – Kansas City. "UMKC composer Zhou Long named UMKC Distinguished Professor." <http://info.umkc.edu/umatters/2012/03/06/umkc-composer-zhou-long-is-first-umkc-faculty-designated-as-a-umkc-distinguished-professor/> (accessed January 1, 2014).

<sup>44</sup> University of Missouri – Kansas City. "Chen Yi: Lorena Searcy Cravens/Millsap/Missouri Distinguished Professor of Composition." <http://conservatory.umkc.edu/faculty.cfm?r=%22%2624%20%0A> (accessed May 1, 2014).

Xinghai Conservatory of Music in Guangzhou province in June 2006. They also became Visiting Professors at Shenyang, Xian, and Tianjin Conservatories of Music in June 2007. In 2011, Dr. Zhou and his wife were both granted the Fifth “Thousand Plan” Award in Tianjin, known as “The Recruitment Program of Global Experts” in China, which is a Chinese government-funded program designed to attract experts from all fields.<sup>45</sup>

In 2011, he became the first Chinese-American composer to receive the Pulitzer Prize in Music for his opera *Madame White Snake*, which brought him immediate fame throughout the world.<sup>46</sup> Commissioned by Opera Boston and the Beijing Music Festival, *Madame White Snake* is Zhou Long’s first opera, which was premiered on February 26, 2010 by Opera Boston at the Cutler Majestic Theatre. The work was highly praised by the jurors, and they described the work as “a deeply expressive opera that draws on a Chinese folk tale to blend the musical traditions of the East and the West.”<sup>47</sup> Even though Zhou draws upon many different inspirations for his compositions he will always first be considered a Chinese composer. Zhou states: “Even though I have American citizenship now, the American critics still call me a ‘Chinese Composer.’ For me, this title feels more intimate to me, and in fact, I did not change. The Chinese tradition has

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<sup>45</sup> Tianjin Conservatory of Music. Visiting Professor Dr. Chen Yi and Dr. Zhou Long Both Granted the Fifth “Thousand Plan” in Tianjin. <http://www.tjcm.edu.cn/showwords.asp?airid=2100&BigType> (accessed Sep. 1, 2013)

<sup>46</sup> Although Zhou Long was the first Chinese American composer to win the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 2011, his wife Chen Yi was nominated as a finalist for the same prize in 2006 for her composition *Si Ji* (Four Seasons). The Pulitzer Prizes. "Past Winners and Finalists in Music". <http://www.pulitzer.org/bycat/Music> (accessed May 21, 2014).

<sup>47</sup> Oxford University Press. Zhou Long: Full Biography.

been deeply rooted in me, and it will never change.”<sup>48</sup> Zhou states on his personal page on the University of Missouri Kansas City website: “I draw some of my themes and inspirations from ancient Chinese poetry. There are musical traits distinctly reminiscent of ancient China: sensitive melodies, expressive glissandi – performing with a gliding result by sliding one or more fingers rapidly over the keys of a piano – in various statements and, in particular, a peculiarly Chinese undercurrent of tranquility and meditation.”<sup>49</sup> His composition *Chan*, also known as *Dhyana*, for flute, clarinet, violin, cello and piano quintet, for which the Chinese title “*Chan*” (禪) means “meditation”, is related to Zen Buddhism. Further, several compositions that reflect philosophical ideals of ancient Daoism, including *He* (和) for Sting Quartet (2002), *Wuxing* (五行) for sextet (2002), and *Wuji* (无极).<sup>50</sup> The title *He* (和) means “harmony”; *Wuxing* (五行) is known as the “Five Elements or Five Phases”, which are Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water; and *Wuji* (无极) means “infinite, endless, or limitless.” These are the main philosophical

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<sup>48</sup> Translated from a Chinese article. Jiti Li, “Zhou Long—A Composer Cultivating Chinese Music in the United States.” *People's Music* 5 (2007): 5-7.

<sup>49</sup> University of Missouri Kansas City. Zhou Long’s Life and Music. [http://www.umkc.edu/news/2008-web-profiles/long\\_zhou081208.asp](http://www.umkc.edu/news/2008-web-profiles/long_zhou081208.asp) (accessed September 1, 2013).

<sup>50</sup> Besides the one written in 1987 and revised in 1991, Zhou wrote another piece called *Wuji* in 2004, which is a trio for piano and two Chinese percussion instruments, *chui* (槌) and *bang* (棒). For more details please refer to footnote 28. The other pieces related to ancient Chinese religious and philosophical ideals are *Ding* (定) for clarinet, percussion and double bass (1991), *Xuan* (玄) for flute, percussion, pipa, zheng, violin and cello (1993), *Heng* (恒), *Hung* (魂) and *Tianling* (天灵). Jiti Li, “Zhou Long--A Composer Cultivating Chinese Music in the United States.” *People's Music*.

ideals and concepts in ancient Daoism<sup>51</sup> as developed by the Chinese philosophers *Laozi* (老子) and *Zhuangzi* (庄子) around the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Zhou also admires the music and art of the Tang dynasty, which is regarded as the golden age of literature and art in Chinese history. Influences of the music, art and literature of the Tang dynasty are found in the symphonic works *Poems from Tang* and *Out of Tang Court*. Many works are directly related to well-known Chinese literature, such as the poems *Pipa Xing* (琵琶行)<sup>52</sup> by Bai Juyi (白居易), *Konghou Yin* (箜篌引)<sup>53</sup> by Li He (李贺), *Li Sao* (离骚) by Qu Yuan (屈原) (from the Warring States period of ancient China), and *Shengsheng Man* (声声慢) by the famous female poet of the Song Dynasty Li Qingzhao (李清照). The work *With Wang Wei, Meng Haoran* (和王维，孟浩然), written in 2007 for *pipa*, *erhu* and chamber orchestra, honors the two major poets of the Tang Dynasty, Wang Wei (王维) and his great friend Meng Haoran (孟浩然), who together were known as “Wang Meng,” and who led the development of the “nature and landscape” poetry style.

Zhou Long also holds ancient Chinese instruments and music in high regard. His string quartet *Qin Qu* (琴曲), composed in 1982, has a connection with the ancient

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<sup>51</sup> Daoism, also known as Taoism, is a Chinese philosophical tradition which emphasizes living in harmony with the Dao. The term Dao means “way,” “path,” or “principle.” *Dao De Jing* (道德经) written by the founder of Daoism, *Laozi* (老子), and the writings of *Zhuangzi* (庄子) were the two texts that built the philosophical foundation for Daoism. Daoism was developed during the Warring States period, and had a profound influence on Chinese culture.

<sup>52</sup> *Pipa Xing* (琵琶行) composed in 1991/2000 for soprano, pipa, and cello.

<sup>53</sup> *Konghou Yin* (箜篌引) written in 1995 for soprano, erhu, pipa, zheng and strings.

*guqin*<sup>54</sup> music *Yu Ge* (渔歌). The trio for piano, violin and cello *You Lan* (幽兰) is named after a *guqin* piece, and the use of the string instruments in the 1994 work for string quartet *Four Poems from Tang* also resembles the *guqin*. Several other pieces incorporate ancient musical instruments, such as the set of *qing*<sup>55</sup> and *the chime bells*,<sup>56</sup> namely *Qing Ling* (磬灵) written in 1999 for piano trio, and *Zhong Ji* (钟祭) composed for Yo Yo Ma and the New York *Changfeng* Chinese Ensemble.<sup>57</sup> Zhou revealed his passion for combining cultural influences stating: “I compose not just to make a musical statement, but to achieve my goal of sharing different cultures in our new society and improving the understanding between people of various backgrounds.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Jin Jie, *Chinese Music*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 59-60. The *guqin* was first created in the Zhou Dynasty and went through a long evolution and development. It now typically has seven strings though the earliest form had only five strings. The body of the instrument is elongated and hollow in the center. The strings hang above the surface without supports. There is a huge variety in the ways that the *guqin* can be played, with around ninety extant techniques. Chinese considered the *guqin* to be superior to all other instruments in depth and strength of musical expression.

<sup>55</sup> *Qing* (磬) is a percussion instrument made of stone. A set of *Chime Qing* may consist of many *qings* of various sizes hung up by a frame.

<sup>56</sup> *The Chime Bells*, known as *bianzhong* (编钟), excavated from the tomb of Marquis Yi (*zenghouyi* 曾侯乙), contained sixty-five bells of various sizes with different pitches. Some of the bigger bells may have been over seven meters long and close to three meters tall. They had a range of up to five octaves. The beautiful and pure tone of the bells produced harmony when struck together.

<sup>57</sup> Jiti Li, “Zhou Long--A Composer Cultivating Chinese Music in the United States.” *People's Music*.

<sup>58</sup> University of Missouri Kansas City. Zhou Long's Life and Music. [http://www.umkc.edu/news/2008-web-profiles/long\\_zhou081208.asp](http://www.umkc.edu/news/2008-web-profiles/long_zhou081208.asp) (accessed September 1, 2013).



The following chapters will focus on separate examinations of the three piano works by Zhou Long. *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations* (1980), the composer's first solo piano composition, reveals his early attempts at utilizing variation form and combining Chinese folk melody with Western harmony. *Wu Kui* (1983) begins to incorporate twentieth-century compositional technique along with more modern and dissonant western harmonies while still referencing Chinese folk culture. Finally, the recent composition for piano, *Pianogongs* (2007), presents a unique integration of Eastern and Western instruments through the use of Chinese opera gongs and piano. The discussion of these works will aim to elucidate the composer's overall compositional style and musical philosophy, as well as to evaluate his influence on contemporary Chinese music and contemporary music in general.

CHAPTER II  
MONGOLIAN FOLK-TUNE VARIATIONS

*Overview*

*Mongolian Folk-tune Variations* is one of the composer's earliest attempts at solo piano composition. It was composed around 1979 or 1980 sometime between Zhou's sophomore and junior year at the Central Conservatory of Music. When talking about the exact year of the composition, he said, "I cannot remember clearly. The manuscript was already tattered. There was no clear record. Then I had to input the score electronically from the penciled manuscript, so I could give it to the Oxford University Press."<sup>59</sup> One of his composition assignments in college, it was never published in China. Later upon the request from the Oxford University Press for an intermediate piano piece, Zhou revisited his earlier manuscripts, and publishing the *Variations* for the first time in 2009. Dr. Zhou said:

It is an early composition of mine, a student composition. They [Oxford University Press] published most of my compositions, which were composed in America. But they asked for some easier solo compositions. I only have some works composed when I was a student. I feel ashamed to publish them. They said: 'no, no, it doesn't matter.' They took them and liked them, so they published all my student works, since they had never been published. They were abandoned as composition exercises before. However the publisher ended up liking these pieces, since they can be played by almost anybody.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Zhou, interview by the author, 2013.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

Although the composer does not include this piece in his official oeuvre, it is still worth studying as it reveals many interesting aspects about how Zhou began to explore Western compositional forms and structures and how he began to incorporate these forms and structures into the Chinese idiom.

Growing up listening to art songs by Debussy and Tchaikovsky, Zhou had the advantage of close contact with Western classical music early on in China. He was born and raised in an intellectual, artistic, and musical family in Beijing. Since his mother was a voice professor at CCM, he started to take piano lessons at a very young age, although they only lasted a couple of years. He gave up taking piano lesson when he entered elementary school. Dr. Zhou said in the interview with the author that: “Later during the Cultural Revolution, I started to play the piano again since there was nothing else to do. My level was not very high, and I was playing Op. 299.”<sup>61</sup> He continued taking piano lessons while studying composition at CCM.

At this time, Zhou Long started to become familiar with traditional Chinese music through exposure to the *Yanbanxi*, also known as the *Chinese Revolutionary Operas*,<sup>62</sup> or the *Model Operas* that had been promoted at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

Zhou stated:

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<sup>61</sup> Zhou, interview by the author, 2013. Czerny’s Op. 299 is used as piano technique method book in China.

<sup>62</sup> *Yanbanxi*, or *Revolutionary Operas*, emerged and thrived during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China under the influence of the left-wing politicians Jiang Qing, Chairman Mao’s last wife, and her followers known as the “Gang of Four.” In contrast with the contents and setting of the traditional Beijing Opera, *Yanbanxi* were created to depict stories of the heroic proletarian class represented by workers, peasants and soldiers, and to praise the spirit and ideals of the Cultural Revolution. They were used as a propaganda tool.

I started with those *Chinese Revolutionary Model Operas*. There was nothing else to get in touch with when you went down in the village. During that time it was all about working in the farm, and collecting folk songs was completely out of the picture. Later when I went to the song-and-dance troupe at Zhangjiakou,<sup>63</sup> I started to know some real folk music. Zhangjiakou is located between three provinces, Hebei, Inner Mongolia, and Shanxi. It was a very special location, because they had *Shanxi bangzi*,<sup>64</sup> *Hebei bangzi*,<sup>65</sup> and *Bashang erren tai*.<sup>66</sup> There was plenty of folk music over there. I listened to a lot of Chinese opera, folk music, and collected folk tunes. In fact, I went to Hulunbeier Prairie<sup>67</sup> during that time. So before I entered the Music Conservatory, I had already become acquainted with the northern folk music.<sup>68</sup>

Later, Zhou was able to learn more about Western music theory, harmony, and form and analysis along with Chinese folk music courses through the curriculum at CCM. The early influences in his life, which allowed him to master both musical languages from the East to the West and compose freely with both cultural backgrounds, grounded his later success in composition.

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<sup>63</sup> Zhangjiakou (张家口) located in northwest China, is a city in Hebei province. For details see footnote 18 in chapter I.

<sup>64</sup> *Shanxi Bangzi* (山西梆子) or Shanxi Clapper operas, is a type of opera practiced in Shanxi province. There are four clapper opera forms, and all of them influenced other dramatic forms nationwide.

<sup>65</sup> *Hebei Bangzi* (河北梆子) is a type of opera practiced in Hebei Province.

<sup>66</sup> *Bashang erren tai*, also known as *Bashang two units* (坝上二人台) in the West, is one of the Chinese local operas, popular in the Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi and Hebei Zhangjiakou regions.

<sup>67</sup> The Hulunbeier Prairie is located in the northeastern part of Inner Mongolia. It consists of well-preserved grassland with a total area of about 93,000 square kilometers at an elevation of between 650 to 700 meters.

<sup>68</sup> Zhou, interview by the author, 2013.

*Influence of Ethnic Music and Historical Background of The Mongolian Nationality*

In the 1950s, the research study of traditional Chinese folk and ethnic music became popular in Chinese institutes under the influence of Hungarian composer Béla Bartók's ethnomusicological research on the folk music of Eastern Europe. After the establishment of The People's Republic of China, the central government set up special institutions to research and collect folk tunes and music from all regions and nationalities. This stirred an enthusiastic upsurge through all musicians and music institutions in China. Not only were folk musicians invited to the institutions, so that researchers could notate the folk tunes they played, but many young composers and music students in the music conservatory were also sent to remote areas to collect folk tunes. Zhou recalled that he was excited to go to the Hulunbeier Prairie to collect folk tunes. During that time he was studying the folk opera *Sons and Daughters of the Grassland*.<sup>69</sup> He said, "we were studying the opera, not for us to write."<sup>70</sup> He went to live in a Mongolian yurt<sup>71</sup> and stayed there for about ten days to experience the nomadic life style of the people and to study their ethnic music. These vivid memories and experiences probably influenced him

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<sup>69</sup> *Sons and Daughters of the Grassland* (草原儿女) was a revolutionary modern ballet, based on a story from the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region, which reflected the life and struggles of the Mongolians. The dance-drama adopted the movements of classical ballet and soon became popular throughout China in the 1970s and was filmed in 1975. "Sons and Daughters of the Grassland." Beijing Review Archive. [http://www.bjreview.com.cn/Cover\\_Story\\_Series\\_2010/2010-02/23/content\\_247954.htm](http://www.bjreview.com.cn/Cover_Story_Series_2010/2010-02/23/content_247954.htm) (accessed December 22, 2013).

<sup>70</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

<sup>71</sup> The Mongolian yurt is a large round portable tent made of wooden frames and waterproof wool covers.

when composing the theme and variations based on a Mongolian folk tune. When asked whether he collected the folk tunes himself or not, Dr. Zhou said:

No, it is from my research. I looked up some materials at the Chinese Music Research Institute. I did not collect the tune myself, although I have been there. It was not called Mongolian ethnic group at that time. When I was working at the Zhangjiakou song-and-dance troupe, I went to Heilongjiang. There was a clan called the Elunchun ethnic group.<sup>72</sup> It originally was part of Inner Mongolia, however it became part of Heilongjiang province later. The Hulunbeier Prairie is located there.<sup>73</sup>

Even though Zhou did not directly collect the folk tune, his research in the area gave him the exposure necessary to write the variations. This upsurge in folk music collection affected the vision of many young Chinese composers, and it stimulated them to produce many new compositions using folk and ethnic music of that time. Beginning in the 1950s, it became a trend to use folk tunes and folk elements from all regions and nationalities in a new compositional style. Chen Yi, the wife of Zhou Long and also a composer, composed a piano solo called *Duo Ye* in 1984, which won First Prize in the Fourth National Competition in China. She used folk tunes from the Dong ethnic minority group, which she visited to gather folk tunes in the Guangxi area in 1980.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> The Elunchun nationality (鄂伦春族), also known as the Oroqen (Olunchun) nationality, is an ethnic minority group living in Inner Mongolia and Heilongjiang, with a population of more than eight thousand.

<sup>73</sup> Zhou, interview by the author, 2013.

<sup>74</sup> Changkui Wang, *Chinese Piano Music Culture*. Beijing: Guangming Daily Press, 2009. 218.

China has a rich ethnic musical background, and almost all Chinese ethnic groups have created their own folk songs and dances. There are fifty-six ethnic groups in China, the Han Chinese being the largest, constituting about 92% of the population. Because of their smaller relative size, the other fifty-five ethnic groups are known as the ethnic minorities. The Mongolian nationality, known as “the ethnic group riding on horseback,” is one of these minor ethnic groups. There are around 6 million Mongolian people in China. They originated from nomadic tribes living in the northern grassland of China. Nowadays they mainly live in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, which is located in the Northern part of China bordering with Mongolia and Russia. Inner Mongolia is the second largest plateau in China, averaging around 1,200 meters in altitude, and it is the third-largest provincial-level subdivision of China, covering 12% of China’s total land area. Geographically, it has basin, natural grassland and desert in the west side, with a wide variety of regional climates. Due to the rough environmental conditions, the Mongolians were historically nomads who mainly lived off their flocks and herds, and their social structure is based on families, clans and tribes. Their tribal leaders were called Khans. The Great Khan, Chinggis Khan<sup>75</sup> was the most famous historical Mongolian figure in Chinese history, and he was the founder of the Mongol Empire and the King of the Yuan Dynasty.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Chinggis Khan (成吉思汗), also known as Genghis Khan (1162-1227), founded the Mongol Empire in 1206. His grandson Khubilai Khan (1260-1294) established the Yuan Dynasty in 1271, comprising present day Mongolia, China and Korea.

<sup>76</sup> John P. McKay, Bennett D. Hill, John Buckler, Patricia B. Ebrey, and Roger B. Beck. *A History of World Societies*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007. 291-293.

## Mongolian Folk Tunes

The Mongolians are particularly known for their music and poetry, and they have created a multitude of unique styles of folk singing. There is a Mongolian saying in the Hetao Region of Inner Mongolia: “Folk songs are as plentiful as blackberries in Hetao, one could sing only a small number of them in three years.”<sup>77</sup> Mongolian music is well known for the use of overtone singing, known as *Khuumei*. *Khuumei* singing imitates the sounds of nature through unique vocal techniques. In this style, the performer will sing both the bass sounds and the treble melody at the same time while also creating overtones.<sup>78</sup> The performers often use the *matouqin*<sup>79</sup> or horse-headed fiddle as an accompanying instrument for folk songs and dances.

There are numerous different types of Mongolian folksongs, and they may be used for different purposes such as pastoral, ballads, folk, dinners, weddings, working and hunting. However, there are two major art forms in the traditional Mongolian folk music: *Chang Diao* (长调) and *Duan Diao* (短调).<sup>80</sup> In Chinese, *chang* means “long,”

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<sup>77</sup> Jie, Jin. *Chinese Music*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 92-93.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* 93-94.

<sup>79</sup> The *matouqin* (马头琴) is a famous Mongolian bowed string instrument is also known as *Huur* or *morin khuur*, or sometimes referred to as *ikil*. The instrument is made of a wooden-framed sound box in trapezoidal shape, a long neck attached with two horsehair strings, and a carved horse's head on the top. The musicians hold the neck upright with the box between their legs and play it with an arched bow. For details, please consult Carole Pegg, "Huur." *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed January 5, 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/49726>.

<sup>80</sup> There are many different translations for these two terms, and depending on the spelling, Mongolian *Chang Diao* is also called “long song,” “long tune,” “long tone,” “*Urtyn*”



*duan* means “short,” and *diao* means “melody,” “tune,” or “key” in music. Further information about the long song style can be found in *Chinese Music* written by Jin Jie, as follows:

The long tone is characterized by a falling and rising melody with a free rhythm. Praise songs, pastoral songs and some folk songs are long tone, and they are usually sung at party, wedding or *Maadam*.<sup>81</sup> In contrast, the short tone is marked by a relaxed and cheerful melody, a tight structure and a short length. Hunting songs, ballads and some folk dances fall into this category.<sup>82</sup>

The Mongolian “long song” or *Urtiin duu* can be traced back to the thirteenth century, and it is believed to have a history of two thousand years. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization has recognized it as one of the masterpieces of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity. It is a lyrical chant with a highly ornamented melody, and it plays a distinct role in the Mongolian society. The context of the lyrical theme can vary from religious, philosophical, romantic or festive, and it is performed at all kinds of events, such as weddings, celebrations for a new home or a newborn child. According to UNESCO, “Performances and compositions of *Urtiin duu* are closely linked to the nomadic pastoral way of life, which is still widely practiced in Mongolia.”<sup>83</sup> A long song may only consist of a few words, and it is characterized by

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*duu*,” or “*Urtiin duu*.” Likewise, the *Duan Diao* is also called the *Bogino duu*, “short song,” “short tone,” or “short tune” in different texts.

<sup>81</sup> *Maadam* or *Naadam* is a Mongolian summer festival of wrestling, horse racing and archery.

<sup>82</sup> Jie, Jin. *Chinese Music*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 93.

<sup>83</sup> United Nations Educational Scientific and Culture Organization. 2005. *Urtiin Duu: Traditional Folk Long Song*. [http://www.unesco.org/culture/intangible-heritage/25apa\\_uk.htm](http://www.unesco.org/culture/intangible-heritage/25apa_uk.htm)

its style of singing with long and extended syllables in the text, not the overall length of the song. The style of singing features a great deal of ornamentation, falsetto, throat singing, overtone singing, long and continuous flowing melody with rich rhythmical variation, expressive and lyrical melodies with high pitches and extremely wide vocal range, and a free compositional form. The steady and lyrical melody rises and falls, which imitates the peaceful life in the grasslands.<sup>84</sup> Zhou Long's variations are based on a simple and lyrical eight-measure ethnic folk tune titled *Mongolian Xiao Diao*. Zhou said himself that: "Though the tune is called *Mongolian Xiao Diao*, it is in the style of *Chang Diao* (long song), or *Zhong Chang Diao* (medium long song)."<sup>85</sup>

### *The Influence of Western Music*

Beginning in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, China's literature, philosophy, music and art gradually became influenced by Western culture. Chinese people were fascinated by the new style, and the obsession completely changed people's daily life, from the way they dressed to the way they thought. Its lasting effect is still growing nowadays. Chinese music educators began to build a Westernized music education system in the early 1920s. The main focus of Chinese musical institutions was on instruments such as the piano and violin, forms such as the symphony, concerto,

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(accessed January 5, 2014).

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Zhou, interview by the author, 2013.

sonata, variations, and Western music theory. Compared to the Western music system, traditional Chinese music lacked logical structure. Chinese music features flowing single line melodies, dispersed *sanban* rhythm,<sup>86</sup> and an improvisatory style. Unlike Western music's focus on form and structural design, ancient *guqin*<sup>87</sup> and folk music followed loose forms, since they were mostly used for self-expression and self-enjoyment. Many folk music and Chinese opera tunes were never notated, and they were passed down through generations of oral traditions, creating a variety of interpretations and regional styles. The Chinese scholar Jiti Li discusses traditional Chinese music in her book *Chinese Musical Structure*, stating:

In the traditional Chinese concept, music is the presentation of “process” and “mood,” and the key to appreciating it is to not focus on musical form and structure, but to concentrate on its feelings and understand the flowing process of the music and overall mood.<sup>88</sup>

This exposure to Western ideas changed the way Chinese composers thought. They quickly adapted to the new system and explored ways to combine it with Chinese tunes and musical style.

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<sup>86</sup> *Sanban* (散板), a Chinese musical term related to rhythm, is a form of music with free meter and irregular rhythm, often seen in traditional Chinese music. It is similar to *senza misura* in Western music.

<sup>87</sup> The *guqin* (古琴) is an ancient Chinese plucked string instrument, once regarded as one of the most prestigious musical instruments. Originally it had five strings, and was customized to seven strings during the Han dynasty.

<sup>88</sup> Jiti Li, *Chinese Musical Structure: An Outline Analysis*. Beijing: Central Conservatory of Music Publishing Company, 2004. 6.

## Compositional Techniques Used in the Work

Western composers would frequently base their variations on a borrowed theme. Zhou Long also built his variations on a borrowed Mongolian folk tune. The structure of the piece follows a standard theme and variation form. Throughout the work, Zhou combines traditional ethnic Chinese music with the theme and variation form structure. The theme consists of a simple, two phrase, eight-measure melody based on the pentatonic scale in the Chinese key B *yu*.<sup>89</sup> Zhou said that:

At that time, I was looking for a theme for the variation. So I looked through many folk tunes, and I liked this one very much. I thought the major tunes were not very interesting to me, so I picked a minor tune, a melody in the key of *Yu*. I thought it was very lyrical, very open, and I felt there was potential for this theme to become a variation.<sup>90</sup>

The main theme is harmonized with diatonic harmony and chordal accompaniment. Zhou states: “Harmonically speaking, it is arranged and harmonized within minor keys.”<sup>91</sup> The first phrase begins and ends on the dominant. In the *yu* mode, the dominant is a minor chord.

Having presented the theme, Zhou employs many different techniques to develop it through eight variations, ending with a coda. Contrapuntal technique and four-part writing can be found in the first three variations. However, in Variation II, Zhou moves

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<sup>89</sup> *Yu* is one of the Chinese pentatonic modes, which are named as *Gong* (宫), *Shang* (商), *Jue* (角), *Zhi* (徵), *Yu* (羽). *Yu* is equivalent to a minor key in the Western musical system.

<sup>90</sup> Zhou, interview by the author, 2013.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

the main melody to the tenor voice in left hand and puts a counter melody in the soprano. In Variation III, the tempo changes to *Vivace*, which with the addition of a triplet rhythmic figure in right hand, creates a flowing mood and adds a brighter color to the minor tune. Developing motives extracted from the main theme, the main melody remains in the tenor voice, and the countermelody, in triplets, is projected in the higher registers creating a conversation between the two voices. Continuing to extract motives from the main theme, Variation IV directly modulates to the distant key of D minor. A new rhythmic figure, an eighth note followed by a quarter note, creates a short-long feeling, where the quarter note is stressed on the stronger beats. This variation changes its meter to cut time, and the tempo is marked *Accelerando*. This marking implies that the *accelerando* should be used to shape each individual phrase based on the ascent or descent of the melodic sequences.<sup>92</sup> With a drastic mood change to melancholy, Variation V is marked “Adagio, somber,” making it the slowest tempo of the variations. To build an open and void feeling, Zhou explores the contrasting sounds between the higher and lower registers on the piano. For instance, the opening A flat major chord expands over five octaves. Extracting the basic pitch cells from the main theme, Zhou creates a new, four-measure long lyrical melody stretched out in 6/4 meter, which is projected by the right hand in the higher register while the left hand eighth-note counter melody intertwines in the lower register. He changes the meter to 4/4 in the last two measures to prepare for Variation VI, marked *attacca*. This transition highlights the great

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<sup>92</sup> The *accelerando* can be used to shape each phrase, which are mostly four measures long with one or two measures of sequential material. The first phrase, mm. 1-4, is repeated an octave higher at mm. 5-7. Further phrases constitute mm. 8-11, 12-15, and 16-21.

contrast in moods between these two variations. The new, joyful melody created in Variation VI, marked *Scherzando*, is only loosely related to the original theme. The sixteenth-note rhythmic figures of the lively pentatonic melody in the right hand create a jubilant and celebratory scene. One can see influences of traditional Chinese folk music ensembles in this variation. The left hand imitates traditional gong and drum accompaniment while the right hand melody is reminiscent of the Chinese wind instrument, the *suona*.<sup>93</sup> This variation features pentatonic ascending and descending lines, combined with chromatic harmonies in the left hand (see mm. 8-9 in Figure 1).

Figure 1. Zhou Long, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, Variation VI, mm. 8-9



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Variation VII opens with a left hand melody in 6/8, which contains some intervallic similarities to the original theme. A double octave texture in both hands is introduced in this variation. Variation VIII is the Finale marked “*Allegretto, fermamente.*” Filled with motivic and sequential developments, Zhou uses a thicker texture, which increases the difficulty and virtuosity. The meter is changed again to 3/4 and the melody is presented

<sup>93</sup> The *Suona* (唢呐) is traditional Chinese double-reed instrument, popular in traditional music ensembles around different regions of China. It has a distinctive sound featuring loud and high-pitches, and it is used for all kinds of purposes including festivals and ritual music.

in the right hand. The soft and flowing *Agile* section inserted in the middle (mm. 39-54), reflects an impressionistic influence. The grandeur of the Finale quickly dissipates once the coda, marked “*Andante, Tranquillo*,” is reached. Zhou uses contrapuntal four-part writing again in the return of the original main theme, but now in a higher register. The left hand presents a sextuplet accompaniment figure, creating a peaceful and meditative atmosphere at the end of the piece.

### Performance Considerations

Zhou Long uses many Western composers’ music as a model to develop his variations. He aims to include many varieties of piano techniques developed in the Western piano world. He said:

Variation is used to develop the piano techniques. However, I was trying to write something easier. Although the musical language is rather traditional, from the piano technique perspective, it basically covered most of the techniques at that time.<sup>94</sup>

Although he aimed for an easy and intermediate level piece, as it is stated on the publisher’s website, the variations grow more difficult towards the end and Variation VIII-Finale becomes quite challenging.

Pedaling is a big question in this piece, since there are basically no detailed pedal markings on the score, except a few places marked with *una corda* (such as Variation III, m. 11, at the beginning of Variations IV, V, and VII, at m. 17 of Variation VII, and for

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<sup>94</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

the entire coda section), and *tre corde* (Var. 4 at m. 4, Var. 5 at m. 7, and Var. 7 at m. 9 and m. 24). There is *stretto pedale* in var. 8 at m. 60. When the author asked Zhou whether the performer could use pedals at will or not, he said that: “Yes, at will, since the musical language is easy to deal with.”<sup>95</sup> The pedaling is basically free style according to the performer’s understanding of the piece.

### Mixing Western Harmony with a Pentatonic Folk Tune

Since the piano is a Western instrument, it is not surprising to see that this piece combines pentatony with Westernized diatonic harmony. Zhou stated, “the harmonic style is more Chinese, however I don’t think it is totally Chinese. This piece is more Westernized.” He added, “this one used some harmonic techniques, which are similar to Li Yinghai’s music theory.”<sup>96</sup> It is transformed major and minor keys, and it softens the harmonic functions. However, basically, it is still based on it.”<sup>97</sup> Many generations of Chinese composers strove to transform the Western harmonic system into a Chinese nationalistic style. The famous Chinese composer, music theorist and music educator Li Yinghai published the groundbreaking music theory treatise *Han Nationality Keys and Harmony* in 1959. He was among the earliest Chinese musicians studying and

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Li Yinghai (黎英海) is a famous Chinese composer, music theorist and music educator, who taught at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music and the China Conservatory of Music in Beijing successively. He was devoted to developing nationalistic Chinese music and Chinese music theory. His landmark treaty *Han nationality Keys and Harmony*, is a groundbreaking work in Chinese music theory.

<sup>97</sup> Zhou, interview by the author, 2013.



researching the topic of pentatonic scale systems and harmony in China. When combining the pentatonic scales, triads are enriched with additional notes, such as adding the interval of a sixth to the tonic triad (do mi sol la do). Or, the third of a triad (la do mi la), may be replaced with a fourth (la re mi la), juxtaposing a fourth and a fifth. These types of broken-style chords are known as the “*pipa* chord,”<sup>98</sup> since they are used regularly in traditional plucked Chinese instrumental music. Added seconds and perfect fourths lent Eastern color to the harmony and were truer to the Chinese traditional style.<sup>99</sup>

#### Key Relationships among Variations

The overall key arrangement and modulation technique in this piece are influenced by the Western music system. Following the original key of B minor for the main theme and first two variations, the keys of E minor, D minor, A<sup>b</sup> major, D<sup>b</sup> major, and E minor are used for individual variations. Variation VIII, the Finale, begins in F<sup>#</sup> minor, but its climax appears to end on a C major chord. Zhou unifies the tonal plan of the work by adding a tranquil Coda in the key of B minor. He said that:

There are several long distant modulations. I studied with Su Xia for five years. At that time, he was very strict about it, and very thoughtful. He said you don't have to be too formal. There are some close related modulations and you could let it flow. Some modulations are sudden modulations, and some other places are purposefully designed.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> The *Pipa* is a Chinese four-string plucked string instrument with a pear-shaped wooden body.

<sup>99</sup> Li. *Chinese Music Structure*. Central Conservatory of Music Publishing Company, 2004. 285.

<sup>100</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

The opening theme is written in *Bu* pentatonic scale and harmonized in B minor. Variation I and II follow the same plan. However, Variation II ends with a B major chord, which functions as the dominant pivot chord to modulate to E minor for Variation III. Variation IV starts directly in D minor, but uses pentatonic scales to undermine the functional harmonic progression. During the last four measures, the left hand outlines two ascending pentatonic scale sequences based on G flat, which helps the transition to the next variation in A flat major. Variation V is marked *attacca* at the end, and in order to prepare the transition and modulation to Variation VI, Zhou changes the meter of the last two measures, introducing a new motive that features descending broken chords along with decorative ornaments in the right hand in the E flat *gong* system at m. 12 (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Zhou Long, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, Variation V, mm. 12-13



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This motive has the flavor of Chinese folk music and is influenced by Chinese wind instruments such as the *suona*, whose music often features these kinds of trills. The parallel fourths of the last measure arrive at D flat major for the beginning of Variation VI.

Variation VI also takes an unexpected tonal direction at the end. Combining chromatic descending chordal textures with pentatonic ascending sequences allows rapid modulation to distant keys. Reaching C major at the downbeat of m. 19, the right hand uses pentatonic sequences to descend to the lower register and then return, going from *b zhi* pentatonic scale through C# *zhi* and D# *zhi*, and ultimately ending on an F# major chord (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Zhou Long, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, Variation VI, mm.18-23

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### Influence of Western Composers

As this piece was among Zhou's first compositional attempt in theme and variation form, he looked to the works of great Western composers for guidance. Zhou recalled, "I looked into lots of Russian compositions at that time." He adds, "I did not

study lots of impressionistic stuff at that time. When I wrote this variation, I might have looked into Schumann and Glazunov.”<sup>101</sup> Though Zhou did not focus on studying impressionistic music during that time, traces of French impressionism can still be found in Variation III at mm. 18-21 (see Figure 4), which is quite similar to the last phrase of *Arabesque* no. 1 in E major, by Claude Debussy (1862-1916) (see Figure 5). Compared to Debussy’s ascending line in E major, Zhou uses E minor along with C# pentatonic harmony and inversions, creating a different color and effect.

Figure 4. Zhou Long, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, Variation III, mm. 18-21



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Figure 5. Debussy, *Arabesque No. 1 in E major*, mm. 103-107



<sup>101</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

The shifting moods and styles of these variations may remind the listener of the character pieces of Robert Schumann (1810-1856) or Johannes Brahms (1833-1897). Zhou said, “In fact, the later variations developed a completely different style from the original one, however variations should be like this.”<sup>102</sup> Zhou was not timid about using pitch cells from the main theme and transforming them into several different melodies with new meters, new keys and new characters in each variation. Variation I is graceful, variation II conversational, variation III flowing, variation IV lyrical, variation V somber and expressive, and variation VI joyful and celebratory. The contrast between variation V and VI is quite sudden and dramatic. Two themes are featured in variation VII, the opening theme A (see Figure 6) projected by left hand (mm. 1-8) in E minor in contrast with a right hand melody theme B at m. 17 in G minor (see Figure. 7).

Figure 6. Zhou Long, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, Variation VII, mm. 1-10



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<sup>102</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

Figure 7. Zhou Long, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, Variation VII, mm. 17-24

The image shows a musical score for Variation VII of Zhou Long's *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, measures 17-24. The score is written for piano and consists of two systems. The first system (measures 17-20) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes the performance instruction *pp legato una corda*. The melody in the right hand is characterized by a series of eighth notes with a descending contour, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of chords. The second system (measures 21-24) continues the melodic line, which concludes with a fermata. The instruction *tre corde* is placed at the end of the piece.

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Debussy's *Danse* is a model for Variation VII (see Figure 2.6), of which the first theme in E minor is similar to the opening theme in E major in Debussy's *Danse* (see Figure 8). Both themes are written in 6/8, one in E major and the other one in E minor. They have similar rhythmic features and comparable accompaniment figures.

Figure 8. Debussy, *Danse*, mm. 1-11

The image shows the first theme of Debussy's *Danse*, measures 1-11. The score is in E major and 6/8 time, marked *Allegretto* and *pp très léger*. The right hand features a melody of eighth notes with a characteristic Debussy-style chromaticism and grace notes. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment of chords and eighth notes. The piece concludes with a fermata.

The melody is repeated at m. 9 with octaves in left hand. Although both themes are written in minor keys, they display different characters with different accompaniment. The accompaniment of the first theme features offbeat broken chords, introducing a dance like folk element. In contrast, chromatic descending chords, displaying a sentimental character, accompany the second theme. Variation VIII is a grand and magnificent finale followed by a contrasting calm and peaceful coda. Meter changes also help to shape the different characters of each variation. The original theme is written in 4/4, which begins to change from variation IV in cut time, followed by variation V in 6/4, variation VI in 4/4, variation VII in 6/8, variation VIII in 3/4, and Coda again in 4/4.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) also influenced this piece. The short-long type of rhythmic texture, which alternates between right and left hand in Variation IV (see Figure 9), resembles the second theme in B major, in Brahms' *Ballade in G minor*, Op. 118, No.3 (see Figure 10).

Figure 9. Zhou Long, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, Variation IV, mm. 1-8

The image shows a musical score for Variation IV of 'Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations' by Zhou Long, measures 1-8. The score is in 4/4 time and marked 'Accelerando' with a tempo of quarter note = 76. It features a piano (p) dynamic in the first system and a forte (f) dynamic in the second system. The first system includes markings for 'una corda' and 'tre corde'. The melody is characterized by a short-long rhythmic pattern.

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Figure 10. Brahms, *Ballade in G minor, Op. 118, No. 3*, the second theme in B major, mm. 41-48



The influence of the Russian composer, Alexander Glazunov (1865-1936), appears in the Finale. The Variation XV Finale of Glazunov's *Theme and Variations* Op. 72 resonates closely with Zhou Long Variation VIII Finale. Both are written in F# minor in 3/4 and feature similar grand and thick chordal textures. A running sixteenth accompaniment figure occurs in both, starting at the *Agile* section in Zhou Long's example at m. 39 and Glazunov's at m. 13 (see Figures 11 & 12).



Figure 11. Zhou Long, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, Variation VIII, mm. 36-46

The musical score for Variation VIII consists of three systems of piano music. The first system (measures 36-39) features a melody in the right hand with a dynamic of *f* and a bass line in the left hand with a dynamic of *pp*. The second system (measures 40-43) includes a melodic phrase marked *loco* in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand, with dynamics of *mf* and *pp*. The third system (measures 44-46) shows a more active right hand with a dynamic of *p* and a bass line with a dynamic of *f*. The score includes performance markings such as *Agile*, *loco*, *f*, *pp*, and *mf*.

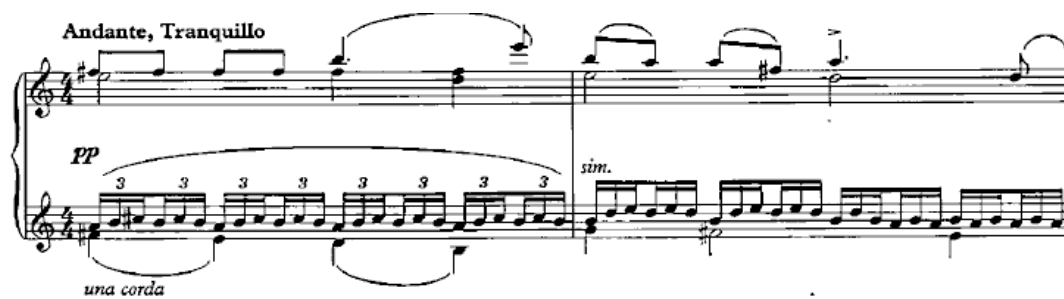
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Figure 12. Glazunov, *Theme and Variations Op. 72*, Variation XV Finale, mm. 8-17

The musical score for Variation XV Finale consists of three systems of piano music. The first system (measures 8-10) features a melody in the right hand with a dynamic of *mf* and a bass line in the left hand with a dynamic of *p*. The second system (measures 11-13) shows a more active right hand with a dynamic of *p* and a bass line with a dynamic of *p*. The third system (measures 14-17) features a melody in the right hand with a dynamic of *p* and a bass line with a dynamic of *p*. The score includes performance markings such as *mf*, *p*, and *7*.

At the end of the piece, Zhou Long's Coda replicates the texture from Variation II of Glazunov's *Theme and Variations*. An illustration of their similarities follows (see Figure 13 & 14). Both examples use four-part contrapuntal texture, but Zhou puts the sixteenth triplet accompaniment figure in the left hand tenor voice.

Figure 13. Zhou Long, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, Coda, mm. 1-2



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Figure 14. Glazunov, *Theme and Variations Op. 72*, Variation II, mm. 1-4



As a student work, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations* incorporates Western musical influences and Eastern ethnic elements. There are many Western facets to this piece due to Zhou's study of Western systems and compositions through which he

thoroughly built his knowledge. He quickly adapted the musical languages from both worlds, which laid a great foundation for his future success. Zhou stated, “I would rather depart from the style similar to *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, which is written before *Wu Kui*. I will probably not write like this again. In fact, I will stop this kind of writing or any style similar to the Romantic era.”<sup>103</sup> Close to his graduation from CCM, his musical language had changed significantly. We will see from his graduation piece *Wu Kui* that he was able to create a more original and innovative contemporary Chinese music as he artistically transferred modern conventions from the West to the East.

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<sup>103</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

## CHAPTER III

### WU KUI

#### *Overview*

*Wu Kui* (五魁), a single-movement solo piano work, is one of Zhou Long's earlier works, composed towards the end of his study at the Central Conservatory of Music. He began to compose this large solo piano composition for a competition at CCM towards the end of 1982 and completed it in 1983, the year he graduated. Dr. Zhou commented on the completion of this piece stating: "Yes, I had not graduated yet. It was pretty modern to write like this during that time, of course it seems normal nowadays."<sup>104</sup> It was granted the Excellent Teaching Material Award (教材奖) by the CCM in the same year,<sup>105</sup> and it was published soon after in the *Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music*.

*Wu* (五) means "five," and *Kui* (魁) means many different things in Chinese such as "chief," "first," "number one," "big," "tall," and "stalwart."<sup>106</sup> The dance *Wu Kui* is

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<sup>104</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

<sup>105</sup> "Listing of Zhou Long's Music Compositions." *People's Music* 5 (2007): 14-15.

<sup>106</sup> *Kui* is also used as the name for the first star of the seven stars, *Bei-dou-qi-xing* (北斗七星), known as the Big Dipper in the west.

also called *wu kui wu* (五魁舞), or *da wu kui wu* (大五魁舞).<sup>107</sup> *Wu Kui Dance* is a Manchu folk mask dance used for celebration after hunting or harvest. Zhou Long said, “it is a dance from a hunting clan.”<sup>108</sup> It originated from the Man nationality, which is one of the largest ethnic minorities from the Northeastern part of China.<sup>109</sup> Typically, five Manchu hunters wear the masks of the five animals—tiger, leopard, bear, deer, and roe deer. The dance is performed by the hunters to express happiness and joy in working and in life<sup>110</sup> by imitating the movement, habits and playfulness of the five animals in the dance.<sup>111</sup>

### The Man Nationality and its Folk Dance Tradition

The Man ethnic minority, also known as the Manchu, is one of the oldest ethnic groups in China, with a history that can be dated back to the tenth century. They were

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<sup>107</sup> *Da wu kui wu* (大五魁舞) can be translated as “big five stalwart animals dance”. *Da* (大) means big; *Wu* (舞) means dance.

<sup>108</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

<sup>109</sup> The majority of the Manchu (满族) people reside in the Northeastern part of China including the provinces of Liaoning, Heilongjiang, and Jilin, and part of Inner Mongolia, which is referred to as Manchuria in Western culture. The Man ethnic minority is the third largest ethnic minority group in China, with a population of more than 10 million people today. Travel China Guide. Man (Manchu) Nationality, <http://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/nationality/manchu/> (accessed September 18, 2013)

<sup>110</sup> Long Zhou, *Wu Kui*, for Piano. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2002.

<sup>111</sup> De Li. “My View on the Features of Manchu Ethnic Dances.” *Manchu Research 2* (1996): 61-67.

direct descendants of the Jurchens,<sup>112</sup> who established the Jin Dynasty (1127-1234) and ruled the north of China while the Southern Song Dynasty (960-1279) controlled about two-thirds of China. The brilliant Khan of the later Jin Dynasty, Nurhaci (努尔哈赤, 1559-1626), united all of the Jurchen tribes and built the so-called Eight Banner military system, which eventually led to the conquest of the rest of China. His son Huang Taiji (皇太极, 1592-1643) became Emperor and founded the last dynasty in Chinese history, the Qing (1644-1911), changing the name of the Jurchen people to Manchu. Before they ruled the whole nation, the Manchu had a tribal social structure that lived in close contact with Mongols, Koreans, and Chinese in Manchuria. The Manchus were excellent horsemen and archers who engaged in fishing, farming, and hunting. They developed a sophisticated social structure of separate classes and practiced Shamanism<sup>113</sup> as their religion. In the course of history, they also adopted other religions such as Tibetan Buddhism and various Chinese folk religions. After their conquest of China in the seventeenth century, the Manchu people greatly influenced Chinese history, culture and arts. Manchu men wore a queue, a long braided ponytail, along with their shaved front heads, which used to be the signature image of China in the West.<sup>114</sup> Over thousands of

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<sup>112</sup> The Jurchens (女真) were an ancient Mohe people who spoke Tungusic languages and originated from Manchuria, the modern day Northeast region of China.

<sup>113</sup> Shamanism is a primitive religion practiced by the Turks and Mongols in Siberia, in which the *shaman*, or priest-doctor, can enter into a trance state during a ritual and consult the spirits of nature and the unseen world of gods and demons to practice divination and healing. Shamanism can also apply to similar religions in primitive cultures, such as North-West American Indians. OED Online. "shamanism, n.," Oxford University Press, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/177389?redirectedFrom=shamanism> (accessed Sep. 18, 2013).

<sup>114</sup> John P. McKay, Bennett D. Hill, John Buckler, Patricia B. Ebrey, and Roger B. Beck.

years, the Man ethnic minority formed a unique ethnic culture that gradually blended and mingled with other Chinese cultures dominated by the Han Chinese. The Man nationality is renowned for singing and dancing. Many styles of dances arose among various regions or tribes and were performed for occasions such as weddings, holidays, social gatherings, religious ceremonies, and court events.

From their native religion Shamanism, Manchu people believe that all creatures have their own spiritual gods, which is one of the main reasons that many Shaman dances contain animal imitations. Various traditional Manchu dances vividly embody their ancestors' fishing and hunting culture, including dances known as *Hunting Dance*, *Hunter's Dance*, *Hunt Deer Dance*, and *Hunt Leopard Dance*. In these, not only do the dancers sometimes dress like the animal characterized, but they also imitate its movements and habits. For instance, some dances like *yingwu* (鸚鵡) “parrot” and *bailingque* (白翎雀) “sparrow” imitate bird movements, and birdcalls are heard in the music. *Yanglie wu* (扬烈舞)<sup>115</sup> reflects on the hunting of bears by Manchu ancestors by including imitations of bears, hunting, shooting, and capturing scenes. Many traditional folk dances were performed improvisatorially at social gatherings with many dancers participating. For instance, a popular northeastern dance, *yangge* (秧歌) is a large-scaled dance in which hundreds of people dance together. The Manchu dance style features free

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*A History of World Societies*. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2007. 634.

<sup>115</sup> *Yang* means “raise” and *lie* means “intense” and “ardent.” *Yanglie wu* features dancers who wear stilts and carry a bow while riding imitation horses. Some other dancers wear animal skins and pretend to be hunted.

and easy movements combined with a rugged and robust style that displays passionate vigor. Many traditional Manchu dances are strongly rhythmic, and many varieties of local wind, string, and percussion instruments are used to accompany them. Some of the instruments and dance tools are unique to the Manchu nationality. Examples of these include the *zhuagu*,<sup>116</sup> the *taipinggu*,<sup>117</sup> the *yaoling*,<sup>118</sup> the *bajiaogu*,<sup>119</sup> the *tuoli*,<sup>120</sup> the *hali horse knife* (哈利马刀), and the *bawangbian* (霸王鞭).<sup>121</sup> Some dances preserved a primitive style, such as the dance called *yerenwu* (野人舞), the Barbarian dance, which has an intense rhythm. Thus, a wide variety of ethnic Manchu dances reflect the lifestyle of their ancestors.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> The *zhuagu* (抓鼓) is a type of Shaman drum.

<sup>117</sup> The *taipinggu* (太平鼓) also known as *dangu* (单鼓) is a flat hand drum covered with animal skin. It was used at Manchu ritual ceremonies by a shaman doctor to pray and to offer sacrifice to gods and ancestors. Later it was used in folk celebrations for the new year and happiness.

<sup>118</sup> The *yaoling* (腰铃), or *xiaoyaoling* is a small bell instrument hung around the performer's waist. The *dayaoling* is similar, but with larger bells.

<sup>119</sup> The *bajiaogu* (八角鼓) is a type of drum with an octagonal shape.

<sup>120</sup> The *tuoli* (托利) is a type of brass mirror that the dancers hold during performance.

<sup>121</sup> The *bawangbian* is a type of whip called the overlord whip in Chinese.

<sup>122</sup> De Li. "My View on the Features of Manchu Ethnic Dances." *Manchu Research* 2 (1996): 62-67.



*The Composer's Inspiration and the Influence of Chinese Percussion*

Zhou's experience with the history and tradition of the Wu Kui Dance started during the Cultural Revolution, when he spent some time in the song-and-dance troupe in Heilongjiang<sup>123</sup> for a couple of years. His experience in the Northeast part of China allowed him the opportunity to explore not only the regional style of living, but also the music and dance native to the area. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, he had the chance to watch various Chinese folk-dances at the *diaoyan* (调演), an organized performance program promoted by the Chinese central government. The *diaoyan* program brought to Beijing all kinds of ethnic and folk dances along with excellent regional music and art shows from different provinces. Dr. Zhou said:

I saw lots of folk-dance programs from the Northeast of China, not only Wu Kui. Wu Kui is only one of many.<sup>124</sup> They used the folk dance music elements back then in the performances, but I didn't use the original music elements in my composition. I was inspired by the form and content of the dance Wu Kui.<sup>125</sup>

Many northeastern folk dances have regular rhythmic drumbeats and patterns. The composer confirmed in the interview with the author that in the original folk-dance music of Wu Kui, which the composer observed while watching a *Diaoyan* performance, the accompaniment has regular drumbeats. However, rather than adopting these rhythms

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<sup>123</sup> See footnote 14 for details.

<sup>124</sup> Dr. Zhou said in the interview: "My other composition *Tai Ping Gu*, which was written around the same period, belongs to the similar Northeastern style." *Tai Ping Gu* (太平鼓) for violin and piano was written in 1983, the same year as *Wu Kui*.

<sup>125</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

literally, Zhou crafts his solo piano composition *Wu Kui* crafts an original and innovative musical language from rhythmic motives that reflect the influence and inspiration of the folk sources.

The preface to the score of *Wu Kui* states, “capturing the original style of this dance, this solo piano piece opens with animated rhythmic patterns, moves into a slower, free-flowing and lyrical middle section, and concludes with a return to the fierce exultant rhythms and motifs of the beginning.”<sup>126</sup> The rhythmic motives and the melody are both original ideas from the composer, as he confirmed in our interview. The rhythmic motif in the *Con Animo* section (mm. 1-39) becomes an important feature of the piece even though it does not use original musical elements from the original dance accompaniment. “The rhythm comes from my imagination. The original folk-dance music has relatively regular and inerratic rhythm” said Dr. Zhou, “however the intention and artistic conception (*Yixiang* 意向) are from the dance.”<sup>127</sup> Using energetic rhythmic motives and irregular rhythmic patterns, the composer interprets how the dancers imitate various movements and habits of the five animals traditional to the northeastern hunting dance.

Different types of Chinese percussion instruments produce varied sounds, diverse timbres, and multiple pitches depending on their shapes and sizes. Most Chinese drums consist of a round wooden framework covered with animal skins. Some bigger drums are played with two thick wooden sticks and when struck in different locations may create various timbres and pitches. The center of the drum has more resonance and is often

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<sup>126</sup> Zhou, Long. *Wu Kui*, for Piano. 2002. 2.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

used to perform low downbeat sounds. The volume of the sound may decrease gradually as the striking point of the sticks is moved from the center to the edge of the drum surface. A clapper drum called the *bangu*, usually used in Peking Opera as an accompaniment instrument, is played with thin bamboo sticks, producing high-pitched sounds. The *Bajiao gu* is an octagonal tambourine from the Man ethnic group, with a wooden frame covered with boa skin. Seven holes are cut on the seven sides of the wooden frame, and small cymbals sit inside each hole. The performer plays and shakes the instrument, producing a mixture of cymbal and drum sounds. The *Taiping gu* is a flat hand drum, shaped with an elliptical metal frame with a handle that looks like a fan. It is often used in dance performances, and usually the performer and dancer hold it in their left hand and beat it with a drum whip in the right hand while dancing. It is not only used for religious spiritual dances in Shamanism, but also as a popular accompanying instrument for folk dances in the northern part of China.<sup>128</sup>

Dr. Zhou has confirmed in many interviews that he treats the piano like a percussion instrument in this piece. He states: "I know a lot of composers don't like to create piano music as percussion music, but I do that a lot with the piano."<sup>129</sup> When he first started to compose the piece *Wu Kui* in the early 1980s, he consulted with Zhu

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<sup>128</sup> Jie Jin, *Chinese Music*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 65-66.

<sup>129</sup> Chiu, Kan. "Voices from the east: Culture and expression in contemporary Chinese piano music." Diss. University of California Los Angeles, 2009. Web. <<https://libproxy.uncg.edu/login?url=http://search.proquest.com.libproxy.uncg.edu/docview/304851808?accountid=14604>>. Zhou Long told the author, "my imagination for writing piano music from the very beginning has been to treat it like a percussion instrument. That ideal has been infused in me a long time ago, and I may not be able to stay away from it."

Gongyi (朱工一), a piano professor at CCM.<sup>130</sup> Dr. Zhou recalls that a Chinese broadcasting station first recorded the piece, just after he finished writing it. A student of Zhu Gongyi performed the piece for the recording, and Zhou remembered: “He didn’t have long fingers, but he had very strong and robust fingers, like small hammers. He played fiercely at that time. That was when Zhu Gongyi gave me the advice to treat it as a percussion piece, so the rhythm and the touch felt pretty short.”<sup>131</sup> Zhu Gongyi suggested to Zhou that since the piano is a type of percussion instrument, he should explore its strength and use its broad register range and strong rhythmic characteristics.<sup>132</sup> Zhou Long followed professor Zhu’s advice has kept it in mind ever since. Zhou certainly enjoys writing piano music like this, and he continues to compose his piano works in a percussive style, especially his later work *Pianogongs*.

### Irregular Rhythmic Motives

*Wu Kui* opens with vigorous rhythmic motives (see Figure 15. mm. 1-8) in the low register. The first eight measures act as a percussive, rhythmic introduction to the piece, containing two drum-like rhythmic patterns.

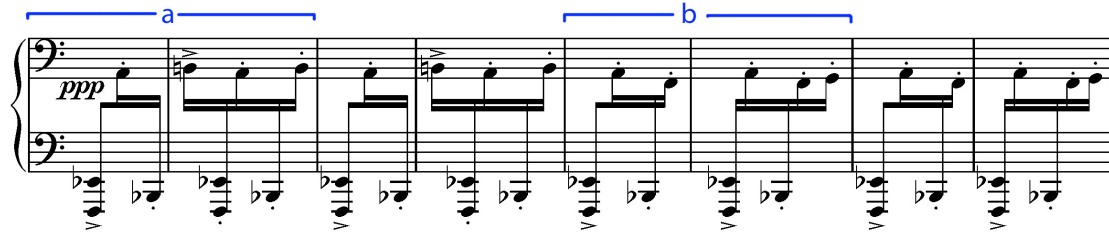
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<sup>130</sup> Zhu Gongyi (1922-1986), Chinese pianist, studied with Ding Shande and Italian pianist and conductor Mario Paci. He became associate professor at the Central Conservatory of Music (中央音乐学院) in 1950, and professor of music in 1979. *Zhu Gongyi Piano Pedagogy* was published by Ge Deyue (葛德月), an associate professor from the China Conservatory of Music (中国音乐学院) in Beijing.

<sup>131</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

<sup>132</sup> Chui Kan, dissertation. 22.

Figure 15. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, mm. 1-8



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Rhythmic motive “a” (mm. 1-2) and rhythmic motive “b” (mm. 5-6) are both two-measure rhythmic patterns, which repeat right after their original presentation (“a” repeats at mm. 3-4, and “b” repeats at mm. 7-8). Motive “a” comprises two shorter rhythmic motives (see Motive “a”) with meters alternating between 4/16 and 5/16.<sup>133</sup> In contrast to motive “a,” both measures of motive “b” are in 5/16 meter. Nevertheless, these two rhythmic motives are closely related, motive “b” being a rearrangement and answer to motive “a.” The robust and primitive rhythmic character of these motives creates a gripping introduction. Although metric indications are not stated in the piece, constant meter changes are implied by the rhythmic patterns, bar lines, and accent markings that shift between the left and right hands. In the 1980s, it was considered rather avant-garde in China to juxtapose metric groupings in this way.

Dr. Zhou talked about the rhythmic influence in his compositions of *taipinggu* (太平鼓), a traditional Manchu flat hand drum, stating:

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<sup>133</sup> These meter changes are explicitly notated in Zhou Long’s later brass quintet version of the same piece called *Five Maskers*.

Yes, there are lots of drums in the rhythm [in *Wu Kui*]. There is a type of drum called *taipinggu* in Shamanism. In my violin piece called *Tai Ping Gu*,<sup>134</sup> I borrowed some rhythm from the *taiping* drum ensemble, but I did not use its rhythm entirely. They beat the drum pretty regular, square and normally. I used a variety of rhythm and meter in both *Tai Ping Gu* and *Wu Kui*. I made these rhythmic changes flow with the change of emotion and mood. During that time in the 80s [in China], there were not many people composing with constant meter changes yet.<sup>135</sup>

The simple pitch variations and use of the low register of the piano in the opening section also reflects the percussion influence by imitating the deep sonority of the drums. An example of this timbre is found in the repeated alternations between a minor seventh F and E flat, along with a single B flat in the left hand bass part (see mm. 1-17). The dissonant minor seventh is emphasized and frequently used as the down beat during the opening phrase (mm. 1-8). The composer only occasionally shifts the downbeat accents to the right hand as in m. 2 and m. 4. In the second phrase, starting from mm. 9-17 (see Figure 17 on pg. 58), the minor seventh interval appears in almost every other measure (at mm. 9, 11, 13, 15 and 16), although in measures 13 and 17 it is shifted away from the downbeat. This metrical diversity within the phrase represents an innovative response to the Chinese ancestors' hunting dance. Another example of the Chinese percussion ensemble influence can be found in a transitional type of rhythmic figure from m. 18 to m. 20 (see Figure 16.), which is used to connect between the main theme (mm. 9-17) with its dominant imitation at mm. 21-28. This percussion interlude functions as transitional material, recurring often between phrases and sections, for instance at mm. 29-30 and at

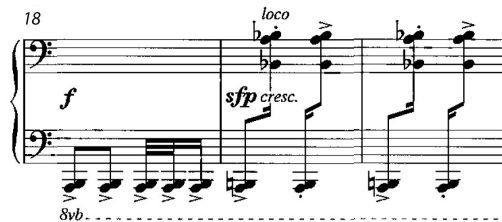
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<sup>134</sup> Zhou Long composed *Tai Ping Gu* for violin and piano in 1983, the same year as *Wu Kui*.

<sup>135</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

m. 48. It enters with great strength and power, its *f* dynamic contrasting with the *ppp* of the beginning.

Figure 16. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, mm. 18-20



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Furthermore, in the right hand of the two opening passages (mm.1-17), the melody varies between A and B in motive “a”, and between A, F and G in motive “b”. These simple pitch variations along with vivid rhythmic patterns unmistakably simulate the features and techniques of Chinese percussion ensembles using the instruments discussed above.

### Hidden Melody and Motivic Development

The various pitches of Chinese percussion instruments may well explain why the composer hides simple melodic motives within the driving rhythmic patterns. Dr. Zhou explained, “This melody is basically like a motive, and is essentially comprised of three notes which forms a major third and a major second.”<sup>136</sup> This hidden motive of a major third and major second first appears in the right hand (A-F-G) in m. 6, motive “b” (see Figure 15, p. 55) in the eight-measure long introductory phrase. This hidden melodic

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<sup>136</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

motive, emphasized by accents, is blended into the energetic rhythmic patterns of the second phrase (mm. 9-16). The accented notes found in the right hand outline the major thirds and seconds described by Zhou. This motive is developed thoroughly throughout the piece using techniques such as thematic transformation, transposition, inversion, augmentation, diminution, and fragmentation. Even though these motivic developments are influenced by standard Western compositional techniques, Zhou assimilates these skills freely and uses them in such an organic way that he is able to mix Western techniques and Chinese style while staying true to his personal musical intentions. Dr. Zhou mentioned in the interview that: “The motive is my original idea. It has no association with the dance accompaniment music of *Wu Kui*.”<sup>137</sup>

Figure 17. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, mm. 9-17



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This theme is similar to a period, containing two parts, the antecedent “c” and the consequent “d” as (shown in Figure. 17), in which the consequent “d” (5 measures) is a slightly prolonged restatement of the antecedent “c” (4 measures). The composer emphasizes the major third motive in the antecedent “c” with G-A-B-A in the right hand,

<sup>137</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.



and he accentuates the major second motive in the consequent “d” with G-A-G. Together these thematic motives provide the foundation upon which the piece is built. All of the development in the piece is deeply rooted in them. Some standard variation techniques are used in developing these principal thematic motives in the subsequent phrases. For instance, after a strong interlude (mm. 18-20), Zhou restates the main theme with a dominant transposition from mm. 21 to 28, in which the *mf* dynamic marking, the higher register and doubled parallel fourth texture in the right hand add volume and powerful energy. After another “percussion” interlude, the composer varies the theme again in mm. 31-38 by inverting the left and right hand alternation of the rhythmic pattern. The main thematic motives are presented by the left hand (see Figure 18, mm. 31-38) as opposed to the original theme where they are presented in the right hand.

Figure 18. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, mm. 31-38

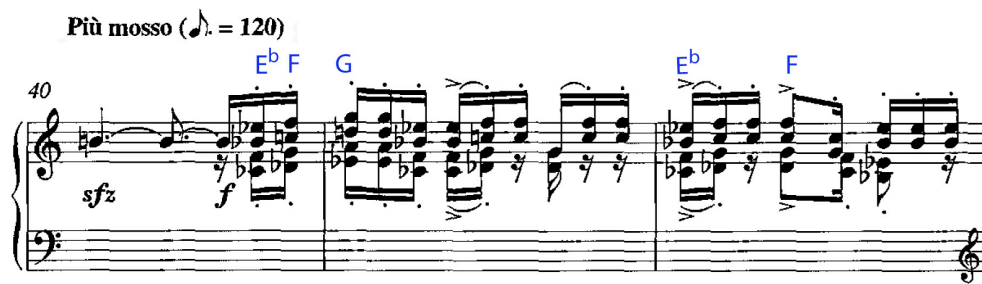
The image shows a musical score for measures 31-38 of 'Wu Kui' by Zhou Long. The score is written in bass clef with a piano (pp) dynamic marking. The left hand plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The notes are: m. 31: E♭, F; m. 32: G, F; m. 33: F; m. 34: E♭, F; m. 35: E♭. The notes are written in blue ink. The score is divided into two systems by a blue bracket at the top.

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Through diminution, the rhythmic motif of the main theme is condensed at the *Più mosso* section starting from m. 40 to m. 42 (see Figure 19). However, the major third and major second motives (E<sup>b</sup>-G and E<sup>b</sup>-F) are still hidden inside with a more straightforward and even rhythmic motive. This *Più mosso* acts as a transitional section

while the composer develops two materials, the first being the abstracted thematic motivic figure in Figure 3.5. This interacts with a new type of transitional figure, a fast 32<sup>nd</sup>-note broken arpeggio that lasts for one measure that first appears at m. 39 (see Figure 20) right before the *Più mosso* section. It then alternates with the more condensed thematic pattern in mm. 43-44, 45-46, and 49-52, as if to keep interrupting the scene.

Figure 19. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, mm. 40-42



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Figure 20. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, m. 39



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The thematic motives are prolonged into broader versions starting from mm. 66-67 (see Figure 21), with the melody projected on the top in augmentation. However, the major third (E-F-G) and the major second (E-F) thematic motives (at m. 72-73) are

interrupted by the return of the rhythmic motive from the opening introduction played an octave higher than originally (mm. 68-69). This foretells the end of the A section, in the last part of which all of the thematic motives and rhythmic patterns appear. The music comes to its first climax at m. 77, after which the theme of the opening introduction returns almost five registers higher (at m. 78), and the 32<sup>nd</sup> note fast arpeggio interrupts twice at m. 90 and m. 95. The condensed thematic motive enters at m. 96, as it quickly descends to the lower register. The theme of the opening introduction finally reaches its original low register at m. 100. The rhythm gradually declines at m. 117.

Figure 21. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, mm. 66-67



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Thus, in the opening section of *Wu Kui*, we see how Chinese percussion-influenced rhythmic figures provide passionate zest and perpetual rhythmic drive. After the lively rhythmic section gradually dissipates, there follows a slow and lyrical middle section, in which one can clearly see the influence of a form of traditional Chinese music known as *San Ban*.

### *Influences of Traditional Chinese Music*

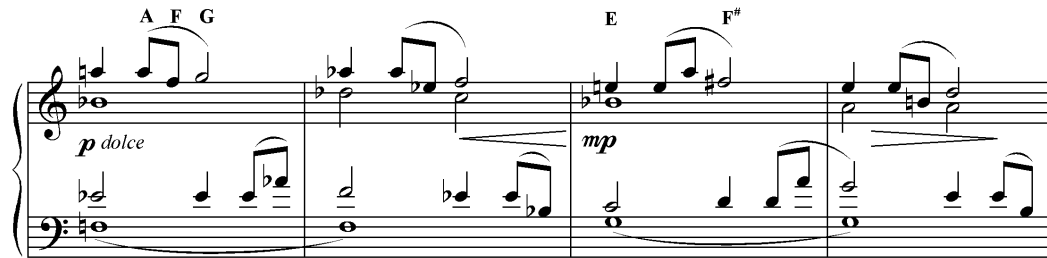
*Sanban* (散板) denotes a form of music with free meter and irregular rhythm, often seen in traditional Chinese music. It is similar to *senza misura* in Western music. The B section of the piece, beginning at m. 118 and marked *Largo*, exemplifies the *sanban* style. The thematic motive is woven discreetly into contrapuntal four-part writing, in which the major third is projected in m. 108 with AFG<sup>138</sup> in the soprano line and the major second in m. 110 with E and F<sup>#</sup> (see Figure 22). In contrast to the opening, the mood has completely changed, becoming lyrical and melancholy. Dr. Zhou said, “in the middle *sanban* section, the piano plays the melody in the higher register, which sounds like a little flute or piccolo, giving this section an open and broad feeling.”<sup>139</sup> The thematic motive along with the rhythmic pattern (quarter, two eighths and a half note) is developed in four-part contrapuntal writing. However, the motives are arranged freely. For instance, the interval of a third is expanded to a perfect fourth (A<sup>b</sup>-E<sup>b</sup> in the soprano line at m. 119 and E-A at m. 120). The motive is mirrored in different voices, as if in a conversation between the two voices. The tenor voice answers and acts as a counter melody to the soprano (see Figure 22).

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<sup>138</sup> The Oxford Edition shows AGA, a misprint. Please refer to the Appendix for all corrections.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

Figure 22. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, mm. 118-121



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Dr. Zhou said about the slow middle section, “yes, it has become a real *sanban* in that section. This melody is basically like a motive.”<sup>140</sup> *Banshi* (板式) or *banyan* (板眼) is the metrical structure used for the meter and rhythm in traditional Chinese music and Chinese opera.<sup>141</sup> The strong beat in each measure is called *ban* (板), and the other beats are called *yan* (眼). For instance “one *ban* one *yan*” (一板一眼) equals duple meter, “one *ban* and three *yan*” (一板三眼) means quadruple meter, *kuaiban* (快板) means “fast meter,” *manban* (慢板) means “slow meter,” and *daoban* (导板) means “lead-in meter.” As *san* (散) means “free” and “dispersed” in Chinese, *sanban* (散板) can be translated as “free meter” or “unmetered.” In Chinese opera and traditional instrumental music, *sanban* may occur at the beginning, middle, or end. Sometimes it occurs at the climax of a fast piece, serving as the release of the intense energy into a slow and free section. There is a saying called “fast playing slow singing” (紧拉慢唱) or *yaoban* (摇板) in

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Chinese opera (中国戏曲) is a popular musical form combining drama and traditional Chinese musical theatre. Of its many regional branches, Beijing opera is the most famous.

Chinese opera, where the slow singing has slow and free meter in contrast to the accompaniment, which has a fast meter and tight rhythm. This type of *yaoban* is also used in Chinese instrumental music.<sup>142</sup> It seems that the overall metrical structure of *Wu Kui* may be similar to the description of *yaoban* in traditional Chinese music, where the slow, singing middle section (*sanban*) contrasts with the fast beginning and ending percussive sections. Furthermore, there are a couple of extensive unmeasured phrases in this section that clearly reflect the *sanban* influence. One of these at m. 129 is marked *Tranquillo* (see Figure 23), forming one long measure that stands alone.

Figure 23. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, m. 129

The image shows a musical score for a single measure of music, marked 'tranquillo' with a tempo of ♩ = 56. The score is written on three staves. The top staff is a treble clef, the middle is a grand staff (treble and bass clefs), and the bottom is a bass clef. The music consists of a series of eighth notes in the right hand, with some notes beamed together. The left hand plays a series of eighth notes in the bass clef, with some notes beamed together. The score includes dynamics like 'ppp' and 'dim.', and performance instructions like 'Una corda'. The measure is marked with a large '8' at the beginning and end, indicating its length. The tempo is marked 'tranquillo' with a quarter note equal to 56 (♩ = 56). The score includes dynamics like 'ppp' and 'dim.', and performance instructions like 'Una corda'.

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The *Tranquillo* phrase (♩ = 56) is slightly faster than the beginning of the B section, which is marked *Largo* (♩ = 46). The *Tranquillo* measure is written on three staves. The performer's left hand plays the bottom two staves, crossing over the right hand to play the F# in a very high register and dropping down to play the thematic motive

<sup>142</sup> Li, *Chinese Music Structure: An Outline Analysis*. Beijing: Central Conservatory of Music Publishing Company, 2004. 50-52 and 60-61.

in the low register. The composer transposes the major third motive and major second motive in the bass line, which is related to the opening motive in the Largo section (AFG in m. 118). The *Tranquillo* phrase is marked *una corda*, creating a unique sonority in the piece.<sup>143</sup> After the peaceful and sorrowful serenade from the *Largo* section, the piece enters a broad and spiritual moment that evokes water drops creating ripples on a serene and tranquil lake.

The *sanban* influence also affects m. 134, which lasts about one page. At the beginning of the measure, a series of percussive figures marked *ad lib.* enter the scene. They consist of accelerating repeated notes and chord tremolos that imitate traditional Chinese drum rolls. Then a phrase similar to m. 129 appears, marked *Scorrevole*, meaning flowing and gliding. However, this time the composer redistributes the registers, moving the D-B<sup>b</sup>-C motive two octaves closer to the right hand material and moving the F# to the low register. The *Con moto* section (mm. 135-142) uses the motive from the Largo section in a faster tempo (dotted quarter equals 108) and with different meters.<sup>144</sup> The *Arioso* section starting at m. 143 acts like a cadenza, spanning over two pages. It is evidently influenced by *sanban* as well, and is full of improvisational materials. The thematic motive appears sporadically in this section, and the left hand utilizes drum-like triplet figures (Figure 24), requiring the performer to use the right hand

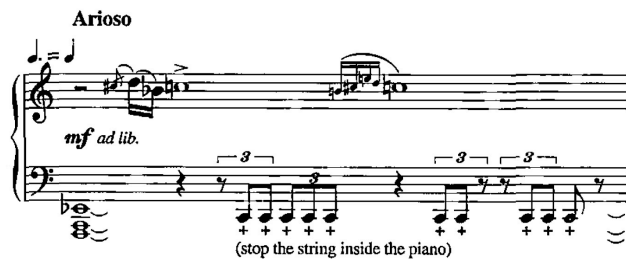
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<sup>143</sup> The lyrical middle section starting from m. 118 is similar to antiphonal sung dialogues performed in the valley. In some respects, the middle section is influenced by impressionistic composers such as Debussy. Dr. Zhou told the author, “yes, the touches and pedaling may be close to impressionism.”

<sup>144</sup> The opening phrase in the Largo section (mm. 118-121) is notated in 4/4; however, in the brass quintet version *Five Maskers* the composer alternates from 6/8 to 7/8 (mm. 135-142).

to stop the strings inside the piano while the left hand plays C repetitively. The cadenza ends with a *Scherzando* section during which the right hand plays a rhythmic percussive motive in sextuplets and the left hand supplies thematic motives underneath. This leads to a short return of the A section (mm. 144-166), after which the piece ends with an extravagant, unmeasured coda first marked *Vigoroso* (at m. 167).<sup>145</sup> Beginning *fortissimo*, the texture thickens and becomes more virtuosic as the left hand covers distances of over two octaves and the right hand widens the register using syncopated rhythm. Starting from *Vivace*, the tempo increases with contrasting dynamics.

Figure 24. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, m. 143



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The middle expressive and lyrical section is deeply connected to the composer's life and emotional experience in the northern part of China. Zhou said, "of course this composition had some connection with my life experience over there."<sup>146</sup> The Cultural

<sup>145</sup> Measure 167 is nearly three pages long in its entirety, including the *Vigoroso* and *Vivace* sections.

<sup>146</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.



Revolution had a major impact on Zhou's life.<sup>147</sup> After it ended in 1976, China gradually opened up to the Western world. Chinese music scholars were keen to learn classical Western repertoire and to be introduced to contemporary music. Young composers like Zhou Long were exposed to all styles of Western music from all eras. It has been a principal goal for many Chinese composers of this generation to absorb the best from Western music and combine it with the Chinese idiom.

### Chinese Harmonic Color and Percussion Sounds

Influenced by Western contemporary music, many Chinese composers started to explore new ways of utilizing Chinese pentatonic scales and harmony within an atonal style. As Zhou was aiming to explore Chinese-styled percussive sounds in *Wu Kui*, he was also trying to stay away from a tonal system and functional harmony. Zhou stated, "The harmony I used in the piece basically breaks away from the tonal system. It has

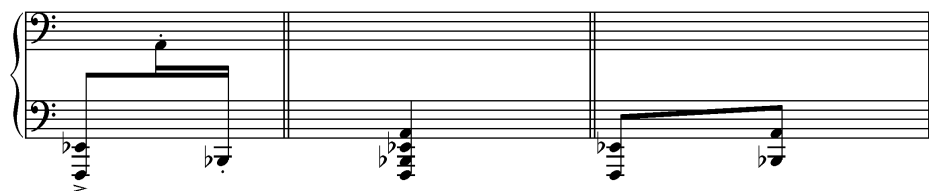
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<sup>147</sup> Ibid. Zhou talked about the effect that the Cultural Revolution had on his compositions, stating: "I wrote a composition called *The Fire of Future* later, and it basically depicted my life experience during that time. *The Fire of Future* for Children's Choir and orchestra was commissioned by a symphony orchestra. During that time, when I was working at the military and farm village, they burned the grass on the wasteland. It depicts this fire and my feelings during that time. Since we did not have any houses, we lived in tents when we were on the burning team. During the time working in the burning squad, sometimes we had to run from the wasteland after we burned it. When the strong wind came, the whole forest was burned. It was very dangerous to put out the fire when we burned the forest at that time. We had no tools, or airplanes to sprinkle water. We were dependent on humans to extinguish the fire. After that, lots of people from the military died extinguishing the fire. This kind of life experience is reflected in my later compositions. I did not think anything about being a composer at that time, even though I played piano when I was young and loved music. It left a deep impression in my life, and *The Fire of Future* was a composition, which truly reflects that period of life experience. In fact, it depicts the yearning of the youth, since I was sixteen when I was sent down to the village." *The Fire of Future* for symphonic orchestra and Children's Choir was commissioned by Tokyo Philharmonic Orchestra in 2001.

some harmonic effect, however it did not get rid of harmony completely. Sometimes there are piano compositions deviated from it.” Zhou acknowledged in the interview with the author that the famous Chinese composer, music theorist and music educator, Li Yinghai,<sup>148</sup> significantly influenced his concept of harmony. Nevertheless, Zhou adds his own ideas and creates a unique style of pentatonic harmonic language.

Zhou takes advantage of a Western instrument, the piano, to imitate Chinese percussion sounds and overtones by superposing and overlapping a number of fourths (see Figure 25, m. 1). This example shows the first measure of the piece, introducing the drum-like basic rhythmic motive and harmonic foundation that occurs throughout its opening (from mm. 1-17). Combining all the notes together reveals two perfect fourths along with an augmented fourth on the top, as illustrated in the following example. These notes also generate two sevenths by overlapping and rearranging them in different order. The piece begins with a harmonic minor seventh interval (F and E flat) on the downbeat, followed by a melodic major seventh interval (B flat and A).

Figure 25. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, m. 1



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<sup>148</sup> Zhou studied harmony with Li Yinghai privately before he entered CCM.

The superposition of fourths is one of the principal features developed from pentatonic scales. As the following illustration shows, a pentatonic scale can generate a series of perfect fourths.

Figure 26. Pentatonic Scale and series of Perfect Fourths



The interval of a seventh also comes from the pentatonic scale, since the stepwise intervals can be inverted to minor sevenths, which can again be divided into two juxtaposed perfect fourths (see the following illustration).

Figure 27. Juxtaposed Perfect Fourth in Relation to the Pentatonic Scale



Zhou stated, “yes, overlapping them, it forms a sort of pentatonic multi-modal, overlapping multi-tonality. Even during the *sanban* in the middle section, it has multi-tonality,” and he adds, “multi-pentatonic tonality. So the vertical sounds are basically formed from overlapping pentatonic harmonic language. It also has connections with the Chinese melodic method.”<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

Through these means, Zhou's harmonic color simulates the sonority created by Chinese percussion instruments through superposed fourths and overlapping multi-pentatonic harmony. For example, in the *Piu mosso* section starting from m. 40, several perfect fourths move in parallel motion below the main thematic motive (see Figure 19 on page 60). By overlapping the pentatonic fourths, Zhou's multi-modal tonality creates a unique tone color different from the typical Western atonal sound. Almost all of the thematic development, from the rapid 32<sup>nd</sup>-note broken arpeggios (see Figure 20 on p. 60) to the vigorous ending section, involves this type of pentatonic harmonic language.

#### *Unique Musical Language Combining the West with the East*

In the early 1980s, the younger generation of composers started searching for new ways to combine elements of traditional Chinese music with techniques of twentieth-century composition. As a result, they created a "New Wave" in Chinese composition (*xinchao yinyue* 新潮音乐),<sup>150</sup> which broke through existing cultural and musical boundaries. Even though traditional music was looked down upon in the late 1970s in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, Zhou Long is a strong advocate of exploring traditional Chinese folk music. He himself observed that traditional Chinese music was not treated well at that time, saying:

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<sup>150</sup> Ching-chih Liu, *A Critical History of New Music in China*. ed. Caroline Mason. Hong Kong: The Chinese University, 2010. 14-17.

Back in the 80s, even close to my graduation time, they had to censor everything. If you were to have a recital, they would censor the recital programs. I was assigned to the National Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra of China at that time. I used some folk instruments, the *bangzi*<sup>151</sup> and *muyu*<sup>152</sup> (known as wood block in the western culture) to write a fisherman's song or a symphonic poem of fisherman's song. The radio station said it contained a dated monastic feeling, and it seemed like it was not allowed. But I explained to them that this is only a folk custom, and it has nothing to do with the monastic temple. Therefore it was presented on the television shows.<sup>153</sup>

Though the environment was still sensitive at that time, members of the younger generation of composers started to combine elements of traditional Chinese music and folk influence with twentieth-century compositional techniques. As the new policy<sup>154</sup> opened up the gates to the modern and contemporary music of the Western world, the younger generation started to explore modern Western techniques such as atonality, multitonality, tone clusters, and irregular rhythms. However, during that time only the standard music curriculum was offered through the music conservatories, focusing on classical Western compositional disciplines of harmony, counterpoint, form and analysis,

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<sup>151</sup> The *bangzi* (梆子) is a traditional Chinese folk instrument. It is a small, rectangular, high-pitched wood block.

<sup>152</sup> The *muyu* (木鱼) is a rounded woodblock carved in the shape of a fish and struck with a wooden stick. It is often used in Buddhist chanting.

<sup>153</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

<sup>154</sup> In 1979, Chairman Deng Xiaoping's speech at the Fourth Congress on Chinese literature and artwork encouraged freedom in science, literature, music and art, which marked a new beginning and gradually changed the situation in China. He pointed out specifically the path of creating new style, encouraging free development, advocating for different opinions and free debate in all school of thought, transforming foreign ideas into the Chinese style, and using the past for today's development. His speech unlocked new opportunities for Chinese scholars to gain access to twentieth-century modern and contemporary Western music, which were previously blocked.

and orchestration. Alongside this were offered comprehensive Chinese folk music courses, which greatly promoted musical nationalism. In these courses, younger composers not only had to memorize folk tunes, but also to study folk chamber music, *xiqu* (regional Chinese opera, theatre and drama music), and *shuochang* music.<sup>155</sup>

Collecting folk tunes was encouraged as well. As Zhou remembered:

At that time we brought tape recorders, very poor tape recorders. We thought that collecting folk songs was very interesting and had lots of fun. We indeed went to the primitive mountain areas. There was no electricity at all. So they preserved some folk songs, which still retained some originality. At that time, we first recorded them, and then we each transcribed them on the score after we returned home. So we accumulated some first-hand data.<sup>156</sup>

The modern musical language and contemporary techniques of Western composers were absorbed primarily through listening to recordings and studying scores. The term New Wave Music (*xinchao yinyue*) was first used to criticize this newly developing style of music. Zhou said, “I disagree with the parlance,” and he further explained:

Back then our composition was not very avant-garde, but it exceeded what was proper during that time in China. They criticized this at the time, and they called it “*xinchao* [new wave].” At that time, it was too modern, too pioneer, and it was suppressed for a while in China. Actually, this kind of musical language was very common from the western perspective. To our musical language, it sounds basically classical if you listen to it nowadays. They felt it was a new wave at that time.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> *Shuochang* (说唱音乐), also known as *quyi* (曲艺), is a traditional form of folk art entertainment consisting mainly of talking and singing. Through the combination of literature and music, the performer would use the *shuochang* art form to tell historical legends and stories.

<sup>156</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

Though they had to choose carefully which traditional Chinese music elements and which newer compositional techniques to use, composers of the younger generation claimed a certain degree of freedom in expressing their own individual feelings. Thus the new contemporary modern musical language and the old traditional Chinese music and culture became complementary, essential elements of their music. As a younger generation composer, Zhou explored new ideas and twentieth-century influenced compositional techniques, one of which, was the combination of unpredictable irregular rhythmic motives with constant meter changes.

#### Change of Meter and the “Five Maskers” Edition

The constant change of meter was a rather avant-garde compositional technique in the early 1980s in China. As a young composer, Zhou was not afraid to innovate. The use of free meter was among the pioneering elements in *Wu Kui*. Even though there are no meter indications in the solo piano version, such changes are clearly implied by bar lines and accents. Dr. Zhou explained, “For the Oxford edition, I have published a new version of the piece for brass quintet called *Five Maskers*.<sup>158</sup> It is the same exact piece, but it is more standardized.”<sup>159</sup> *Five Maskers*, written in 1995, is scored for a brass quintet consisting of trumpet in C doubling a piccolo trumpet (in mm. 120-168), trumpet

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<sup>158</sup> *Five Maskers* is published by Oxford University Press in Oxford contemporary repertoire series. <http://ukcatalogue.oup.com/product/9780193864450.do>

<sup>159</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

in B-flat, horn in F, trombone and tuba. It was commissioned and premiered by the Stony Brook Contemporary Chamber Ensemble of New York State University.

*Five Maskers*, the Brass Quintet version of *Wu Kui*, is essentially a transcription of *Wu Kui* but with all of the meter changes notated. For instance, from the beginning of measure 1 to measure 65 in the Quintet version, the meter fluctuates constantly among 3/16, 4/16, 5/16, 6/16, 9/16, 10/16, and 12/16, with only one measure in 3/8 (m. 18). The meter changes to 5/4 at m. 66 for two measures and then continues with constant meter changes among all the previously mentioned 16<sup>th</sup>-note meters together with 4/8, 6/8, 7/8, 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 5/4, 6/4, 7/4, and 9/4. There are only a few minor differences between the piano edition and the brass quintet edition. First, the quintet version contains more detailed dynamic markings and articulations, possibly necessitated by the instrumentation. There are also slightly different meters in a few places. The quintet edition at m. 27 is notated with an eighth note plus two sixteenths in 4/16 meter, whereas the piano edition has three sixteenths in that bar. Another minor difference happens at mm. 75 and 76. The rhythmic pattern and meter differs slightly between the two editions, where the piano version is notated in 5/4 and the quintet version is notated in 4/4.

#### Editorial Issues and Performance Practice

Certain issues for the performer of *Wu Kui* arise from existence of two editions. After it was finished in 1983, *Wu Kui* won the “Textbook Award” of the CCM<sup>160</sup> and was

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<sup>160</sup> It was noted as “Textbook Award” (教材奖) in “Listing of Zhou Long’s Musical Compositions.” *People’s Music* 5 (2007): 14-15.



published soon after in *Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music*.<sup>161</sup> In 1994 this Chinese edition was included and published in the anthology *Chinese Piano Composition Selections*, volume 1.<sup>162</sup> However, in this edition the *Arioso* section at measure 143 was deleted by the editor. When discussing the missing *Arioso* section with the author, Dr. Zhou said, “Professor Wang Yali said that the middle section was too long, so he cut it out,” and he added, “you could not disagree at that time. If you disagreed, they would not publish it!” Later when Oxford University Press published *Wu Kui* in 2002, Zhou restored this section.

Though the Oxford edition presents the complete work without cuts, it contains a considerable number of editorial errors, which are listed here and corrections to which are printed in the Appendix. Dr. Zhou said, “After I proofread for them, they kept changing and made a lot of corrections that went through three different people. During this time, they changed my corrections incorrectly.” The first mistake occurs at p. 4, m. 54, where the lowest note on the downbeat for the left hand should be F instead of E. Another mistake is at m. 55 (see Figure A1 in Appendix). Instead of the dyad G and C, it should read A and D on the only eighth note of the measure. At p. 6, m. 98 (see Figure A3 in

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<sup>161</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013. *Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music* (中央音乐学院学报) is a peer-reviewed academic music journal published quarterly in Beijing. In order to stimulate Chinese piano composition, the piano department at CCM held the composition event calling for new compositions across the entire nation in August 1983. *Wu Kui* won third place in the event, and it was used as the piano competition’s selected repertoire. “The Event for Chinese Piano Composition and the Piano Competition for Performing Chinese Piano Compositions by the Piano Department at CCM.” *Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music* 3 (1984): 15.

<sup>162</sup> Zhou, Long. *Chinese Piano Compositions Selections: Wu Kui*. Beijing: People’s Music Publishing House. 1994. PP. 147-157, 160 measures.

Appendix), the dyad E# and A# should occur on the only eighth note of the right hand (instead of D# and G#). Next, the melody in the high register at p. 7, m. 118 should be AAFG instead of AAGA, since the motive starts with a major third (see Figure A4 in Appendix). Here, the wrong notes conflict with the hidden thematic motive. A serious textural error occurs in measures 120 and 121, where the Oxford edition omits the alto voice, consisting of a whole note B flat on the downbeat of measure 120, and two half notes A at measure 121 (see Figure A4 in Appendix). These parts are present in the Chinese edition, which should be considered correct regarding the four-part texture of these measures.

The Oxford edition misses some accent marks in m. 129 on p. 7 (see Figure A5 in Appendix). Dr. Zhou said:

For the second to last line on page 7, I added accent marks above the staccatos (F#) for left hand later. I didn't have to, since there is *ppp* there. It is a little over-exaggerated to combine accent marks with *ppp*. Generally speaking, you could just project or emphasize it a little bit here.<sup>163</sup>

There is also a wrong note on p. 9, m. 137. Matching the major third motif established in m. 135, the second right-hand note should be an A natural instead of A flat (see Figure A6 in Appendix). At the end of p. 12 (m. 166), the second to last note in the right hand part should be an E flat instead of E natural, forming a minor third with the last note (see Figure A7 in Appendix). Zhou said, "This sequence should be similar to the previous one in the same measure, which is why it should be similar (minor third) at the end of the sequence." In the same measure, the 8<sup>va</sup> sign should be added below the left hand, and it

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

should extend from the beginning of the measure until the same sequence ending in the middle of m. 166 at p. 13. Regarding the use of the pedal, Dr. Zhou said, “Pedal should be added for each group of sequence. There are sixteenth-note rests separating the sequences, and you can release the pedal there.” Zhou said, “For the last sequence at measure 166 on page 13, there should be a *Rubato* sign close to the last half of the sequence. It should probably slow down and relax a little bit.” He added: “You could relax a little there, and don’t have to be so mechanical. It is all right to slow down a little bit, and broaden up a little bit.” At the last line of page 13, some wedge accent marks should be added on the top of the original accent marks. There are three accents for the right hand and four for the left hand with three groups in the measure. The same group repeating at the end of the line should have the same markings. Zhou said: “In fact, there should be absolutely no pedal at this place. It should be separated, heavily accented, very powerful, very focused and short.”

As for the pedaling in the *Vigorouso* section (m. 167), Zhou emphasizes, “this place should especially not have any pedal. You could use a little bit of pedal in the other places, since it feels a little bit like a *portamento*. But the right hand does not need any.” Pedal could be used elsewhere during this section, but there should be no pedal at all for the two groups marked with *staccatissimo* signs (see Figure A8 in Appendix). According to Zhou, “there are three groups in the last line, you could lightly tap the pedal for the middle group.” He further explains, “on page 14 you could use some pedal, since the basses have those little slurs. Of course you don’t have to use pedal for the entire line, maybe one pedal for each group.” Finally, and quite significantly, on the last page (p.

15), a bass clef for the left hand is omitted in the middle of the next to last line, after the sixteenth-note parallel-fourth passage (see Figure A9 in Appendix).

Due to the unmeasured sections in *Wu Kui*, the brass quintet version (*Five Maskers*) contains significantly more measures, a total of 252 measures in comparison with the solo piano edition, which consists of 169. The several extensive unmeasured sections of *Wu Kui* are designated measure 117 (the end of the A section), measure 129 (*Tranquillo*), measure 134 (*ad lib.* in the slow middle section), measure 143 (*Arioso*), and measures 166 and 167 near the end. The entire coda starting from measure 167 (*Vigoroso*) is unmeasured except for the two measures at the very end. This is an influence of the ancient Chinese music style according to Dr. Zhou. He said, “actually for *Wu Kui*, I didn’t even use bar lines when I first started the solo version, and then eventually I drew the bar lines later. It is because this piece emphasizes lots of accents. Therefore, from the perspective of conception, it was influenced by *guqin* music.”<sup>164</sup> We will now explore this particular Chinese musical tradition in greater detail.

### Influence of *Guqin* Music

After emerging thousands of years ago, the ancient plucked string instrument *Guqin* (古琴) has played a significant role in Chinese music history. *Guqin*, also known as *qin* (琴) traditionally, has become a general term for all types of stringed instrument including piano (*gangqin* 钢琴), organ (*guangfengqin* 管风琴), violin (*xiaotiqin* 小提琴)

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<sup>164</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

and so forth. The word *gu* (古), “ancient,” was added later as a prefix to differentiate a particular instrument from its generalized popular usage. The *guqin* is made of an extended wooden resonator designed to be 3 *chi* 6 *cun* and 5 *fen* in the Chinese scale,<sup>165</sup> symbolizing 365 days in a year.<sup>166</sup> Originally the five strings were tuned to a pentatonic scale. The *guqin* was customized with two additional strings in the Zhou Dynasty in the eleventh century BCE, where it was then called *qixianqin* (七弦琴), literally translated as “seven-stringed instrument.” It has silk strings unsupported by a bridge, creating quite a low and melancholy timbre. Because it is quiet, performers focus on projecting subtle changes. The performer’s right hand plays the silk strings, while the left hand fingers hold the strings down for position changes. Since the instrument can produce melody and harmony, it was used as a solo instrument, as an accompaniment for the voice, in duets with other Chinese instruments, or in instrumental ensembles. “Chinese considered the *guqin* to be superior to all other instruments in depth and strength of musical expression.”<sup>167</sup> The *guqin* gained enormous popularity among Chinese scholars in ancient times, being regarded as one of the most prestigious musical instruments.

Zhou Long, who holds *guqin* music in high regard, has composed many works under its influence, particularly his string quartets. Although the piano is not commonly

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<sup>165</sup> *Chi* (尺), *cun* (寸) and *fen* (分) are used as units of length in Chinese measurement. *Chi*, translated literally as “ruler,” equals to one third of a meter. One *chi* equals ten *cun*, and one *cun* equals ten *fen*.

<sup>166</sup> Shen, Sin-yan. *China: A Journey into Its Musical Art*. Chicago: Chinese Music Society of North America, 2000, 86-88.

<sup>167</sup> Jie Jin. *Chinese Music*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 60.

considered a member of the string family of instruments, the *guqin* music and its musical form affected *Wu Kui*. Zhou explained the connection:

*Guqin*'s musical form basically develops gradually. It begins with slow and free *banshi*.<sup>168</sup> Most of the *guqin* music starts very slow and free, and then the rhythm gradually becomes active. Actually not only *guqin* music, but also much Chinese folk music is similar to this. This kind of musical structure develops from slow and free to active, and then to the climax. Of course, there are a few exceptions, such as *Jiukuang* [A *guqin* repertoire]. It starts with a dance. But the others like *Meihua Sannong* (梅花三弄), or *Guangling San* (广陵散) these kinds of famous *guqin* repertoire all start freely, basically no meter.<sup>169</sup>

This kind of loosely arranged *guqin* form with its gradual and free features not only explains why the irregular meter is not designated explicitly in the piano version, but also why there are so many extensive unmeasured bars in the middle section. These unmeasured sections could be related to the ancient *qin* tablature, the ancient musical notation system evolved from *guqin* practice. Zhou explains further:

In the *ancient guqin tablature*, the traditions were divided into different genres, and each of them had different interpretations. They created new tablature with their own rhythm, since the original ones have no records of rhythm. Its text tablature only depicted fingering actions, and the fingering actions present tone color or overtones. Also, the fingering descriptions represent musical positions, and the positions indicate registers of the *guqin*. So through the text tablature, you would know the notes and tone color. Because of the various fingering actions, such as how to use the fingernails to play, or how to rebound and sweep, these all related to the tone color and register, however there is no note value, and of course note value generates rhythm. So later generation *guqin* players recorded

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<sup>168</sup> *Banshi* or *banyan* is a metric and rhythmic pattern in traditional Chinese music. *Ban* indicates strong beats, and *yan* means less strong or soft beats. So one *ban* one *yan* is 2/4; one *ban* three *yan* is 4/4; only one *ban* without any *yan* is 1/4. If the meter is no *ban* and no *yan*, it is *san ban*, or free meter.

<sup>169</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

the rhythm with their own interpretation. Slowly and gradually *guqin* music developed all kinds of interpretation. Some had active rhythm; others had broad or scattered rhythm. It was all from different *guqin* masters' own interpretations. In fact, you could play the middle section in *Wu Kui*, scattered, slowly and freely (散漫的). It is basically a *sanban*.<sup>170</sup>

Zhou Long relates the features of the ancient *guqin* tablature to the scattered form featuring free and improvisatory rhythms in the middle section of *Wu Kui*. This may help the performer better understand these unmeasured sections, especially the *Tranquillo* at measure 129 and *Scorrevole* at measure 134. It worth noting that both sections marked *una corda* simulate features of *guqin* music. The lyricism in the right hand and the accented left hand notes are comparable to plucking the stringed instrument. Perhaps because the ancient *guqin* tablature usually left the performer to interpret the tempo and rhythm, Zhou choose to gave some liberty to the performer in those unbarred measures.

In addition to the free rhythm and meter, Zhou also uses some unconventional rhythmic notations to simulate the improvisatory rhythmic changes that should be played gradually faster and gradually slower, for example measure 123 (see Figure 28).

Figure 28. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, Middle Section, mm. 122-124



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<sup>170</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

This should be played gradually slower as the beams drop from 16<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> notes. Figure 28 and 29 may further demonstrate the influence of *guqin* technique, for which the single notes and the rolling arpeggios found at m. 122 along with the gradually reduced chordal alternation at m. 123 could be related to the plucking and sweeping technique in *guqin* music. The composer put *ad lib.* at the beginning of m. 134 (see Figure 29) as the beam expands from the eighth notes to thirty-second notes, which implies a gradually increased speed for the repeated F. The long extended bar from the eighth-note beam to sixteenth- and back to eighth- at m. 134 indicates gradually faster and gradually slower changes in tempo.

Figure 29. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, Middle Section, m. 134, Partial Measure



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## Extended Piano Techniques and Zhou Long's Personal Encounter with George Crumb

*Wu Kui* uses extended piano techniques in the *Arioso* section at m. 143 (see Figure 30). The eminent American composer George Crumb<sup>171</sup> developed the use of extended techniques, utilizing the strings inside of the piano to produce many unconventional sounds. Zhou acknowledged in our interview that he was influenced by George Crumb in *Wu Kui*, especially in the *Arioso* section marked with “stop the string inside the piano.” Zhou stated, “in the 1970s, many American composers used extended piano techniques, but it [the piece] is different than prepared piano. This piece only stops the strings in a few places. This technique was rarely used in China at that time.”<sup>172</sup> As shown in Figure 30, the performer damps the vibration of the C string through direct contact of the finger with the string inside the piano.

Figure 30. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, m. 143

The musical score for Figure 30 is for the *Arioso* section of *Wu Kui*, measure 143. It is written for piano in G major and 4/4 time. The right hand (treble clef) begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The left hand (bass clef) plays a bass line with quarter notes G2, F2, E2, and D2. The score is marked *mf ad lib.* and includes a '3' (triple) marking over the bass line. A note in the bass line has a '+' sign below it, indicating a string stop. The instruction '(stop the string inside the piano)' is written below the bass line.

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<sup>171</sup> American composer George Crumb was born in 1929 in Charleston, West Virginia. He was the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1968 for his *Echoes of Time and the River*, written for orchestra in 1967.

<sup>172</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

While holding down the string with one hand, the other hand plays the rhythm on the keyboard. In combination with birdcall figures in the treble clef, this extended technique creates a colorful contrast in this cadenza-like *Arioso* section.

Crumb is known for extended performance techniques and creative timbres such as in his most famous composition *Ancient Voices of Children* for mezzo-soprano, boy soprano, oboe, mandolin, harp, amplified piano, and percussion (1970), which includes creative timbres from a paper-threaded harp, a toy piano, a harmonica, a chisel used for pitch bending on the piano strings and a musical saw.<sup>173</sup> The use of tuned Tibetan prayer stones and Japanese temple bells in this piece demonstrates Crumb's interest in Eastern culture and musical ideas. Beginning in 1972, he took a series of journeys for performances and lectures on his music including trips to the Far East, Australia, New Zealand, Europe, Israel, Brazil, Columbia and Mexico.<sup>174</sup> Crumb's visit to Chinese conservatories had an impact on many of the younger-generation Chinese composers and opened their minds to innovative compositional techniques.

Zhou Long had a personal encounter with George Crumb in a master class while a junior at the Central Conservatory of Music around 1983. As Zhou recalled:

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<sup>173</sup> Crumb, George. "Crumb - Ancient Voices of Children." The Boston Conservatory. Accessed August 11, 2014. <http://www.bostonconservatory.edu/percdb/crumb-ancient-voices-children>

<sup>174</sup> Don Gillespie, *George Crumb: Profile of a Composer*. New York: C. F. Peters Corporation, 1986: 12-14.

He did not listen to my piano works. I remember when George Crumb visited the Central Conservatory of Music, many students showed him their compositions. I let him listen to my *Valley Stream*,<sup>175</sup> which was composed for Chinese folk instruments. He liked it very much. I wrote a lot of compositions for Chinese instruments at that time.<sup>176</sup>

Since *Wu Kui* adopts Crumb's unconventional stopped-string technique, Zhou encountered problems when he first recorded the whole piece. As Zhou recalled, "it was rather troublesome when I recorded that piece. They did not want you to touch the inside of the piano. The performer had to wear rubber gloves in order to play like that."<sup>177</sup> He remembered that when Helen Huang first recorded this piece, she initially had to leave out the *Arioso* section at first; then after recording the rest of the piece, she had to wash her hands and wear gloves in order to record the section where the performer touches the strings. Zhou added, "there were some Steinways they wouldn't let you touch the inside at all."<sup>178</sup>

Forming part of Zhou Long's early exploration of traditional elements of Chinese folk music, Chinese pentatonic harmony, and ancient Chinese musical concepts and forms in combination with avant-garde twentieth century and contemporary Western musical influences, *Wu Kui* eventually gained the status of one of his most successful

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<sup>175</sup> *Valley Stream* for flute, guan, *zheng*, and percussion quartet (1984), and it won runner-up at the third national music composition competition in China.

<sup>176</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

compositions. It helped to form his unique musical style, and was gradually recognized by the Western musical world as well. Zhou said:

I did not start the combination of Chinese and Western music elements. This kind of combination started when Western music entered China. Of course the combination mostly involved using the European major and minor system, and applying it to a lot of folk tunes and arrangements at first. Many touring Chinese orchestras and ensembles brought pieces like the *Butterfly Lovers* or similar styled music into the United States. They sounded like movie soundtrack music to many American audiences and critics. However my later compositions combined 20<sup>th</sup> Century compositional technique and traditional Chinese music concepts and elements, which made them feel fresh and novel. Because 20<sup>th</sup> Century western music has its unique style and language, when you add Chinese elements, people feel it is a fresh language and closer to the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The combination of Chinese tunes and post-Romantic European sound and style was often thought as a type of arrangement. Such pieces were not widely approved. They recognized my later composition style, not only me, in fact my generation of Chinese composers, since we composed in similar Chinese style. We were gradually approved by the American and Western music world. This kind of composition expanded into a new music world, and they thought it had infused some fresh blood into the American contemporary music world.<sup>179</sup>

Zhou Long and his generation of Chinese composers began a new era of Chinese musical development, composing personally styled Chinese music that combined five thousand years of Chinese musical tradition and culture with modern Western musical concepts.

This cultural mixture fascinated Zhou Long, who explained:

Yes, it is not only in my piano compositions, but also a lot of the orchestral works. It is not limited to the percussion section, but it is the combination of sounds and harmony from the brass and string instruments. They form this kind Chinese sound, which I was talking about earlier. It shows this percussion-based effect on the piano. I also used this Chinese drums and gongs effect in my orchestra works to create a very strong effect.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

Zhou Long's recently published work *Pianogongs*, which we will now consider, is an excellent example of his use of such a percussive timbre. *Pianogongs* combines the piano with the sonorities of two Chinese opera gongs, creating a groundbreaking synthesis of the sounds of the East and the West.

## CHAPTER IV

### PIANOGONGS

#### *Overview*

*Pianogongs* (钢琴锣) is composed for piano solo and two Chinese opera gongs (6" and 11"). Completed on May 4, 2005 in Kansas City, Missouri, it was premiered the same month on May 29, 2005 at the Beijing Modern Music Festival in Beijing, China and published by The Oxford University Press in 2006. A single-movement composition that lasts about seven minutes, it was commissioned by pianist Dr. Teresa McCollough,<sup>181</sup> Professor of Music at Santa Clara University, where she teaches piano and music theory. As a leading performer and advocate of contemporary music, she has produced two recordings, *New American Piano Music* in 2001, and *Music for Hammers and Sticks* in 2004, in which Zhou Long's piano trio *Wu Ji*<sup>182</sup> is included. Zhou and McCollough became acquainted during the recording of *Wu Ji*. Dr. Zhou recalled the commissioning of *Pianogongs*:

Dr. McCollough is very interested in Chinese music, and she recorded my other piece *Wu Ji* before. After she did the recording, she told me that she was very interested in those two Chinese percussion instruments (Chinese gongs). She hoped that I could compose a piece that contained those percussion instruments. Then I asked her: "Could you play these percussion instruments directly?" She

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<sup>181</sup> Teresa McCollough personal website. "Teresa McCollough." 2003  
<http://www.teresamccollough.com/bio/> (accessed June 1, 2014).

<sup>182</sup> *Wu Ji* (无极) is a trio for piano, *zheng* and percussion (1987/1991). See footnote 28.

said she could try, although it might be a little bit challenging for her. At that time, I thought about combining these two Chinese opera gongs with piano in the composition.<sup>183</sup>

Zhou Long continues to search for the perfect union of traditional Chinese and western instruments in his chamber music, having produced a large output featuring various combinations of instruments from the West and the East. Examples include *Hun* with *pipa* and string quartet, *Xuan* featuring flute, percussion, *pipa*, *zheng*, violin and cello, and his piano trio *Wu Ji* featuring piano, *zheng* and Chinese percussion. However, *Pianogongs* is the first piece in which Zhou Long has incorporated Chinese instruments into a solo piano composition. Zhou's view of the piano as a percussion instrument inspired him to create a piece where the pianist performs multiple instruments simultaneously, creating an unprecedented timbre.

Inspired by the distinctive sonorities created by the percussion instruments used in Beijing opera, Zhou uses the piano to imitate the rhythm and unique sonority of many different Chinese chimes, bells, and drums including *da gu* (large drum) and *ban gu* (piccolo drum). In so doing, he develops a variety of small motivic materials blending the unique sound and rhythm of Chinese instruments with Westernized form and structure. From the performance perspective, the coordination of the right hand piano part with the two opera gongs played by the left hand is a challenging task for the pianist. In order to achieve the most effective performance, it will aid the performer to gain a basic understanding of the Chinese percussion instruments featured in the piece and their historical background.

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<sup>183</sup> Zhou, interview by the author, 2013.

### *The Beijing Opera and Its Instrumental Performance Customs*

The Beijing Opera (京剧), also known as Peking Opera, is one of the most famous performing arts in China, combining music, theatre, vocal performance, styled recitation, costuming, make-up, dance and acrobatics. Named after the capital of China, it originated primarily from *xipi* and *erhuang* music<sup>184</sup> and was initially performed as entertainment for the general public at *xiyuanzi* (戏园子), a term denoting “play garden,” or “teahouse-theater.”<sup>185</sup> The combination of *xipi* and *erhuang*, known as *pihuang* (皮黄), marked the beginning of the Beijing Opera around 1790.<sup>186</sup> Integrating numerous theatrical styles from various regions of China, the Beijing Opera was embraced by all social classes as it matured, establishing a dominant status in theaters during the second half of the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, it became the preeminent national Chinese theater art.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> The Beijing opera is based on two traditional styles of singing known as *xipi* (西皮) and *erhuang* (二黄), which together are called the *pihuang* music system. The *xipi* style originated from a type of clapper opera in the western part of China and was used to express excitement and strong feelings of happiness, anger or agitation, whereas the *erhuang* style originated from the southeastern part of China and represents subdued moods such as sorrow, melancholy and conflicting thoughts. See Jingju Theater Company of Beijing. "History of Peking Opera." <http://www.pekingopera.eu/pekingopera-en.html> (accessed May 1, 2014).

<sup>185</sup> The *xiyuanzi* or “tea courtyard” was a popular teahouse for social gatherings, and initially costumers paid more for the tea than the performance. The opera shows were set up as side entertainment to attract customers. Performances for amusement could last up to twelve hours. Mackerras, Colin. "Peking Opera before the Twentieth Century." *Comparative Drama* 28: 37-38

<sup>186</sup> Colin Mackerras, "Peking Opera before the Twentieth Century." *Comparative Drama* 28: 21.

<sup>187</sup> The Beijing Opera was looked down upon by the upper class in China during its



The Beijing Opera can be divided into two distinctive categories, *wenxi* (文戏), and *wuxi* (武戏), each of which focuses on different themes and styles. The *wenxi* or “civil plays” concentrate on storytelling, including subjects of marriage, love, religion, and righted injustice. The *wuxi* or “martial plays” involve military themes, battles, warfare and rebellion, and feature an emphasis on acrobatics and martial arts displays.<sup>188</sup> This distinction between the two categories affects the arrangement of the accompaniment for Beijing Opera, which is known as either *wenchang* (文场) “civil section,” or *wuchang* (武场) “martial section.”<sup>189</sup> A small ensemble consisting of traditional string and percussion instruments usually accompanies the Beijing Opera. The representative instruments in *wenchang*, comprised of the stringed instruments *jinghu* (京胡),<sup>190</sup> *yueqin* (月琴),<sup>191</sup> *pipa* (琵琶),<sup>192</sup> and *sanxian* (三弦),<sup>193</sup> are mainly used to accompany singing. Sometimes other instruments may be added, including the *ruan*

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earlier development. However, several Beijing Opera companies were invited to perform at the court for the first time for the birthday celebration of the Qianlong Emperor in 1790. Later with the influence of the powerful Empress Dowager Cixi, Beijing Opera was able to establish popularity among the royals and the aristocrats in the court. Mackerras, Colin. "Peking Opera before the Twentieth Century." *Comparative Drama* 28: 21-32.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid. 20.

<sup>189</sup> Wang, Shuo. "A Brief Survey on the Beijing Opera Percussion Music No. 1." *China Theatre* 7 (1988): 58.

<sup>190</sup> The *jinghu* and *jing'erhu* (京二胡) are related to the family of bowed lutes known as *huqin*. They are small two-stringed bowed lutes with a high pitch.

<sup>191</sup> The *yueqin*, or moon guitar, is a plucked lute with a circular body. It is a soft instrument.

<sup>192</sup> The *pipa* is a four-stringed plucked lute with a pear-shaped wooden body.

(阮),<sup>194</sup> the bamboo flute *dizi* (笛子), and the *suona* (唢呐).<sup>195</sup> In contrast, the instrumentation of the *wuchang* generally consists of percussion instruments including *ban* (板),<sup>196</sup> *danpigu* (单皮鼓),<sup>197</sup> *big gong* (大锣), *small gong* (小锣), and cymbals (铙钹). These are used to accompany action scenes with dancing and fighting.<sup>198</sup> Since the percussion section contains the two opera gongs used in *Pianogongs*, the *wuchang* and the functions of the percussion instruments in Beijing Opera will be explained in further detail.

The percussion section forms a vital component of the Beijing opera. There is a common saying *yi tai luo gu ban tai xi*<sup>199</sup> which means half of the Beijing Opera is made of percussion music; since the percussion ensemble not only provides accompaniment and background music for the performance, it also controls the rhythm and tempo

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<sup>193</sup> The *sanxian*, translated literally as “three strings,” is a three-stringed fretless plucked instrument. It has a rounded rectangular resonator, which is covered traditionally with snakeskin.

<sup>194</sup> The *ruan* is a four-stringed Chinese plucked instrument with a circular body.

<sup>195</sup> The *suona* is a double-reed instrument with a wooden body and a copper bowl shaped like a speaker. It is commonly used as an accompanying instrument for wedding ceremonies, funerals and music festivals. One of the most famous *suona* solo pieces is called *A Phoenix Worshipped by Hundreds of Birds*, which has been transcribed into a well-known piano solo arrangement. Jie Jin. *Chinese Music*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 55-56.

<sup>196</sup> The *ban* (板) or *tanban* (檀板) is a hardwood clapper.

<sup>197</sup> The *danpigu* is a type of small Chinese single-skin drum that sits on a large three-legged stand and is played with bamboo sticks.

<sup>198</sup> Jingju Theater Company of Beijing. "History of Peking Opera." <http://www.pekingopera.eu/pekingopera-en.html> (accessed May 1, 2014).

<sup>199</sup> For a discussion of the saying *yi tai luo gu ban tai xi* (一台锣鼓半台戏), see Peng Lu, "The Prominence and Function of Percussion Music in the Art of the Beijing Opera." *Playwright*: 121.

changes for the whole opera. It forms the foundation, and is deeply connected with the four basic performance skills presented on the stage, *chang* (唱) singing melodies, *nian* (念) stylized recitation or speech, *zuo* (做) dance-acting, and *da* (打) combat.<sup>200</sup> Through contrasting timbre, volume, rhythm, and a variety of gong and drum beating patterns, the percussion section is able to depict different characters' personalities, project dramatic conflicts, support staging effects, and collaborate with the dancing and martial art performances.<sup>201</sup>

The traditional Beijing Opera orchestra consists of eight or nine performers, many of whom have the ability to play multiple instruments.<sup>202</sup> Typically, four players form the core of the *wuchang*, each of them in charge of several percussion instruments.<sup>203</sup> The drum master or *sigu* (司鼓),<sup>204</sup> the leader of the orchestra, plays *bangu* (板鼓), the combination of the two lead instruments of the percussion ensemble. He holds a single-membrane drum called *danpigu* in the left hand, and the clapper, *ban*, in the right hand;<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Mackerras, "Peking Opera before the Twentieth Century." *Comparative Drama* 28: 26.

<sup>201</sup> Xigui Zhang, "Ramble about the Gong and Drum in the Beijing opera." *Peking Opera of China* 7 (2004): 22-23.

<sup>202</sup> The *sanxian* player from the string section may also play *suona* (a wind instrument) and *tangu* (a drum instrument).

<sup>203</sup> Shuo Wang, "A Brief Survey on the Beijing Opera Percussion Music No. 1." *China Drama* 7 (1988): 58-59.

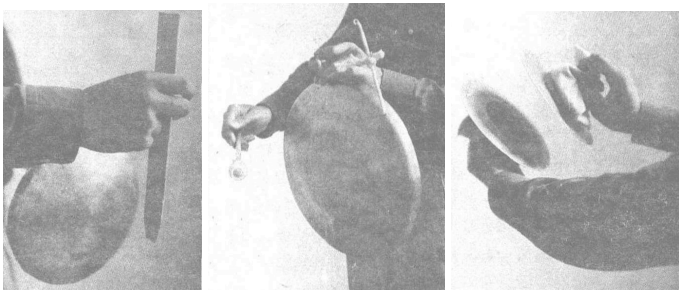
<sup>204</sup> The *sigu* (司鼓) is also known as the *gushi* (鼓师) or *gulao* (鼓佬).

<sup>205</sup> Sin-yan Shen, *China: A Journey into Its Musical Art*. Chicago: Chinese Music Society of North America, 2000: 78.

because the drum master usually plays both *ban* and *danpigu* together, they are known as *bangu*. The other three performers each play a small gong, a large gong and cymbals. Since there is no conductor, the drum master's role is similar to that of a conductor, whose tasks include not only skillful drum and clapper playing, but also conducting the entire ensemble and sending signals for tempo and rhythmic changes.<sup>206</sup>

In the *wuchang*, besides the *bangu* played by the drummer master, the other three performers each play a bronze instrument such as a small gong or *xiaoluo* (小锣), a large gong or *dalu* (大锣), and cymbals, which are also known as *naobo* (铙钹) (see illustration in Figure 31). Each brass percussion instrument has its distinct sound and role in the ensemble. All of the percussion instruments in the Beijing opera are used to imitate sounds in real life and to replicate the percussive sounds of the ancient battleground, during which ancient Chinese people played these percussion instruments to stimulate the courage and zeal of the soldiers.

Figure 31. Pictured are a small gong (left), a big gong (middle), and cymbals (right)<sup>207</sup>



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<sup>206</sup> Peng Lu, "The Prominence and Function of Percussion Music in the Art of the Beijing Opera." *Playwright*: 121 and 161.

<sup>207</sup> Shuo Wang, "A Brief Survey on the Beijing Opera Percussion Music No. 1." *China Theatre* 7 (1988): 58-59.

The large gong used in *Pianogongs*, known as *daluo* (大锣),<sup>208</sup> is made of brass and has a diameter of about 30 centimeters, or 11 inches. It has a flat circular disc and a short rim, which the performer holds in the left hand and plays with a padded mallet in the right hand. The *daluo* is usually played on strong beats, to support the rhythmic patterns played by *bangu*. The *daluo* has a descending tone, and its pitch and tone color vary somewhat depending on the different areas of the surface that are struck. The sound from the center of the gong is lower in pitch and more resonant than that from the edge of the gong. The basic performance techniques of all types of gongs in the Beijing Opera include *yi* (抑),<sup>209</sup> *yang* (扬),<sup>210</sup> *dun* (顿),<sup>211</sup> *cuo* (挫),<sup>212</sup> *nang* (攘),<sup>213</sup> *chuai* (揣),<sup>214</sup> and

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<sup>208</sup> The *daluo* is also known as *jingluo* (京锣). There are various kinds of big gongs in the *wuchang*, and different types of *gongs* may vary slightly in size and pitch. Six major types of *daluo* are used in the Beijing Opera, covering a range of high and low pitches. For a detailed description of the various subtypes of *daluo* used in the Beijing Opera, see Li, Yanbo. "The *daluo* in the Beijing Opera Orchestra." *Da Wu Tai* 3 (2005): 72.

<sup>209</sup> Yanbo Li, "The *daluo* in the Beijing Opera Orchestra." *Da Wu Tai* 3 (2005): 72. The technique of *yi* (抑) is to lightly tap the center of the gong and restrain the volume of the gong after.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid. The *yang* (扬) technique is to hit the center of the gong loudly which increases the volume.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid. The *dun* (顿) technique means that no matter how hard the performer hits the gongs, he should stop the sound with one hand immediately after hitting it.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid. The *cuo* (挫) technique means that after hitting the center of the gong, the performer stops the sound in long or short gaps.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid. The *nang* (攘) technique means that after hitting the gong's center, the performer may push the gong up and out, so that the sound of the gong gets more resonance.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid. The *chuai* (揣) technique means to keep hitting the gong's center continuously.

*bian* (边).<sup>215</sup> All these various techniques and high or low-pitched gongs must be chosen according to the different tunes used to express feelings and moods. For instance, the high-pitched big gong named *xiaosuluo* may be used to create noise and special effects for battlefield scenes and to present a ruthless and brutal atmosphere. In general, the big gong may be used to announce the entrance of major characters on stage, especially males like generals and military soldiers. It is also used to project intensified stage atmosphere, identify points of drama, connect different scenes, and reinforce the strong and martial personalities of the characters.<sup>216</sup>

The small circular shaped gong called *xiaoluo* (小锣), also made of brass, has a diameter of about 6 inches. Like the *daluo*, the *xiaoluo* plays important roles in the percussion ensemble. The *xiaoluo* performer holds it in the same position and plays with similar techniques. Besides being involved in the rhythmic section of the *wuxi* (martial plays), it is also used to accompany the drum solos in the *wenxi* (civil plays). The small gong has a rising tone color, which makes it suitable for lighthearted scenes and comedy, in which it is used to label points of humor and can be associated with the entrance of secondary characters on stage, especially the appearance of the female character *dan*.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid. The *bian* (边) technique means to hit the edge of the gong once or continuously.

<sup>216</sup> Yanbo Li, "The *daluo* in the Beijing Opera Orchestra." *Da Wu Tai*.

<sup>217</sup> There are four principal role types in the Beijing Opera. The *sheng* (生), or male lead, encompasses several subcategories including *laosheng* (老生), an older male role, *xiaosheng* (小生), a younger male character, and *wusheng* (武生), who is trained in acrobatics as a martial character. *Dan* (旦) is used to refer all types of female lead such as *qingyi* (青衣), a virtuous and elite women character, *huadan* (花旦), a spirited young woman character, *laodan* (老旦), an older women, and *wudan* (武旦) who are female martial characters. The *jing* (净) characters with

and the clowns. Typically the Beijing opera starts with powerful brass sounds from the big and small gongs together, which easily draws the attention of the audience. These big and small gongs are both used for multiple rhythmic effects including the portrayal of intense emotions and imitating the clashing sounds of weapons in martial arts and fighting scenes.<sup>218</sup>

Cymbals is a general term for *naobo* (饶钹) or *cha* (镲). These are circular brass percussion instruments whose centers contain many half spheres of different sizes. The performer holds a pair of them in each hand and makes a clashing sound. They are used in many flexible ways to assist the rhythmic structure and patterns in the *wuchang*, usually on weaker beats. The cymbals may produce surprising effects and can be used in celebrations, military plays, or to announce the entrance of important figures from the opera. They may also be used for a variety of scenes including walking at night, witty and entertaining dance movements, and sad and deplorable scenes.<sup>219</sup> Though Zhou Long did not use cymbals directly in *Pianogongs*, he was influenced by them and used the piano to reproduce the clashing sound effects they produce.

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painted faces represent forceful male figures such as generals, warriors or strong villains, and *chou* (丑), the clown, is a comic character who is amusing and foolish. The principal *dan* characters of different ages commonly appear in *wenxi*, and young *shen*, *jing* and *chou* characters more often appear in *wuxi*. See Jingju Theater Company of Beijing. "History of Peking Opera."

<sup>218</sup> Xigui Zhang, "Survey on the Gong and Drum in the Beijing Opera." *Peking Opera of China*.

<sup>219</sup> Dolores Menstell Hsu, "Musical Elements of Chinese Opera." *The Musical Quarterly* 50: 450-451.

### *The Percussion Ensemble in Beijing Opera and Luogujing*

Through centuries of musical development, varieties of rhythmic patterns and instrumentation were created for the percussion ensemble forming the structured rhythmic patterns known as “*luogujing*” (锣鼓经).<sup>220</sup> Notated through a special system of Chinese characters, each of them involves specific performance techniques played by one or multiple instruments (See Figure 32). The *luogujing* forms the basic structure and foundation of the Beijing Opera. There are over one hundred titles in the *luogujing* system, and about fifty of them are commonly used on stage. Unique titles are associated with specific ensemble and rhythmic combinations designed to express particular emotions and feelings from the characters, or used to shape the diverse atmospheres on stage. The *luogujing* music is used to support the beginning and ending of the opera, to indicate scene changes, to punctuate the performers’ speech and movement on stage, and to provide music and sound effects for dancing and fighting scenes.<sup>221</sup> For example, one *luogujing* pattern titled *jijifeng* (急急风) may be used to match faster tempo fighting

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<sup>220</sup> Popular in folk culture, the *luogujing* is a simplified version of the percussion ensemble notation system, which uses a variety of onomatopoeic Chinese characters to represent the unison of the ensemble sound and its performance techniques. The underlines on the bottom of the characters indicate rhythmic changes; a single line indicates eighth-note motion and double lines indicate sixteenth-note motion.

<sup>221</sup> Shuo Wang, "A Brief Survey on the Beijing Opera Percussion Music No. 2." *China Theatre* 8 (1988): 51-53.



scenes.<sup>222</sup> The following table (Figure 32) shows just some of the commonly used Chinese characters in the *luogujing* notation system.

Figure 32. List of Chinese Characters Commonly Used in *luogujing* Notation System<sup>223</sup>

<i>danpigu</i> 单皮鼓	大 ( <i>da</i> )—single hit loudly with right hand. 八 ( <i>ba</i> )—double hit with two sticks, or single hit loudly with left hand. 多 ( <i>duo</i> )—single hit lightly. 嘟 ( <i>du</i> )—drum roll continuously with two sticks.
<i>ban</i> 檀板	扎 ( <i>zha</i> )—play loudly. 衣 ( <i>yi</i> )—play loudly or lightly. 本 ( <i>ben</i> )—play lightly and continuously. 乙 ( <i>yi</i> )—hit the <i>ban</i> or indicate a rest.
<i>daluo</i> 大锣	匡 ( <i>kuang</i> )—single hit loudly, or play <i>daluo</i> and <i>xiaoluo</i> together. 空 ( <i>kong</i> )—tap the <i>daluo</i> softly. 仓 ( <i>cang</i> )—play <i>daluo</i> , <i>xiaoluo</i> and <i>yaobo</i> (cymbals) together loudly, however <i>daluo</i> leads. 顷 ( <i>qing</i> )—play <i>daluo</i> and <i>yaobo</i> together lightly.
<i>xiaoluo</i> 小锣	台 ( <i>tai</i> )—single hit loudly. 令 ( <i>ling</i> )—tap the <i>xiaoluo</i> softly. 匝 ( <i>za</i> )—hit the <i>xiaoluo</i> with covered sound.
<i>naobo</i> 饶钹	七 ( <i>qi</i> )—play the <i>naobo</i> solo. 才 ( <i>cai</i> )—single hit the <i>naobo</i> , or play <i>naobo</i> and <i>xiaoluo</i> together however <i>naobo</i> as the leader. 扑 ( <i>pu</i> )—hit with covered sound.

<sup>222</sup> Peng Lu, "The Prominence and Function of Percussion Music in the Art of the Beijing Opera." *Playwright*: 121 and 161.

<sup>223</sup> The material translated from the following two resources. Shuo Wang, "A Brief Survey on the Beijing Opera Percussion Music No. 2." *China Theatre* 8 (1988): 53. The second resource is from the Chinese Theater Art Website. "The common technique and usage of luogujing in the Beijing Opera." <http://www.xijucn.com/html/jingju/20110907/28693.html> (accessed June 21, 2014).

Each word implies specific instrumentation and performance techniques. In order to show how the notation system works, a short *luogujing* pattern called *chongtou* (冲头) is presented below (Figure 33), followed by a description of its meaning. Sometimes played in moderate tempo, the *chongtou* is used in transitional scenes and to accompany secondary characters walking on and off the stage. Played by small gong, big gong and cymbals together, *chongtou* contains simple duple rhythmic components in which all the instruments alternate between strong and soft beats.

Figure 33. Example of *luogujing* called *chongtou*<sup>224</sup>

八 嘯 || : 匡才 : || 匡才 | 仓 ||

*Chongtou* begins with *ba* (八) and *du* (嘯), which start with a double hit, two sticks together, followed with the drum roll on *danpigu*. The next couple of measures include *kuang* (匡) and *cai* (才), which means a single hit with both big and small gongs on the downbeat, and then a single hit of the cymbal on the weaker beat. The same pattern can be repeated several times before ending with *cang* (仓), a single hit involving all four instruments together.<sup>225</sup>

As the leader of the Beijing opera orchestra, the drum master uses hand gestures and drum codes to signal tempo and *luogujing* changes. He must not only know all of the *luogujing* from memory but also be familiar with all the various tunes, scenes, and story

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<sup>224</sup> For definitions of the Chinese characters, please refer to Figure 32 on page 98-99.

<sup>225</sup> Wang, "A Brief Survey on the Beijing Opera Percussion Music No. 2." *China Theatre* 8 (1988): 51-53.

lines, so as to guide the orchestra spontaneously through the performance. Significantly, all musicians in the Beijing opera are trained with strong improvisational skills, the music of the Beijing opera having been passed on through generations based on oral tradition and physical imitation.<sup>226</sup>

The *luogujing* influences the rhythm in *Pianogongs*. Zhou Long explained, “the syncopated rhythm (the left hand gong rhythm at m. 36) is a little bit like it. In the Beijing Opera, they call syncopation “horse leg.” This kind of three beat “horse leg” is used pretty commonly in the Beijing Opera.”<sup>227</sup> The *luogujing* titled *matuier* (马腿儿), translated literally as “horse leg”, is in triple meter, which is sometimes used repeatedly in faster-tempo scenes (see Figure 34). Often played in *wuxi* and aggressive scenes, *matuier* accompanies the performers in action scenes with sword fights, rolling and jumping movements.<sup>228</sup>

Figure 34. Example of *luogujing* called *matuier*<sup>229</sup>

嘟 | 拉八 乙大 乙台 || : 仓 令才 乙台 : || 仓 ||

This particular rhythm may have influenced the rhythmic patterns used in the gong sections of *Pianogongs* (mm. 29-57). However, Zhou Long did not limit himself to the

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<sup>226</sup> Yijun Liu. “An Exploration of the Rhythm Teaching in the Beijing Opera Gong-Drum Ensemble—A solfeggio Angle of View” Diss. China Conservatory of Music, 2011.

<sup>227</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

<sup>228</sup> Wang, “A Brief Survey on the Beijing Opera Percussion Music No. 5.” *China Theatre* 8 (1988): 58-59.

<sup>229</sup> For definitions of the Chinese characters, please refer to Figure 32, page 98-99.

*luogujing* from the Beijing Opera only but also drew upon influences from the varieties of regional folk *luogu* (gong and drum) music in China. He said:

However there are various combinations of drum beat patterns and some of them are actually influenced by Chinese folk percussion music,<sup>230</sup> for instance, *Zhoushan gong and drum*<sup>231</sup> and Chinese folk percussion music from the *Jiangzhe*<sup>232</sup> region located in the Southern part of China. There are also varieties of music titles in the folk percussion music. One of them is titled “*Jin Ganlan*” (translated as “gold olive”), which is a type for *luogu* music influenced by folk percussion music.

Chinese percussion music is vastly profound, and not only plays significant roles in the Beijing opera but is also enriched by a myriad of local and regional musical styles. Zhou Long absorbs these into his own musical language, revealing bits of musical character in each of the basic motivic materials. In *Pianogongs* he develops Eastern-flavored musical language in conjunction with Westernized motivic development and musical structure, to create a completely unique aural experience.

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<sup>230</sup> Chinese folk percussion music is performed by groups of people in many different regions. It may include all kinds of percussion instruments, such as drums, gongs, and cymbals, but there are no string instruments. It is used for big celebrations. Sometimes there are hundreds of performers in the same ensemble, and they may dance along with different drumbeats, which create a magnificent, loud and glorious scene and effect. There are various musical formats with different rhythms and musical forms.

<sup>231</sup> *Zhoushan gong and drum* (舟山锣鼓) music is based on gongs, drums, cymbals, and *suona*. The music features loud sound effects, active melodies, impressive scenes and choreography, and passionate performers. The Zhoushan region is located to the east of the city of Hangzhou, in the northeast of Zhejiang province. This region is rich with ocean-related products, culture and customs, which has nurtured a unique folk tradition.

<sup>232</sup> The *Jiangzhe* region is located in the Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces in the south of China.

### *Motivic and Structural Analysis of Pianogongs*

Zhou Long states in the preface, “this work features a combination of piano (functioning like a percussion instrument) and gongs as a kind of performing force reminiscent to that of the Beijing Opera percussion ensemble.”<sup>233</sup> He explains further that *Pianogongs* is based on three basic materials, a fast repetitive rhythm imitating the drum rolls, a series of chords based on the combination of a major triad and a perfect fourth, and an active and energetic staccato motive. These materials are affiliated with the distinct sonorities of the Chinese percussion ensemble including drums, gongs, bells and chimes, each of which will now be considered in detail.

#### Fast Repetitive Rhythms and Drum Rolls

The first basic material is the fast, repetitive thirty-second note rhythmic pattern that is used throughout the piece to imitate the drum rolls on the *dagu*<sup>234</sup> (large drum) and the *bangu* (piccolo drum) in the Beijing Opera percussion ensemble. Typically, the drum master will use two skinny bamboo sticks, known as *guqian* (鼓签), to play the drums. Music of *bangu* or *danpigu* features expressive, vivid and diverse rhythmic changes, utilizing distinct drum techniques such as the single hit and the double hit with one or two

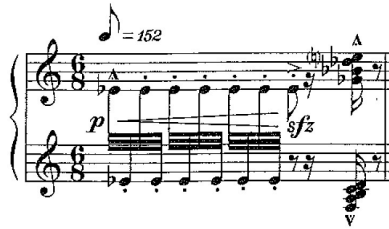
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<sup>233</sup> Zhou, Long. *Pianogongs*, for Piano and Two Chinese Opera Gongs (6” & 11”). Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2006.

<sup>234</sup> The *dagu* (大鼓), translated literally as large drum, also known as *tangu* (堂鼓) has a wooden body covered with leather on the top and bottom. It is placed on a wooden stand during performance and has a deeper, richer resonance than the *bangu*.

*guqian*.<sup>235</sup> The piece starts with an imitation of the drum roll technique as if by alternating two sticks on the *danpigu* (Figure 35).

Figure 35. Zhou Long, *Pianogongs*, m. 1



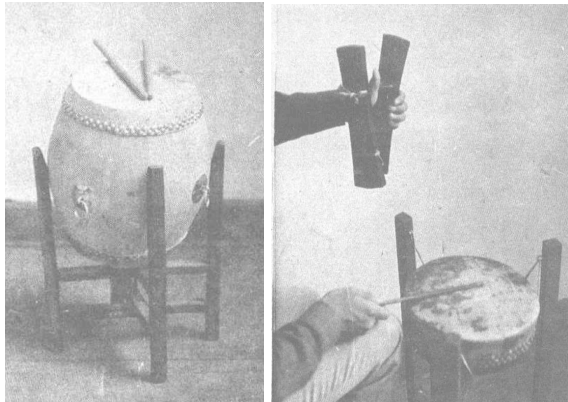
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The rolling drum crescendos to a loud single eighth note, *sfz*, on the fourth beat, imitating the wood clapper *ban* from the percussion ensemble since *ban* is often used on a stronger beats and the drum *gu* may be used on weak beats. The Chinese word *gu* (鼓) is a general term for drum. Zhou Long mentioned two types of drums when he identified the fast repetitive rhythm imitating the drum rolls as one of the three basic materials in the preface to *Pianogongs*. As he explained, the *ban gu* (piccolo drum) also includes the wooden clapper *ban*. However, the *da gu* is a large drum with lower pitch, also known as *tanggu* (see Figure 36).

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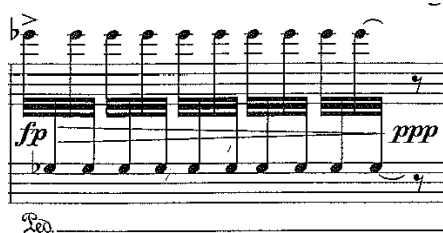
<sup>235</sup> Peng Lu, "The Prominence and Function of Percussion Music in the Art of the Beijing Opera." *Playwright*: 121 and 161.

Figure 36. Pictured are the *dagu* (left) and *bangu* (right)<sup>236</sup>



The *dagu* and *bangu* may vary in size and pitch. As Zhou Long indicated in the preface, the *bangu* is a high-pitched “piccolo drum.” Throughout the piece, he uses a wide pitch spectrum to imitate higher and lower drum sounds, including pitches e flat<sup>1</sup>, e flat<sup>2</sup>, e flat<sup>3</sup>, e natural<sup>3</sup>, f#<sup>3</sup>, g#<sup>3</sup>, b<sup>3</sup>, c<sup>4</sup> and c#<sup>4</sup>. He sometimes combines two pitches in the same “drum roll” (see Figure 37).

Figure 37. Zhou Long, *Pianogongs*, m. 3



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<sup>236</sup> Shuo Wang, "A Brief Survey on the Beijing Opera Percussion Music No. 1." *China Theatre* 7 (1988): 58-59.

Starting from measure 29, in order to free the pianist's left hand to play the two opera gongs, Zhou Long assigns the percussive drum roll technique to single right-hand repeated notes, a pianistic technique familiar in Western music (see Figure 38).

Figure 38. Zhou Long, *Pianogongs*, m. 29

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a 6/8 time signature. It begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 152. The right hand plays a series of repeated notes, indicated by a drum roll symbol (a triangle with a vertical line) and the dynamic marking *pp* sub. The bottom staff is in bass clef with a 6/8 time signature. It contains a few notes, with the dynamic marking *sfz* and the instruction "A '+' dead stroke". Below the staves, the text reads "left hand play 2 gongs with a yarn mallet".

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### A Series of Chords Imitating Chinese Chimes

The second major motivic element mentioned in the preface consists of a series of descending chords reflecting harmonic influences from the West and East. In his preface Zhou describes this material as “a series of chords, based on the combination of a major triad and a perfect fourth, which imitate the tinkling sounds of chimes and bird cries.”<sup>237</sup>

The combination of the diatonic harmonies with the perfect fourth of pentatonic scales produces some impressionistic characteristics along with Eastern pentatonic flavor. Zhou comments that:

By superposing the major triad and perfect fourth together, it sounds pentatonic, but when you interpret it, it feels like impressionism. Some critics think that my harmony has sharper edges than impressionism, since I use some Chinese

<sup>237</sup> Long Zhou, *Pianogongs*. Oxford University Press. 2006. 2.



percussion elements. I think of its timbre and the element inside. It is a transformed angular sound and impression.<sup>238</sup>

As shown in Figure 39, the series of right-hand descending chords starting from mm. 4-6 consists of major and minor chords, even though Zhou mentions only ‘major chords’ in the preface.

Figure 39. Zhou Long, *Pianogongs*, m. 4-6

The musical score for Figure 39 shows a series of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The chords are labeled above the staff: D, bm, Eb, Gb, Eb, Ab, C, Ab, Db, ebm, D, F. The score includes dynamic markings like 'mf' and 'una corda', and performance instructions like 'Ang. 4+'.

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Melodically speaking, there is no consistent sequence. However the descending motion occurs in sets of three chords identified by two second-inversion triads doubling the fifth of the chord followed by one root-position triad doubling the root. The chords in the right hand are somewhat sequential based on the first three chords D – b minor – E flat. The chords descend a third followed by a fifth. The next two sets of sequences are G flat – E flat – A flat, and C – A flat – D flat. However the last three chords deviate from this pattern, following the sequence e flat minor – D – F. The left hand plays perfect fourths whose top note lies a half step below the lowest note in the right hand, thus creating two augmented fourths among all the notes (see illustration in Figure 39). They may sound

<sup>238</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

dissonant at first, as Zhou confirmed, saying “it has some dissonance. But actually the more you listen to it, the more you feel the harmony.”<sup>239</sup> The harmony contains a distinct color, especially when this descending sequence is transformed into a broken chord style at mm. 24-26 (see Figure 40).

Figure 40. Zhou Long, *Pianogongs*, mm. 24-26



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Zhou Long is clearly searching for innovative harmonies to suggest the intricate overtone series created by Chinese chimes. He mentions in the preface, “As I started to work on the piece, I began to think about how the varied spectrum of bronze could be revealed in musical tone colors as fast, repetitive rhythms.”<sup>240</sup> Zhou’s unique harmonic sequence imitates the distinctive overtones of the Chinese chimes known as *qing* (磬), made of L-shaped flat stone or jade. The composer confirmed, “this is the unique overtone series created by the stone chime called *qing* and the bell made of bronze called *zhong*.”<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

<sup>240</sup> Zhou, Long. *Pianogongs*.

<sup>241</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

The ancient Chinese instruments *zhong* and *qing* were used in Chinese ritual and court music during the ancient times. They come in large sets comprising various numbers of pitched bells and chimes. Developed as early as three thousand years ago,<sup>242</sup> the *bianqing* (编磬)<sup>243</sup> has multiple sets of *qings* hung in a wooden frame, with each set containing sixteen *qings* of various sizes. Since each *qing* produces a different scale pitch, musicians are able to play them melodically with a wooden mallet. Likewise, *zhongs* come in large sets known as *bianzhong* (编钟), which may contain up to sixty-five various sized bronze bells hung on a large wooden frame and arranged in order of pitch from low to high and struck with a wooden mallet. The largest set of *bianzhong* was excavated from the tomb of Marquis Yi in the 1970s, and is probably the most complete set known so far, containing sixty-five chimes covering up to five octaves.

All traditional Chinese instruments, individually or as an ensemble, produce unique overtones and tone colors completely different from those of Western instruments. Zhou Long described the musical tone colors as “the varied spectrum of bronze”, because many of the ancient traditional Chinese instruments were originally developed during the earliest Chinese civilization around the Bronze Age.<sup>244</sup> This includes the Xia Dynasty (c.

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<sup>242</sup> Jie Jin. *Chinese Music*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. 9-17.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid. In 1970s, the set of ancient Chinese instruments *bianqing* was discovered in the tomb of Marquis Yi, which could be dated back in the Spring and Autumn Period (around 770-476 BCE). The set of *bianqing* contains twenty-five *qings*. They were hung up in two levels, each of which contains sixteen *qings*.

<sup>244</sup> The Bronze Age is the second principal period of the three-age system used in archaeology, including the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age. The Bronze Age features the early civilizations that used bronze craftsmanship and an early writing system.

2070-1600 BCE), the first dynasty in Chinese history, followed by the Shang Dynasty (1600-1046 BCE) and the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046-771 BCE). During this period, Chinese were using an ancient classification system called *bayin* (“eight sounds”)<sup>245</sup> to categorize the traditional Chinese musical instruments based on the materials from which they were made. The eight categories were gold,<sup>246</sup> stone,<sup>247</sup> silk,<sup>248</sup> bamboo,<sup>249</sup> *pao*,<sup>250</sup> earth,<sup>251</sup> leather<sup>252</sup> and wood.<sup>253</sup> However the first category “gold” or *jin* (金) in Chinese

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<sup>245</sup> Jie Jin. *Chinese Music*. 16. The *bayin* (八音) classification method can be dated back in the Zhou Dynasty (1046-771 BC).

<sup>246</sup> Though translated directly as gold, the representative instruments including the *zhong*, the *bo* and the *nao* are actually made of bronze.

<sup>247</sup> The representative stone percussion instrument is the *qing*.

<sup>248</sup> The representative instruments in the silk category are the *qin* (琴) and the *se* (瑟). Both are similar plucked instruments with silk strings. The *se* may contain twenty-five strings, while the *qin* has five or seven strings.

<sup>249</sup> The wind instruments made of bamboo are the *xiao* (簫) and the *chi* (箎). The *xiao*, also known as a “vertical bamboo flute”, is played vertically on one end and may have six to eight holes. The *chi* is an instrument similar to a bamboo flute and is played horizontally, having seven or eight holes.

<sup>250</sup> The *pao* (匏) category refers to instruments made from gourds, such as the *sheng* (笙) and the *yu* (竽), which are similar free-reed wind instruments containing wind chambers made of gourd along with various numbers of bamboo pipes and bamboo reeds.

<sup>251</sup> The earth or *tu* (土) category is represented by a special ceramic wind instrument named *xun* (埙). It is oval-shaped, usually hollow inside, and may contain up to eight finger holes, six in the front and two for the thumb in the back. The performer blows into the top hole, producing the pitches of a pentatonic scale. Originally made of clay, stone or bone, it is one of the oldest surviving musical instruments in China.

<sup>252</sup> The leather instrument is a type of drum called *tao* (鼗).

<sup>253</sup> The wood category contains two percussion instruments called *zhu* (柷) and *yu* (敔). The *zhu* is a large square instrument played with a wooden stick. The *yu* is carved like a lying

is somewhat misleading, since the representative instruments in this category are actually made of bronze and include the *bo* (钹), *nao* (铙),<sup>254</sup> and *zhong* (钟), the aforementioned set of bronze bells known as *bianzhong*. In searching for a new piano sound for *Pianogongs*, Zhou Long tried to imitate the special tone color and spectrum created by these bronze instruments. In regard to capturing the Chinese timbres, Zhou said:

It shows this percussion-based effect on the piano. I also used this Chinese drum and gong effect in my orchestra works to create a very strong effect. I use the orchestra method and instrumentation technique to stress Chinese percussion sound effects, since the overtones of the percussion sound effect are very unique. One cannot really explain. It is not harmony; it is a cluster of sound and harmony. This combination of clusters creates a unique effect. In fact, I don't have any system for harmony, but I pursue a type of tone color, a focused timbre.<sup>255</sup>

An example of the way in which Zhou Long uses a cluster of sounds and harmony to reproduce the clashing sounds created by these unique percussion instruments is found in the last chord of m. 1 (see Figure 41).

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tiger, having twenty-seven serrated thin wood pieces on the top. The performer uses a bamboo stick to scrape the top in performance.

<sup>254</sup> The *nao*, also known as *zhizhong* (执钟), is similar to the percussion instrument *bo*. The *bo* and *nao* are the same as cymbals, consisting of a pair of two round-shaped brass percussion instruments which the performer clashes together for sound. The combination of the two terms together, *naobo*, is a general term for all kinds of cymbals. *Nao* was one of the earliest bronze percussion instruments, originally created during the Shang Dynasty (1600-1046 BCE).

<sup>255</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

Figure 41. Zhou Long, *Pianogongs*, m. 1



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Zhou explained, “This imitates the big gong in Beijing Operas, about as big as the basin. It is not the tam tam. They are called *huluo*,<sup>256</sup> and sound like a roaring tiger. However, when you hit it, the sound stops immediately.”<sup>257</sup> This explains why the tone cluster chord only lasts for a sixteenth note following the drum rolls at m. 7 and m. 76. Another example occurs at mm. 11-14 (see Figure 42). According to Zhou, “This one is more like reverberating bells.”<sup>258</sup> From major and minor seconds on the downbeat to the alternation between major seconds and major ninths, Zhou Long uses this special kind of tone cluster to illustrate an impressionistic picture. He explained, “I used this kind of irregular combination of meter change to represent the feeling and effect, in which the bell sways in the wind.”<sup>259</sup> This motive changes the basic 6/8 meter of the piece to 7/8.

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<sup>256</sup> The *huluo* (虎锣), or *huyinluo* (虎音锣) is translated literally as “tiger sound gong”. There are three different types of *huluo*, which can vary slightly in size and pitch. They are the high-pitch tiger gong, the medium-pitch tiger gong and the low-pitch tiger gong.

<sup>257</sup> Zhou, interview by author. 2013.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

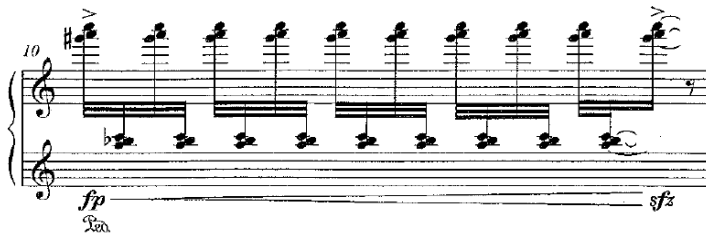
Figure 42. Zhou Long, *Pianogongs*, mm. 11-14



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Zhou Long also combines tone clusters with other types of rhythmic motives throughout the piece. For instance, he adds to the alternating thirty-second drum roll pattern with three-note clusters at m. 10 (see Figure 43).

Figure 43. Zhou Long, *Pianogongs*, m. 10



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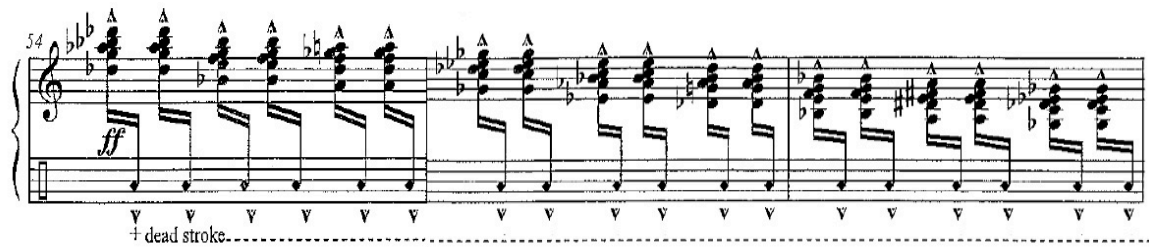
He also uses closely arranged pitches to blend with the sound effect created by the gongs, as in the broken chord texture at m. 31 (see Figure 44). These piano sounds resemble the overtones of other instruments in the percussion ensemble, joining with the gong sounds to form an innovative harmony. Similarly, Zhou adds non-chord tones to the series of the descending chords while alternating the chords with the big gong at mm. 54 to 56 (see Figure 45).

Figure 44. Zhou Long, *Pianogongs*, m. 31



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Figure 45. Zhou Long, *Pianogongs*, mm. 54-56



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Many other types of transformations can be found in places such as mm. 64-65 (see Figure 46). The dissonant pitches imitate drums, chimes and bells used in new rhythmic patterns in 10/16 at m. 64 and with hands together playing the dotted-eighth figures at m. 65. Freely dissonant chords played by both hands together are used dramatically in different octaves at mm. 80-84 (see Figure 47). Zhou explained that this transformation of tone clusters is also related to the swaying bell motive at mm. 11-14. This material represents “the effect of a big bell,” according to Zhou Long.<sup>260</sup>

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.



Figure 46. Zhou Long, *Pianogongs*, mm. 64-65

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Figure 47. Zhou Long, *Pianogongs*, mm. 80-84

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This motive appears in varying meters including 7/8 or 5/8 and also in varying numbers of measures. It first appears as a four-measure motive (mm. 11-14), then in three measures (19-21), two measures (27-28), and finally four measures again (66-69) just before the recapitulation of the A section. It then grows into a heavier and bigger version of the big bell material at mm. 80-83, proceeding to the climax of the cadenza. In the coda, starting at m. 134, it appears once again in the guise of small light bells, as the composer confirmed.

## The Active and Energetic Staccato Motive

The last basic motivic element that Zhou Long mentions in the preface is an active and energetic staccato motive that appears initially at m. 2 (see Figure 48). It acts to link various sections of music.

Figure 48. Zhou Long, *Pianogongs*, m. 2



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This atonal motivic figure is also directly related to birdcalls according to the composer in his interview with the author. Somewhat inconsistently, in the preface Zhou Long mentions bird cries in relation to the second basic element, just considered in relation to chimes. The birdcall reference seems more apt in regard to this third motivic element, which will therefore be referred to as the birdcall motive. This motive regularly appears as connecting material, for instance at m. 2, m. 9, mm. 15-18, m. 22, and m. 78. It also interacts with the small gong rhythmic patterns in the left hand at mm. 52-53 and mm. 108-109. In the coda, it is transformed and occurs frequently toward the end of the piece including at mm. 145-146, m. 148, and mm. 155-156. Though it appears random at

first, its development is essential to the piece, since it neatly weaves all the diverse materials and sections into a whole reflective of the Western value of unity of form and structure.

### *Coordination Between the Piano and the Two Chinese Opera Gongs*

*Pianogongs* is Zhou Long's first work that requires a performer to play three instruments at once, a challenging task even for pianists with advanced technique and musicianship. Physical coordination is the most challenging aspect of the piece, since the pianist needs to choreograph the alternation between solo piano playing and the sections involving three instruments. As most pianists probably have vague ideas about Chinese opera and inadequate knowledge about how to play the Chinese opera gongs, the task may be daunting at first. Even as a musician born and raised in China, I had never played the Chinese gongs until I began to learn this piece.

In the Beijing opera, the two gong performers may choose either the standing or sitting pose, but in either case they always hold the top edge of the gongs with their left hand and play it with a mallet in their right hand. Usually the center of the gongs, called the *luoxin* (锣心), is the best place to strike. The performer controls the mallet with the wrist for loud and soft sounds.<sup>261</sup> As opposed to this traditional mode of playing the gongs, when performing *Pianogongs* the pianist has to place the two Chinese opera gongs on a platform on the left hand side and play them with a mallet held in the left hand. The

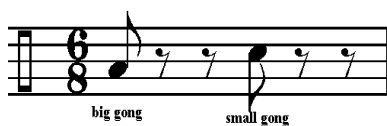
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<sup>261</sup> Minxiong Li, *Chinese Percussion Music*. Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 1996: 8-9.

performer needs to find a comfortable position permitting her to center the body in the middle of the piano so as to access both the low and high registers with the right hand. As the composer indicates in the preface, it is necessary to put the two opera gongs on a soft top or piano bench with cushion, which helps to prevent the sound from being completely muffled. Zhou commented, “the sound effect is similar to *menluo*,<sup>262</sup> which is a special way of performing the Chinese opera gongs.”<sup>263</sup> The soft top prohibits the sound from sustaining longer and helps the gong sound to be equally balanced with the piano.

In two sections in *Pianogongs* all three instruments are played at once. The first occurs from measures 29 to 57, and the second during the recapitulation from m. 85 to the end, introduced by a gong solo. The composer uses pitched percussion notation on the neutral or percussion clef for the two gongs. The higher pitch indicates the small gong and the lower pitch the big gong (see Figure 49).

Figure 49. The Pitched Percussion Notation for the Big Gong and Small Gong



<sup>262</sup> Ibid. *Menluo* (闷锣), literally translated as stuffy gong, is a special way of playing the traditional Chinese opera gongs. The player uses left hand or arm to cover the gong while hitting it with the right hand, producing a dampened sound.

<sup>263</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

The two pitches, shown above, present some clues on how to pick the appropriate opera gongs to use. It can be rather difficult to choose appropriate gongs, since gongs close to the same size may vary in pitch. Zhou Long comments, “these two gongs form a minor third, and they should not form any pure or perfect intervals.”<sup>264</sup> He adds, “for instance you may be able to use an augmented fourth, but no pure intervals.”<sup>265</sup> It is probably best to pick the small gong and big gong together, and compare the sound to see if they form a minor third or augmented fourth.<sup>266</sup>

There is limited information in the score on how to play the two gongs except for the composer’s note, “left hand play two gongs with a yarn mallet” at m. 29 (see Figure 4.8). In the same measure, he uses a “+” sign to indicate a “dead stroke.” Zhou explained, “the ‘dead stroke’ is when you forcefully strike the gong with the mallet, and then leave the mallet on the gong to dampen the sound.”<sup>267</sup> The plus-sign markings usually occur on the downbeats or accent the stronger beats in the left hand rhythmic patterns.

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<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Zhou Long emailed the following youtube link to the author as a reference in purchasing the two gongs. The small gong at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLijkFxmNo8> and the big gong at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h0uZ-JCyzO4>. Long Zhou, e-mail message to author, October 2, 2012.

<sup>267</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

## Overall Structure

*Pianogongs* follows a simple binary form with sections A and B, followed by sections A<sup>1</sup> and B<sup>1</sup> which are developed in a recapitulation, plus a coda starting at m. 134. In section A (mm. 1-28) all the basic themes are presented, including the repetitive drum roll motives, the active and energetic staccato birdcall motives, the series of descending chords, the tone clusters imitating different percussion instruments, and the swaying bell motive. Section B (mm. 29-70) involves the two opera gongs, and in it all the basic materials are developed on the piano by the right hand. The A section, is recapitulated as A<sup>1</sup> at mm. 70-83, whereupon a short *cadenza*-like interlude follows (mm. 84-87), featuring small gong and big gong solo (Figure 50). This gong cadenza is preceded by a crashing tone cluster in the bass, making the short, three-measure gong solo the climax of the piece.

Figure 50. Zhou Long, *Pianogongs*, mm. 84-86

The musical score for Figure 50 shows measures 84-86 of Zhou Long's *Pianogongs*. The score is in 6/8 time with a tempo marking of quarter note = 152. It features a piano part with a right hand staff and a left hand staff. The right hand part is marked 'all keys within written range' and the left hand part is marked 'left hand play gongs'. The left hand part starts with a crashing tone cluster marked 'sfz' and 'L.V.', followed by a series of gong notes marked 'mf' and 'mp'.

'Wu Kui' by Zhou Long © Oxford University Press Inc., 2002. Assigned to Oxford University Press 2010. All rights reserved.

Section B<sup>1</sup> comprises mm. 88-133, followed by a coda from m. 134 to the end. In the coda, the gong part features a repetitive dotted-eighth note rhythmic pattern played mostly on the small gong; the big gong appears only four times in the coda, at measures

144, 147, 149, and 154. The coda transforms materials from the birdcall motives, the repeated drum rolls and little bells. Zhou Long comments, “it [the coda] is similar to the swinging bell [the materials from m. 11 and 12], however since it is written in a very high register, it turns into little bells.”<sup>268</sup>

Viewed as a complete work, *Pianogongs* breaks new ground in the fusion of Western compositional techniques and forms with traditional Chinese musical practice. By adding two Chinese opera gongs to the piano in a way that derives from their traditional roles in the Beijing Opera, Zhou Long has opened a new vision for the future of piano performance, while expanding the piano repertoire beyond the traditional concerns of Western musical culture.

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<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

## CHAPTER V

### FUTURE DIRECTIONS

As a successful Pulitzer-Prize-winning Chinese-American composer and distinguished professor of music composition, Zhou Long serves as a cultural ambassador bridging the gap between China and the West. From his early *Mongolian Folk-tune Variations* that adapted traditional ethnic Chinese tunes to a Western musical form, through his mature *Wu Kui*, an exploration of new harmonies and possibilities in twenty-century musical style, and finally to *Pianogongs* with its mix of Eastern and Western instruments, Zhou Long has developed a unique compositional style based on his life and cultural experiences. Now based in the United States and frequently traveling to China for teaching, performances and master classes, he has successfully established himself as one of the leading composers in both countries, as his music blossoms in the twenty-first century throughout the world.

Oxford University Press recently published *Pianobells*, a new piano solo piece by Zhou Long, on June 6, 2013.<sup>269</sup> It was commissioned and premiered by Dr. Susan Chen on April 20, 2012 at Musica Nova concert of the UKMC Conservatory of Music and Dance in Kansas City.<sup>270</sup> Although Zhou's output for the piano remains relatively small

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<sup>269</sup> Long Zhou, *Pianobells*, for Piano. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2013.

<sup>270</sup> Dr. Susan Chen from Hong Kong, an active piano soloist and chamber musician promoting music from Asia, currently is the Associate Professor of Music and Piano Area Coordinator at Portland State University. Her profile can be found on Portland State University website as follow: <http://www.pdx.edu/profile/susan-chan>



even with the addition of this recent work, his piano works have significantly enhanced the contemporary repertoire. Looking ahead, Zhou predicts that the main focus of his compositional effort will be on the synthesis of Chinese and Western instruments, explaining, “I thought there is still potential for the piano solo to explore. However for me myself, as a composer, I have more interest in combining Chinese instruments with Western instruments. It is my endeavor for the past several decades. Generally speaking, I feel not only does it present more possibilities for the mixing of Chinese and Western instruments, but also it combines different cultures in art.”<sup>271</sup> Regardless of the instrument, Zhou concerns himself with the expression of thoughts and feelings. For him, the quality of the music is primary, and the forms and instruments used to produce that music are secondary. This focus gives promise that Zhou Long’s compositional efforts will continue to increase the public recognition and appreciation of contemporary Chinese music both in the East and the West.

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<sup>271</sup> Zhou, interview by author, 2013.

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### INTERVIEW

Long Zhou, interview by author, Online, March 3, 2013.

Long Zhou, e-mail message to author, October 2, 2012.

APPENDIX A

CORRECTIONS FOR *WU KUI* IN OXFORD EDITION



Figure A1. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, page 4, mm. 54-55



Figure A2. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, page 5, m. 67, Comparison Between Oxford Edition (Left) and Chinese Edition (Right)

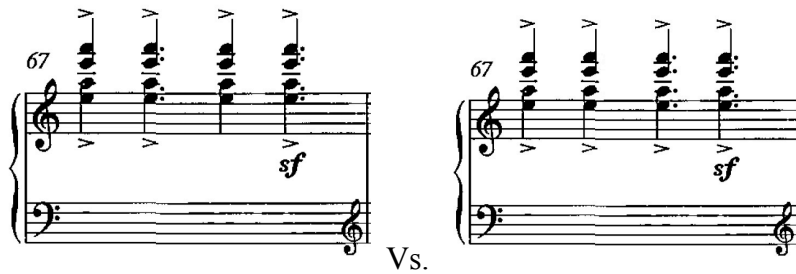


Figure A3. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, page 6, m. 98



Figure A4. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, page 7, m. 118

Musical score for measures 108-111. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features a piano part with a melody in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand. The dynamics are *p dolce* (measures 108-109) and *mp* (measures 110-111). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes with some slurs.

Figure A5. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, page 7, m. 129

Musical score for measures 129-136. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features a piano part with a complex melody in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand. The tempo is marked *tranne* with a quarter note equal to 56 (♩ = 56). The dynamics are *ppp* (measures 129-130) and *rit. dim.* (measures 131-136). The score includes slurs, ties, and a *Una corda* instruction at the bottom. The right hand has a series of eighth-note patterns, and the left hand has a more rhythmic accompaniment.

Figure A6. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, page 9, m. 137

Musical score for measures 137-140. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features a piano part with a melody in the right hand and accompaniment in the left hand. The dynamics are *mf*. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes with some slurs.

Figure A7. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, page 12-13, m.166 -(166)

The image displays two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system begins at measure 166, marked with a *tr* (trill) and a *sfpp* dynamic, which then transitions to *ff*. It features a *8va* (octave) marking and *ped.* (pedal) markings. The second system also starts at measure 166, marked with a tempo of  $\text{♩} = 48$ . It includes a *Rubato* marking, followed by dynamics *fff*, *ppp*, *mp*, and *ff*. Both systems include *8va* and *ped.* markings.

Figure A8. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, m. 167, the last system on page 13

The image shows a single system of musical notation for piano, representing the final system on page 13. It consists of two staves with complex chordal textures. The notation includes various articulation marks such as accents and slurs, and dynamic markings like *sfz* (sforzando) and *mf* (mezzo-forte).

Figure A9. Zhou Long, *Wu Kui*, part of m. 167 to the end of the piece on page 15. It is missing the bass clef in the second to last system and there is a misprint of treble clef instead of bass clef at the beginning of the last system.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a piano piece. The first system, starting at measure 167, is marked with a tempo of  $\text{♩} = 126$ . It features a treble staff with a *8va* marking and a bass staff. The music is characterized by dense, rhythmic chords and arpeggios. The second system, starting at measure 170, is marked with a tempo of  $\text{♩} = 80$ . It includes dynamic markings such as *pp*, *mf*, *ff*, *f*, and *fff*. Performance instructions include *Red.* (Reduction) and a *fff* section lasting approximately 12 seconds (*(c. 12 sec.)*). The notation includes various clefs, accidentals, and articulation marks.

APPENDIX B  
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**Wu Kui**--mm. 1-8, mm. 9-17, mm. 18-20, mm. 31-38, mm. 40-42, m. 39, mm.66-67, mm. 118-121, mm. 122-124, m. 129, m. 143, partial measure of m. 134 and m. 143.

**Pianogongs**--m. 1, m. 2, m. 3, mm. 4-6, mm. 10, mm. 11-14, mm. 24-26, m. 29, m. 31, mm. 54-56, mm.64-65, mm. 80-84, mm. 84-86.

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