

Peiyong's Recital

Peiyong Li

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1. Instruction

In the U.S. jazz music has already grown to become a mature music genre. Because of the various possibilities of jazz there are a lot of jazz musicians who are contributing by fusing their own country's music elements with jazz music. In my home country of China jazz music has shown plenty of visible rising trends. Many jazz clubs have come to surface and some original Chinese jazz albums have been released. More than ever before are Chinese people paying close attention to jazz music. As a jazz musician I chose to come to the USA, the birthplace of jazz, to open my eyes and expand my knowledge of jazz music.

Firstly, I need to have a platform to present my one-year study at BGJI. I really enjoy the feeling of being on stage so I want to have a recital at the end of the third semester. Secondary, my career goal is to be an outstanding musician and an educator both in China and America. As a drummer I don't know a lot about music theory such as harmony, composition and arranging. I didn't realized the importance until I saw almost everyone in global has his/her own original songs. It's important for me to know about music theory because it can really help me to understand what other instruments are doing in a band. I think that having my own original songs and rearranging songs is a good transition start from just being a "rhythm player" to a musician with a broader perspective. Furthermore, after coming to BGJI I heard a lot of great world fusion music composed by the students there. Then I deeply felt that I should also make my every effort to spread the beauty of my country to the rest the world. In order to

present the results of my studies, to reach my career goal and to spread Chinese culture through music, I did a recital with two original compositions and three arrangements of Chinese folk songs.

2. Preparation Process

To prepare my recital, I have to learn new knowledge as much as I can and try to absorb and transfer them into what I can use for my music during my one-year study at BGJI. I learned a lot of fresh and advanced ideas by working with all the masters in BGJI and my private instructors. This really opened my mind to start to think deep about my recital.

2.1 Performing

I used some of these ideas in my performance. For example, Joe Lovano is always emphasizing sound of instruments, which I never think about before. Terri Lyne often reminds me play forward rather than dragging the band. John Patitucci focuses on the accuracy and feeling of time. Adam Cruz taught me how to use drums to paint. Danilo Perez is always telling me the connection between musician and society. Besides, my personal instructor Ian Froman and Kim Plainfield helped me a lot to develop my performing skills both musically and technically. What I benefit from them is that I really tried to focus on all the things that I learned on my daily practice as well as every chance that I can play with other players, which made a solid performing foundation for my recital.

2.2 Composing

Except working hard on playing, I also started to play piano and to learn the basic knowledge of harmony to help composing. I studied basic diatonic harmony, which was new to me. At the same time, I was trying to compose from melody first.

The first song that I composed is called 'As Time Goes by'. It is a 4/6 piece with 3 against 2 feel. The melody is based on pentatonic scale, which has been used widely in China as well as the scale that I'm familiar with and have connection with most. I was imagining the symbol of the south of China- small bridge and flowing river when I composed the A section. In B section, I made 3 against 2 feeling clearer and created a warm and big sound with piano pedal, which built the whole melody up. I also wrote an intro to create a 'bridge and river' scene at the beginning of the music.

The second composition of mine is called 'Thinking Song'. The composing process started from vamping an Ab major7 chord in a rhythm in 7. Then I wrote a melody over it and took the simple chart to my rehearsal. After trying different variations and possibilities, I had a completed music.

2.3 Arranging

Since I was born, my life has been full of all kinds of Chinese culture. When I was a kid, I studied folk dance and played a lot of folk songs with piano. Then I went to school, I have learned many ancient poems during the time from kindergarten to college. I also learn Chinese opera percussion in

Shanghai Conservatory of Music. To some degree, Chinese culture has become an intangible part of my music life. After came to BGJI, I could feel the culture from all over the world every time when I listen the students here play music together. It created such a beautiful moment when global cultures meet together. So I wanted to contribute to spread Chinese culture by mixing Chinese music and jazz music.

All traditional Chinese music is melodic rather than harmonic. Pentatonic mode is the fundament of all Chinese music. The idea of my arrangements is to bring jazz elements that I've learned here into Chinese pentatonic folk melodies that I'm familiar with before.

For my project, I arranged three Chinese folk songs for my recital. The first one is called ' Kang Ding Love Song' *. It's a classic Chinese folk song of Kang Ding, Sichuan Province, which is located in the Southwest of China. In this piece, In order to paint the beautiful scenery of Kang Ding in my arrangement- vast grassland with running horses, endless sky and sweet couples, at the beginning, I let piano plays the melody with most fourth chords, bass play some long notes with bow and imitates Chinese traditional string instruments sound, and drums play around melody and imitate Chinese percussion sound. I also added two unison phrases on cue to strengthen the impression. At the second time, melody comes with a Latin groove*, which builds the base groove of this tune.

**Kang Ding Love Song Chart:*

Pao ma liu liu de shan shang Yi duo liu liu de yun yo,
Duan duan liu liu de zhao zai
Kang - ding liu liu de cheng yo. Yue liang wan
wan Kang - ding liu liu de cheng yo.

**The Latin groove I added to it:*

wan Kang - ding liu liu de cheng yo.

The second arrangement of mine is called 'Jasmine Flower' *. Jasmine Flower is a popular Chinese folk song. The song dates back to the Qianlong era of the Qing dynasty. In time, many regional variations were created, and the song gained popularity both in China and abroad. I arranged the melody the first time similar as Kang Ding Love Song but added a vocal with bass playing with bow in last 4 bars. At the second time, melody comes in 3/4 Waltz feel and the form only follows the first 8 bars.

**Jasmine Flower chart:*

好 一 朵 美 丽 的 茉 莉 花 好 一 朵 美 丽 的 茉 莉 花
Hao yi duo mei li di mo li hua. Hao yi duo mei li di mo li hua.

5
芬 芳 美 丽 满 枝 桠 又 香 又 白 人 人 夸
Fen fang mei li man zhi ya, you xiang you bai ren ren kua.

9
讓 我 來 將 你 摘 下 送 給 別 人 家 茉 莉 花 呀 茉 莉 花
Rang wo lai jiang ni zhai xia, song gei bie ren jia, mo li hua ya mo li hua.

The last song that I arranged is called 'Mother' *. It is a Chinese lullaby but I arranged it as a jazz ballad. I chose this song because my mom has sung it since I was born. The lyrics describe how happy the kids who have mom are and how sad the kids who don't have mom are. I feel a deep connection with it that I love my mother so much even though I'm far away from my hometown now.

**Mother chart:*

1=C 6 · 5 3 5 1 6 5 6 — 3 5 6 5 3 1 6 5 3 2 —

世 上 只 有 妈 妈 好 ， 有 妈 的 孩 子 象 块 宝 ，

2 . 3 5 5 6 3 2 1 — 5 . 3 2 1 6 1 5 — — 0

投 进 妈 妈 的 怀 抱 ， 幸 福 享 不 了 了 。

2.4 Studio Experience

At the third semester I recorded all of my music with my band in the studio. From this experience, I can clearly hear what should I improve in the

recordings. For example, we rushed in two of my compositions and the time was a little bit waving. Also, the dynamic is not obvious enough in all of my songs. These were the things that we highly focused in the following rehearsal.

3. Results

My recital was held on June 28th, 2016. I was a good concert but it didn't reach my expectation to some degree. On one hand, I shared my music with the audience by my performance, my progress was evident and I also got a lot of positive comments from all the committee members. On the other hand, I didn't rehearse enough with my band so there were still some details that could be better during the performance. In summary, I appreciate that I can have this opportunity to present what I've learned here and I believe that what I got from the process is much more important than the result.

4. Impact on me

From this project, I improved myself in many aspects. First of all, in a general way, I made a big progress on drums and my confidence was also built from the project. At the very beginning of the first semester, I felt that my academic level was not as high as other outstanding students here so I didn't have enough confidence of my drumming. Everything about music was totally new for me, which made me stressed out. So what I only thought about was that I should

work hard to catch up. At the same time, I was also trying to figure out what should I do for my project. I talked about this with my private teacher Ian Froman and he suggested me to do a recital, which would be a good way to present my study results after one-year study at BGJI. After having a clear goal, I started to make every effort to prepare my recital. What I play now is quite different from what I played before I came to the States; my cymbal sound has more points, my time feeling gets better, my phrases are opener instead of keep form and play some drum fills every 4 bars, my drum vocabulary is expand, my playing has more reaction with band and so on.

Another area of my musicianship that has improved from this project is that this is the first time that I compose and arrange songs, which is a big change in my life. I always admire people who can write beautiful music and I wish one day I can do that by myself. This project really pushed me to start what I've thought for a long time. So every time I finished one piece, I had big sense of achievement. Furthermore, through this process, I spent a lot of time on piano and harmony theory. This made me think more about using drums to express melody and harmony in the moment. As a result, now I can feel more connection with other members of band when they are playing.

5. Conclusion

This project has allowed me to approach many various aspects of music. My performance, composition and arrangement skills have been improved a lot. If the project continued, I would compose and arrange more music. I would also

learn deeper music theory to further my study. I would also be willing to contribute to global jazz music- build the connection between Chinese music and jazz music, and spread the culture beauty of my country. I believe that global jazz will be the future tendency in the upcoming years.

6. Appendix

These are the music that inspired me on composing and arranging:

- Aaron Parks. Invisible Cinema. Blue Note Records. 2008. CD
- Antonio Sanchez. New Life. Camjazz. 2013. CD
- Chinese percussion.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pIZc1G7sdSE>. YouTube video
- Jasmine Flower. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9M4gca_uLB4.
YouTube video