Development of Violin Repertoire by Chinese Composers in the Twentieth Century: Works by Li Siguang, Ma Sicong, Yang Baozhi, and Li Zili

By

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Chapter 1. Introduction

The Adoption of Violin Music by Chinese Composers

This project aims to increase the exposure to Chinese composers and their violin music in the twentieth century. Because the violin is a prominent instrument in the Western classical tradition, its major repertoire comes from Western composers. Although I received primary violin training in China, I rarely studied and performed a piece by Chinese composers in juries and recitals. When I asked Chinese colleagues in the United States if they were familiar with modern Chinese compositions for the violin, they knew only Chen Yi, Zhou Long, and Bright Sheng, who are active contemporary composers in the U.S. However, Chinese composers who wrote modern violin music in the early twentieth century were the pioneers who established the foundation of Chinese violin music. They combined Chinese musical language and Western compositional techniques to help Chinese people understand violin art. As a Chinese-born violinist, I not only desire to know more of the musical heritage of my home country, I also feel responsible for promoting it. I want to help expand the violin repertoire to include more music from Chinese composers.

Historical Background of the Violin in China Before the 1911 Revolution

Western classical music traditions were largely unknown to the Chinese until the Western missionaries brought them to the imperial emperors around the mid-seventeenth

century. From the mid-seventeenth century to the late nineteenth century, missionaries became a window for the emperors to observe and learn Western science, arts, and cultures. Emperors hired missionaries as mathematicians, astronomers, religious experts, and music teachers to enrich the country with their knowledge. Thus, they played and introduced Western instruments to the emperors.

Missionary Thomas Pereira (徐日升, 1645-1708), who arrived in Beijing in 1673, played a Chinese ballad on the violin to please the Kangxi Emperor (康熙, 1654-1722).[1] The Kangxi Emperor hired Pereira as a music teacher in the imperial court, where he remained during most of his career. Pereira was knowledgeable in both Western music and Chinese music. He helped to produce the first Western music theory treatise written in Chinese, *Musica et Speculativa* (律吕纂要).[2] This theory book introduced basic Western music theory including the staff, scale, interval, rhythm and notation. During his tenure, he helped to repair the organ of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, located in Beijing.[3] The Kangxi Emperor met nine missionaries in 1686 in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu province, including two Frenchmen, Luvicus Pernon (南光国, d. 1702) and Philibertus Geneix (颜理伯, d. 1699).[4]

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[1] Xi Chen, "Zhong guo xiao ti qin yin yue chuang zuo shi yan jiu [Research on the History of the Composition of Chinese Violin Music]" Phd diss., Fujian Normal University, 2011, 10, Chinese Doctoral Dissertations Full-text Database.

[2] Bing Wang, "《Lü lü zuan yao》zhi yan jiu [The Research of Musica et Speculativa]," *Palace Museum Journal*, no. 4 (2020):4, 68. https://www.cnki.net/kcms/doi/10.16319/j.cnki.0452-7402.2002.04.010.html

[3] Renping Qian, *Zhongguo xiao ti qin yin yue* [Chinese Violin Music] (Changsha: Hunan wen yi chu ban she, 2001), 20.

[4] Qin Luo, *Xiao ti qin yi shu quan lan* [An Overview of Violin Arts] (Shanghai: Shang hai yin yue xue yuan chu ban she, 2004), 256.

Pernon was a flautist, a violinist, and a maker of those instruments. After listening to Pernon and other missionaries play Western instruments, the Kangxi Emperor became interested in improving traditional music by studying Western music and instruments.

Violin pedagogy and performance progressed during the Qianlong period. In 1741, the Qianlong Emperor (乾隆, 1711-1799) ordered the formation of a Western ensemble.[5] Missionaries Florian Bahr (魏继晋, 1706-1771) and Jean Walter (鲁仲贤, 1708-1759) arrived in Beijing in 1739 and 1741 respectively. They established an ensemble that included ten violins, two cellos, one bass, woodwinds, guitars, mandolins, and a clavier in the imperial court of the Qianlong Emperor (1711-1799).[6] They recruited and provided instructions to eunuchs, the servants in the court, who were all beginners. This is the earliest historical record of Chinese playing the violin. Court documents record payments for the purchase of instruments, lessons, rehearsals, and making of uniforms between 1741 and 1750.

Taking advantage of the decline of the Qing dynasty of China and poor military strength in the nineteenth century, Western powers used military attacks to force the Qing government to sign a series of unequal treaties requiring China to open the trade port and cede land. While China experienced humiliation and agony, surprisingly, the art of the violin continued to develop, but now outside of the court. Missionaries and Western musicians were allowed to hold cultural and recreational activities in self-governing settlements, known as

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[5] Renping Qian, 27.
[6] Ibid, 29.

"concessions," where Western powers had extraterritorial rights. In 1840, the British navy attacked and forced the Qing dynasty to open maritime trade, causing the First Opium War. The war was ended when the Qing government signed the first of the unequal treaties, the Treaty of Nanking (南京条约, 1842). The treaty required the Qing government to open five ports and ceded Hong Kong to the British Empire. With the failure of the Second Opium War (1856-1860), the Treaty of Tientsin (天津条约, 1858) and Convention of Beijing (北京条约,1860) were signed between the Qing ruler and Western powers including Great Britain, France, Russia, and the United States. These treaties required opening more trade ports, ceded territories, and allowed Christian missionary activities. Thus, Western missionaries established churches and schools which imparted religion, science, arts, music, and cultures. Within the concessions, Western musicians founded orchestras which performed for both Western and Chinese audiences.

In 1850, St. Ignatius High School (徐汇公学) was established in Shanghai; it was the earliest Catholic school in China to offer piano and strings lessons as extracurricular activities.[7] In addition, St. Ignatius High School was the first school in China to form a student orchestra of Western instruments.[8] In 1892, McTyeire School (中西女中), a private all-girls school in Shanghai, was established by Young John Allen (林乐知, 1836-1907) and Laura Askew Haygood (海淑德, 1845-1900) and was supported by the American Southern

[7] Xi Chen, 10.
[8] Renping Qian, 35.

Methodist Episcopal Mission.[9] At the McTyeire School, the music curriculum consisted of instruction in piano, voice, and strings.[10] Thus, mission schools provided opportunities for Chinese students to study Western instruments and spread violin arts in the mid and late nineteenth centuries.

At that point, violin playing was limited to the upper class of Chinese society, even though missionary schools provided various courses to teach Western instruments. Two significant orchestras, the Hart Orchestra and Shanghai Municipal Orchestra, helped to popularize the violin through performances to a broader variety of social classes in Beijing and Shanghai. These two orchestras also provided a group of significant violin teachers in the early twentieth century. Hart Orchestra (赫德乐队) was a private ensemble founded by Sir Robert Hart in Beijing, and all players were European-trained Chinese musicians. Sir Robert Hart (1835-1911) was a British diplomat and official who worked for the Qing government in Beijing, where he resided for fifty-four years. He was the second inspector general of the Imperial Maritime Customs Service; he established and controlled the rights of the postal office and he was also involved in the military and foreign affairs of China.[11] Hart was an

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[9] Jinyu Chen, *Zhong xi nü zhong: 1892-1952* [McTyeire School: 1892-1952] (Shanghai: Tong ji da xue chu ban she, 2016), 25.

[10] Ibid, 101.

[11] Kuo-huang Han, "Zhong guo di yi ge xi yang guan xian yue dui——Beijing Hede yue dui [The first Western Orchestra in China——Beijing Hart Orchestra]," *Music Research*, no. 2 (1990), 43. https://global-cnki-net.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFD9093&filename=MUSI199002006&uniplatform=OVERSEAS_EN&v=K_0miHkdn5J-QtpGnngMakQF33RtKqwPwb68CqkKQbhawZoBHq_mpBTKPSRA435H.

essential official who received numerous awards from the Qing government and built a bridge for cultural exchange between the British Empire and the Qing Dynasty. He also was a classical music enthusiast and an amateur player of both the violin and the cello. Practicing violin for an hour in the morning was part of his daily routine.[12] His orchestra was active from 1885 until 1908, except in 1900 due to the Boxer Rebellion uprising in Beijing. Hart hired around ten young Chinese men as orchestra members and found European musicians to teach them. His recruitment system attracted Chinese from low-income families because they could get generous payments. In 1885, the Hart Orchestra was a wind band; in 1890, Hart mentioned to his assistant James D. Campbell (1833-1907) that because more orchestra members were learning stringed instruments, the orchestra needed to buy those instruments.[13] This orchestra achieved enough proficiency to perform at important social events. They offered both performances and background music at Hart's weekly dinner and dance parties, famous social events in Beijing. The Hart Orchestra performed as background music for some diplomatic events, including the meeting with Prince Adalbert of Prussia (1884-1948) in 1904 and the territory negotiation with the Empire of Japan in 1905.[14] The significant impact of Hart and his orchestra was that he unintentionally cultivated the first generation of Western instrument teachers in China. In 1922, several of these orchestra musicians taught in

[12] Edward B Drew, "Sir Robert Hart and His Life Work in China." *The Journal of Race Development* 4, no.1, (July 1913): 30. https://www.jstor.org/stable/29737977.

[13] Kuo-huang Han, 45.

[14] Ibid, 52.

the first music education institute in China, the Music Institute of Peking University (北京大学音乐传习所, 1922-1927).

Another ensemble to achieve high standards was the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra. Their performances attracted local audiences and cultivated the first-generation violinists in Shanghai. The orchestra began as a wind band in 1879 and later expanded to a full orchestra. At first, the orchestra's performances aimed to provide entertainment for foreign residents in the concessions, and orchestra musicians were foreign. In its golden age, the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra was led by Italian pianist, conductor, and educator Mario Paci (梅百器, 1878-1946), who joined in 1919.[15] The development of Western classical music in China is largely due to Paci's efforts. He broke the rule that the orchestra would only perform for Western audiences. He insisted that all Chinese were welcome to concerts and allowed Chinese musicians to join in the orchestra. Tan Shuzhen (谭抒真, 1907-2002) was the first Chinese violinist to join the orchestra with Paci's permission in 1927.[16] Tan studied violin in Qingdao with an Austrian violinist and later studied at the Music Institute of Peking University before moving to Shanghai in 1925. There he studied with a Dutch violinist, Mr.

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[15] Stanford Libraries, Mario Paci: An Italian Maestro in China, accessed March 1, 2022, https://exhibits.stanford.edu/paci.

[16] Tan Shuzhen, "How I joined the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra" *Music Lover* (May 2017): 55. https://oversea-cnki-net.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFDLAST2017&filename=YYAH201705016&uniplatform=OVERSEAS_EN&v=IKYEKjHmlA_APD_o2Paht8XHZa1Mp-PbKKuq6U-mgK2SW4ZQNfIvyCatQFBAOvJ8.

Van Heyst, who worked in the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra.[17] Chinese audiences started to become interested in the orchestra concerts because Tan joined. The first concert he played in the orchestra was sold out because Chinese audiences were curious to see and hear him playing in a Western orchestra.

Thus, attracting the interest of the Chinese in violin playing and performance was a long process. Although the Chinese were passively familiar with the violin by the end of the nineteenth century, the nascent desire to learn to play this Western instrument sprouted in some intellectuals' minds.

The Early Experiments on the Violin by Chinese Intellectuals, 1912–1949

The Xinhai Revolution in 1911 ended the age of imperial dynasties, and Chinese society entered its early Republican Era in 1912. This revolution heralded what is often thought of as a type of "age of enlightenment." These influences along with those from Western culture led many intellectuals to study abroad, where they first encountered and learned Western classical music. Situ Mengyan (司徒梦岩,1888–1954) was an expert of naval engineering, an amateur violinist, and a first-generation Chinese violin maker. His family was from Guangdong and he became familiar with Guangdong folk music and opera when he was a child. He could play many kinds of traditional Chinese instruments, and he learned violin

[17] The first name of the teacher is unknown.

playing with a missionary violin instructor at the Xujiahui Cathedral.[18] In 1906, he went to Boston and studied naval engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Because he loved the sound of the violin, he studied violin with the Austrian violinist Eugene Gruenberg at the New England Conservatory of Music and violin making with Walter Solon Goss in Boston.[19] In 1915, he returned to Shanghai as chief engineer of the Jiangnan Shipyard Group. He also brought the equipment to continue violin making and playing as a hobby. He transcribed Guangdong folk tunes and instrumental music for the violin. He used portamenti and glissandi to imitate the style of Guangdong music. Playing transcribed Guangdong music on the violin helped more Chinese to become familiar with this Western instrument.

Xiao Youmei (萧友梅, 1884–1940) was a pioneer of modern music education in China. He spent a significant portion of his career studying music and educating others. In 1912, he studied composition, music education, and musicology at Leipzig University and the University of Music and Theatre, Leipzig in Germany. He was the first person from China to earn a Ph.D. in musicology of Western music. After he came back to China, he established

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[18] You wen, "Yi wei xian wei ren zhi de 'yang wei zhong yong' de xian dai yin yue xian qu [A Less-known Music Pioneer Who 'Adapted Foreign Things for Chinese use']," *People's Music*, no. 2 (1989): 30. https://global-cnki-net.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFD8589&filename=RMYY198902018&uniplatform=OVERSEAS_EN&v=2XqpO2Tej9_8XLGMnm8U-UMrfxQ53RP0fBcb9YmT6BvheOwTMb9UMsuhHiGDtPLs.

[19] Renping Qian, 50.

the Music Institute of Peking University in 1922. However, politically and financially, the institute struggled to survive. Thus, Xiao moved to Shanghai in 1927 and established the National Conservatory of Music, now named the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Educator Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培, 1868–1940) supported Xiao and became the first president of the National Conservatory of Music. Shanghai had a better musical environment than Beijing because of the knowledgeable and professional musicians from the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra. Xiao invited maestro Mario Paci and concertmaster Arrigo Foa to become piano and violin professors at the conservatory. This National Conservatory of Music was the first institution of higher education to offer coursework and specialization in Western classical music in China.

The National Conservatory of Music developed a close relationship with the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra. Excellent students had opportunities to collaborate with the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra as soloists. They received discounts for concerts and could hold internships in the orchestra. Two students, Dai Cuilun (戴粹伦, 1912–1981) and Chen Youxin (陈又新, 1913–1968), joined the Shanghai Municipal Orchestra as professional violinists after graduation from the National Conservatory of Music. This conservatory cultivated many musicians who achieved international recognition. Pianist Fou Ts'ong (傅聪, 1934–2020) studied with Mario Paci and later won third prize in the fifth International Chopin Piano Competition in 1955 in Warsaw, Poland. He was the first Chinese pianist to

win an international piano competition. The National Conservatory of Music was considered the cradle of musicians in China during that period.

The early Republican Era of China from 1919 to 1949 was a period of experimentation with Western music. Intellectuals changed from passively listening to Western classical music to actively learning it. Some devoted their careers to music and music education. Their contributions set an excellent foundation for developing future performing arts and Chinese-style compositions.

The Emergence of Compositional Techniques and Styles in the Early Twentieth Century

China was a feudal society for over two thousand years, and the isolation policies of the Ming and Qing dynasties cut off trade, culture, and science communication with other countries. At the time of revolution and resulting collapse of the Qing government in 1912, China was still an agricultural society. However in the wake of this collapse, interactions with the West increased. Chinese society was shocked by the advanced science and technology of the West. Scholar-officials and governors started to rethink the development of the country. They decided that the study and making of foreign goods was an ideal method to revitalize China. Similarly, musicians were inspired by Western classical traditions and desired to use Western classical music systems to re-energize Chinese music.

Chinese classical instrumental music performance was not as popular as Peking opera and other spectacular performing arts. Peking opera features music, including vocal performance and ensembles, legend plots, magnificent costumes, and acrobatics, which attracted large audiences. However, instrumental performances were still a pastime of the literati, with limited general interest. Also, instrumental music was further limited because music notation was entirely in Chinese characters and did not generalize to all kinds of instruments. The notation either indicated pitch or fingerings of the instrument. Rhythm and style were taught by the teacher orally. Thus, it was difficult for performers to obtain all of the necessary performance information by themselves. Western musical notation that indicated pitch and rhythm—and that applied to most instruments—solved this problem. The standardized notation system provided an excellent foundation for composers to investigate Chinese music on the violin.

The violin was a foreign good; thus, Chinese society needed a process to accept and learn this novelty. Western music and instruments were promoted as an advanced musical system, along with Western culture and its advanced technology. Although more Chinese intellectuals started to learn the violin, the comparatively small group of performers was not large enough to bring widespread understanding of Western instruments or affect the national music. In addition, Western musical language was another impediment to the acceptance of the violin. Major and minor scales were unfamiliar to the Chinese. Therefore, in the early

twentieth century, musicians started to use Western compositional techniques combined with Chinese elements, including five-note pentatonic scales, folk music, traditional Chinese operas, and Chinese instrumental music. Also, most tunes and techniques were spread orally. Composers used existing tunes as themes or motives to compose violin pieces. Thus, early Chinese violin compositions combined Chinese musical language with Western compositional techniques to help people accept Western instruments.

The performance of violin compositions by Chinese composers was a milestone in the history of the performing arts in China. In this dissertation, four representative twentieth century composers and their repertoires illustrate the development of modern Chinese violin composition. Each piece uses Western compositional techniques to express the Chinese musical language. All composers were born before 1939. Li Siguang (1889–1971) was a geologist who learned the violin as a hobby during his study in the United Kingdom. His unaccompanied violin solo, *Tough Journey*, is considered China's first native violin composition. Ma Sicong (1912–1987) stands at the head of the first-generation Chinese composers to specialize in violin music after having studied abroad. An influential violinist, composer, and educator, he studied violin, piano, and composition in the Western tradition in Paris. The second-generation composers include Yang Baozhi (1935–), Ma Sicong's student, and Li Zili (1938–). They were trained in China after the People's Republic of China was

established in 1949. The compositions of these four composers reflect their life experiences and mark the beginning of modern Chinese violin composition.

Chapter 2. Four Representative Chinese Composers and Their Violin Compositions

Each composer's life experiences and educational background have influenced their compositions. Thus, each composer's biography will be introduced before their pieces.

1. Li Siguang (李四光, 1889-1971)

Li Siguang was a geologist, a member of the Chinese Academy of Science, and the founder of geomechanics in China. He was a pioneer and innovator in the field of earth sciences in China, and his academic publications include *The Age of the Earth*, *The Introduction of Geology, Astronomy Geology Paleontology*, and *Crossing the Horizon,* among others. These publications have been significant geology and science reference texts in China. He was a diligent person, with a passion for investigating the world around him. There is no evidence that he formally studied violin and composition, but one biography mentions that he played violin at a party when he was a graduate student majoring in science in the United Kingdom.[20] Like other intellectuals in the early twentieth century who learned the Western classical tradition while studying abroad, he played the violin and composed music for personal entertainment and experimentation.

Interestingly, Li Siguang was born into a destitute family in a rural part of what is now known as Hubei Province. His father was a tutor, teaching at an old-style private school in a local neighborhood to make a living for the family. As a child, Li was not only impoverished

[20] Qun Chen, *Li Siguang zhuan* [Biography of Li Siguang] (Beijing: Ren min chu ban she, 2009), 27.

but also diligent, believing that the acquisition of knowledge held the power to change his life. In 1920, he was admitted to the new style primary and middle school established by the Hubei province government, where he studied Chinese classical literature, math, history, geology, and science.[21] His high achievement earned him a full scholarship to study abroad. In 1904, he relocated to the Empire of Japan for pre-college education at Hongwen College and he studied in Osaka Technical College in 1907 as an undergraduate student. During his study, he met Sun Yat-sen who was a key leader of the 1911 Revolution, the first president of the Republic of China, and the "Father of the Nation."[22] Sun Yat-sen inspired and encouraged Li's revolutionary thought during his study in Japan. Li joined in the United Allegiance Society and was expected to help the country become stronger by studying technology and science to help China move from an agricultural society to an industrial society.

In 1913, Li Siguang received a scholarship from the Chinese Ministry of Education that enabled him to further his education in the United Kingdom. Li's informal study of the violin seems to have begun during this time. He learned the violin privately as a hobby while he was studying geology at the University of Birmingham between 1913 and 1919. Li had a close friendship with one of his primary advisors, Professor Leonard Johnston Wills, who used to

[21] Qun Chen, 7.
[22] Ibid, 15.

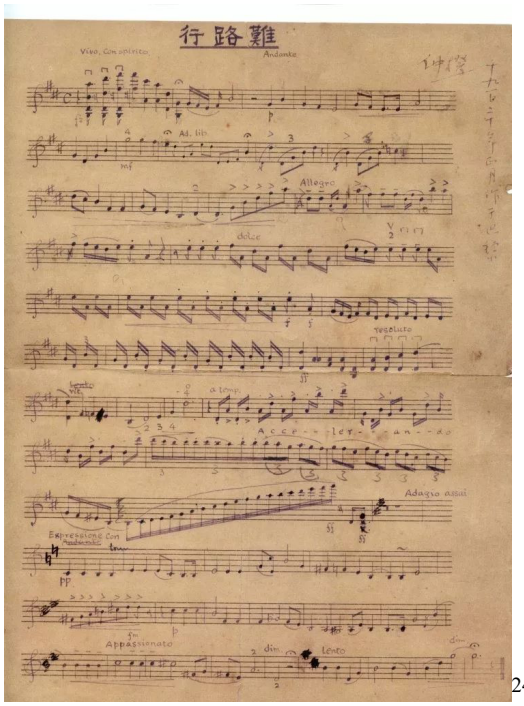
invite him to family parties where Li occasionally played the violin.[23] Playing the violin led Li to compose his solo violin piece *Xing lu nan*, *Tough Journey* in 1919.

Xing lu nan, Tough Journey (行路难, 1919)

Tough Journey was composed by Li Siguang and is considered the first violin work composed by a native Chinese composer. His manuscript was not discovered until the musicologist Chen Lingqun (陈聆群, 1933-2019) found it in the Shanghai Conservatory of Music Library in 1990. This manuscript clearly reflects both Li's Chinese identity and his Western study background. Li wrote the title, *Tough Journey*, and the dates in Chinese characters but he wrote musical terms in the Western tradition, like *andante* under the title (see figure 2.1). Li wrote the dates in Chinese on the right side of the sheet. Figure 2.1 is the front page on which Li wrote February 1920, composed in Paris. Figure 2.2 is the back page on which Li wrote November 20th, 1919, in Paris. Musicologists and publishers typically consider that Li started to compose in 1919 and finished in 1920.

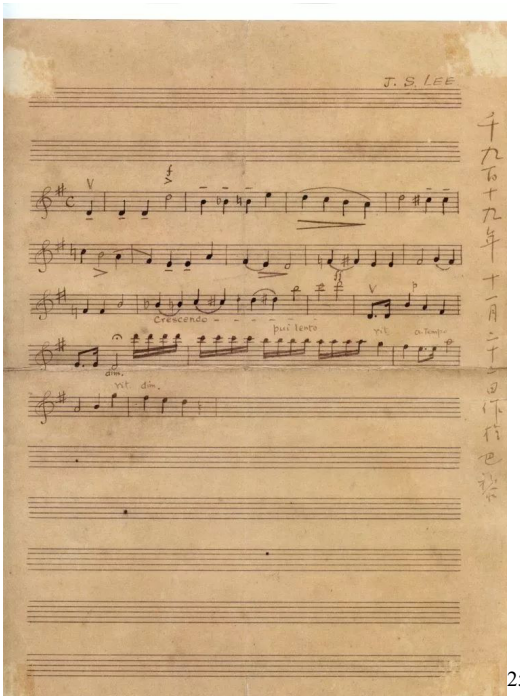
[23] Ibid, 27.

Figure 2.1. The front page of *Tough Journey*



[24]

Figure 2.2 The back page of *Tough Journey*



[25]

[24] Siguang Li, The manuscript of *Tough Journey*, preserved at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music Library, available from Shanghai Conservatory of Music WeChat official account. Accessed April 20, 2022. https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/S8w59jFrC9QeaIqTnDC4oA.

[25] Ibid.

The manuscript was found among the papers gifted to the Shanghai Conservatory of Music library after the death of musicologist and composer Xiao Youmei's (萧友梅, 1884-1940).[26] Xiao and Li had been friends and Li asked Xiao to comment on his composition. Even though Li was not a trained composer, his music marked the beginning of compositions for the violin by the Chinese in the twentieth century.

In 1919, the Paris Peace Conference had decided that a portion of northern China, Shandong, which had formerly been ceded to Germany, instead of being returned to Chinese control, would be taken over by the Japanese empire. The weak reaction of the Chinese government led to protests by students, and this has historically been called the May Fourth Movement of 1919. The main intention of the protests was anti-imperialist, and against cultural and political policies of the time. Li Siguang composed *Tough Journey* in response to this event and to express his concern for his country. For his musical piece, he used the title of a poem, *Xing lu nan*, *Tough Journey*. Written by the Chinese ancient poet Li Bai in the Tang dynasty, this ancient poem expresses the feeling that society and life are arduous. Li Bai wrote this poem to lament that his talent had not been discovered, and his ambitions could not be achieved. Li Siguang's violin piece resonates with this lament but for the country.

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[26] Linqun Chen, "Ma Sicong zhi qian de zhong guo xiao ti qin yin yue lun shu [The Research of Chinese Violin Works Before Ma Sicong]," *Art of Music (Journal of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music)*, (1995, 02): 36. https://www.cnki.net/kcms/doi/10.19359/j.cn31-1004/j.1995.02.005.html.

Li Bai's poem was translated by Chinese translator Xu Yuanchong (许渊冲, 1921-2021), who specialized in translating ancient Chinese poems to English.

Hard Is the Way of the World (Tough Journey)
Li Bai
Pure wine in golden cup costs then thousand coins, good!
Choice dish in a jade plate is worth as much, nice food!
Pushing aside my cup and chopsticks, I can't eat;
Drawing my sword and looking around, I hear my heart beat.
I can't cross Yellow River: Ice has stopped its flow;
I can't climb Mount Taihang: the sky is blind with snow.
I poise a fishing pole with ease on the green stream
Or set sail for the sun like the sage in a dream.
Hard is the way. Hard is the way.
Don't go astray! Whither today?
A time will come to ride the wind and cleave the waves;
I'll set my cloud-like sail to cross the sea which raves.[27]

In this poem, the first two lines describe a glorious scene, and the next two lines express a gloomy emotion in contrast. In the four lines after that, the poet expresses how his talent is not being appreciated, and how his ambitions of serving the country were hard to achieve. A lament about the difficulty of existing in the world follows. The last two lines demonstrate an optimism and hope for the future. Again, Li Siguang used the poem as a reference to compose the musical piece *Tough Journey*. He used the title and the sentiments expressed in the poem to write this violin composition, and he expressed his complex feelings about the development of the country given the May Fourth Movement when he composed this piece.

[27] Yuanchong Xu, translator, *Tang shi san bai shou* [300 Tang Poems: Classified by Theme], Beijing: Zhong guo dui wai fan yi chu ban gong si, 2007), 317.

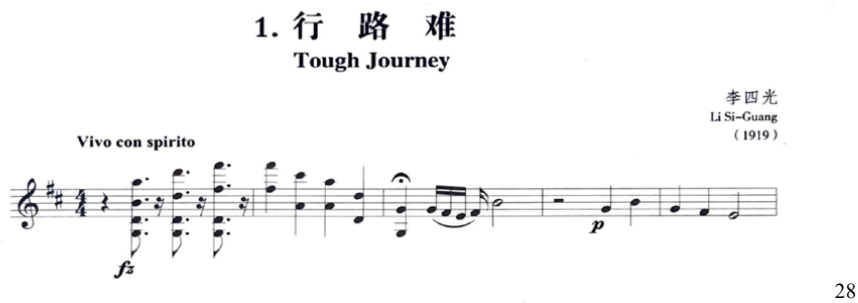
Although this unaccompanied violin solo itself is not a very mature composition, its historical meaning is profound.

The structure of *Tough Journey* consists of three sections but does not resemble any standard form in the Western classical music tradition, such as the ternary form or the sonata form. The structure of the three sections is like the *exposition*, *development*, and *coda* found in much of Western classical music.

Table 2.1. The structure of *Tough Journey*

	Exposition	Development	Coda
Measures	1-14	15-32	33-51, 52-55
Tempo/Character	Vivo con spirito	Allegro	Adagio assai, Lento
Key	D major	D major	Unstable, G major

Figure 2.3. The opening of *Tough Journey*, mm 1-5



[28]

The piece resembles a personal, emotional utterance, like a diary entry. The composer used tempo, dynamics, and key changes to depict the characters of the piece. In figure 2.3, the opening of the work is marked *Vivo con spirito*, lively with spirit or animation, thus the

[28] Zhinuo Ding, *Zhong guo xiao ti qin zuo pin bai nian jing dian: 1919-2019* [A Century of Violin Works by Chinese Composers: 1919-2019] Vol 1, (Shanghai: Shang hai yin yue chu ban she, 2019), 1.

emotion is optimistic. Tempo is clearly indicated for each section: moderato, fast, slow respectively. The exposition consists mostly of moderate speed rhythmic values such as quarter and eighth notes. The development is fast, marked *Allegro*, and the rhythm patterns are mostly sixteenth notes. The slow and mournful coda is marked *adagio assai*. The composer uses tempo changes to organize the music. In addition, Li Siguang employed *fermata*, *rubato,* and *accelerando* to allow flexibility in the pulse and pacing.

After the manuscript was found by musicologist and professor Chen Lingqun, the first official publication of *Tough Journey* was included in the first volume of *A Century of Violin Works by Chinese Composers* published in 2019, a collection of 101 works from 1919-1949.[29] *Tough Journey* is the first piece of this collection; it marks the beginning of Chinese violin compositions and bears profound historical significance.

2. Ma Sicong (马思聪, 1912-1987)

Ma Sicong was a Chinese violinist, educator, and composer, who had a dramatic life and prolific works during his lifetime. He was born in Haifeng, Guangdong province, China on May 7, 1912, and died in Philadelphia, USA, on May 20, 1987. He consistently composed music no matter what situation he was facing, and he believed that his music was for the Chinese people and represented the Chinese people. His work includes a wide range of

[29] Ibid.

genres: art songs, choral music, concert violin pieces with piano, piano solos, sonatas, chamber music (including piano trios, string quartets, and piano quintets), symphonies, ballet suites, and operas.[30]

Ma Sicong was born into an intellectual family in which his parents were both well-educated and open-minded. His father won the top rank in the imperial examination in 1900 during the late Qing Dynasty. Thanks to this high score, Ma's father mainly worked for the government and had a stable living income. He was the first headmaster of Haifeng Higher Elementary School, and later, he became the director of the Guangzhou Shi Department of Treasury. Ma's mother was taught Chinese classical literature by her father, even though women generally received no formal education in the late Qing Dynasty. Thanks to their family background, Ma and his siblings all had a chance to study overseas.

In 1923, Ma Sicong's elder brother came back from France where he had studied, bringing with him a violin. He fell in love with the violin at first sight and decided to study it in France. Thus, in the fall of 1923, at the age of eleven, Ma went to France to study with a female violinist for two months, and lived in Fontainebleau, southeast of Paris. He studied at the Music Conservatory of Nancy, an affiliate of the Conservatoire de Paris in 1925. Since he wanted to learn more sophisticated violin techniques, he went to Paris in 1926 to study with Paul Oberdoerffer, who was a violinist in the orchestra of the Opéra National de Paris and a

[30] Jingwei Zhang, *Ma Sicong nian pu, 1912-1987* [Ma Sicong: Chronology, 1912-1987] (Beijing: Zhong guo wen lian chu ban she, 2004), 210.

teacher at the Conservatoire de Paris. Around the same time, he also studied piano with Mrs. Oberdoerffer. Under the tutelage of Mr. Oberdoerffer, Ma felt that his violin techniques and music expressions improved quickly.[31] Thus supported by the Oberdoerffers, Ma decided to apply for the Conservatoire de Paris. Unfortunately, at that time, Ma was diagnosed with neck issues which caused his doctor to recommend that he stop playing the violin. This potential setback turned out to be a blessing in disguise since during the treatment period in 1927, he had time to learn more French and practice the piano.

Also in that year, Ma Sicong read a lot about music theory and music history, and explored many musical languages from distinguished composers. Ma recalled these memories in his article *Chuang zuo zhi lu* (创作之路), "The Journey of Composing":

> From playing the piano, I started to get familiar with Bach, Mozart, Liszt, and Chopin, especially French late modern composers, Debussy, Ravel, and Faure. Debussy was my favorite composer at that time. I collected all his work and played them on the piano to feel his magical harmonies. I admired his musical language, like some dissonances, key changes, and colorful Eastern melodies.[32]

After Ma's neck recovered, he continued to study with Oberdoerffer and was officially admitted to the Conservatoire de Paris under Boucherif's studio in 1928. One year later, Ma

[31] Sicong Ma, "Tong nian zhui xiang qu," [The Memory of Childhood] in *ju gao sheng zi yuan*, [As I am living higher, the voice reaching far], Edited by Zeng yongchen, (Tianjin Shi: Bai hua wen yi chu ban she, 2000), 6.

[32] Ibid, "Chuang zuo zhi lu [The Journey of Composing]," 15; my translation.

had to suspend his study and go back to China because of financial issues. On February 7, 1929, he returned to China.

However, financial problems did not cause Ma Sicong to quit music. In contrast, he tried, even more, to support himself in order to keep growing as a musician. In September 1929, he started a recital tour in China. This tour showed Ma's brilliant violin playing and helped him gain a strong reputation. The recital tour included Hong Kong, Guangzhou, Nanjing, and Shanghai. Wherever he went, audiences were amazed, and music critics gave extremely high praise. Ma received applause in Shanghai, a city where Western classical music was well developed. The Shanghai News (Shen Bao, 申报), which was one of the most influential newspapers in China at that time, announced his recital dates and programs in large, bold headlines. On January 6, 1930, Ma Sicong was invited to perform a recital in the Shanghai City Hall; the Shanghai News advertised his recital on January 4, 1930.[33] Because of his triumphant concert tours, he successfully achieved financial support from the Guangdong Province government to go to France for the second time to study composition in 1931.[34]

The Bulgarian French composer Janco (or Janko) Binembaum was Ma Sicong's major professor during his second time studying in the Conservatoire de Paris. The composition style of Binembaum was impressionism, colored with Balkan rhythms. "His composition," Ma wrote, "is magnificent and has deep feelings. His works were always a tragedy, not

[33] Jingwei Zhang, 18.
[34] Ibid, 19.

melancholy but Greek tragedy, and his music always has an irresistible passion."[35] Ma strongly felt that Binembaum was not only his composition teacher but also a friend and an artist who helped him understand the world. Ma remembered that Binembaum said that a musician should have versatile knowledge of art and literature.[36] They went to the Louvre Museum together to feel the beauty of artistic paintings, which helped Ma Sicong to get inspiration for composing. Binembaum taught Ma solid and strict compositional techniques but encouraged him to break the rules. Ma related that for the practicing assignments, his teacher had exact rules, but when he had some parallel fifths and octaves in composing, Binembaum appreciated the sound effects instead of correcting them.[37] During World War II, Ma lost touch with his teacher, but in articles he often mentioned the knowledge and inspiration he gained from Binembaum, who had a powerful spiritual influence on his later composing.

After completing his studies in France and returning to China in 1932, Ma Sicong became a dedicated educator. He established a private music school, Guangzhou Conservatory, where he taught piano, violin, and music theory courses. He got his first college position at the National Central University in Nanjing in 1933. He taught violin, viola, and cello, and he also composed string quartets for students to practice chamber music.

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[35] Sicong Ma, "Chuang zuo zhi lu [The Journey of Composing]," 21; my translation.
[36] Ibid, "wo he mei shu [The Fine Arts and Me]," 132.
[37] Ibid, 21; my translation.

In 1937, he was appointed as a professor at the Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou and composed *Rondo No.1* for violin and piano, which was his first work to be published. The *Inner Mongolia Suite* was composed around the same time as *Rondo No.1*, and shared similar Mongolian motives in the music.

In July 1937, China and Japan entered into war. This "War of Resistance" (July 7, 1937-September 2, 1945) led to great destruction in China. As part of the war effort, Ma directed a patriotic choir. At the same time, he composed and recorded a series of choral compositions to encourage the army and people to fight. On the basis of his profession and reputation, he was appointed professor and the first president of the Central Conservatory of Music in Tianjin (now in Beijing). This position provided him a stable and excellent condition to compose and teach until the Cultural Revolution occurred in 1966. The Cultural Revolution was a sociocultural movement that prohibited capitalist elements from 1966 to 1976. Unfortunately, Western music was considered a capitalist element and was not allowed to be performed or taught. Thus, to avoid political persecution, Ma brought his family from China to Philadelphia and continued his composition career there. He never stopped performing and composing until he died during a heart operation in Philadelphia in 1987, at age 75.

As an ambassador of Eastern culture and as a bridge between East and West, Ma Sicong spread Chinese music to the western countries. For example, in 1951, he brought a group of Chinese musicians to attend the Prague Spring International Music Festival in

Czechoslovakia.[38] He performed his *Violin Concerto in F major*, which he had composed in 1944, with the Symfonický Orchestr Českého Rozhlas, and later the *Tone Poem of Tibet*, which he composed in 1941, in a recital which received praise from music critics in Prague.[39] After settling in the United States, he gave his first recital at the Lincoln Center in 1969. The program included Western classical repertoire and some Chinese pieces that he wrote such as *Dragon Lantern Dance*, composed in 1952. His last work was the opera *Rebia*, which he composed in 1980 and which he was planning to premiere in Taiwan in 1988, along with his first visit to mainland China in over twenty years. Unfortunately, he passed away in 1987. The opera finally premiered in Taiwan in 1989, rehearsed and performed by Ma's musician friends.[40]

***Di yi hui xuan qu, Rondo No. 1* (第一回旋曲, 1937)**

As a bridge between Chinese and Western instruments and composition, Ma Sicong's achievements were tremendous. He was in the first-generation of composers to introduce Western instruments to the broader Chinese population, and he also introduced Chinese style music to the world. The *Rondo No. 1* for violin and piano, which he composed in 1937, provides a typical example of his accomplishment. This piece employs Western classical

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[38] Jingwei Zhang, 93.

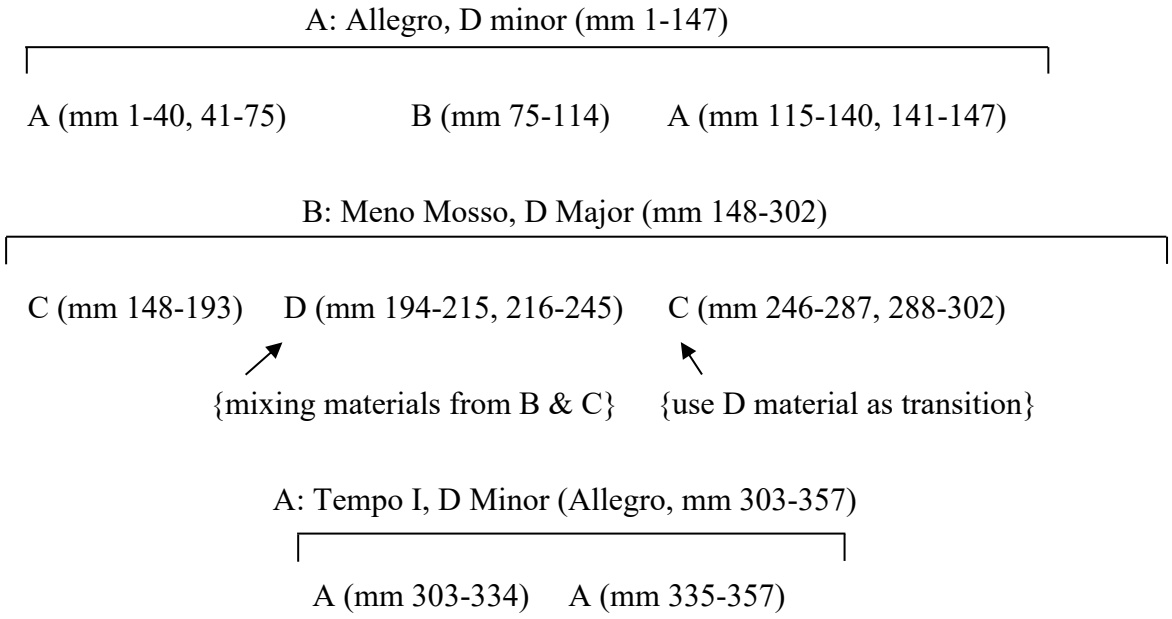
[39] Ibid.

[40] Zushan, Bian, "Wan xia—Ma Sicong wan nian de yin yue chuang zuo[The Sunset—Late Works of Ma Sicong]," *Journal of China Avphile* no.66, (1999): 64.

compositional techniques, which he learned in France, as well as Chinese classical elements, such as folk elements and five-note pentatonic scales. Ma's creative combination was a first for the violin repertoire of China.

Some typical features of Western classical music—characteristic instrumentations, forms, textures, rhythms, keys, and phrasings—find expression in *Rondo No.1*. First of all, the instrumentation includes violin and piano, which are two prominent instruments in the western classical tradition. Staff notation with a clear 2/4 time signature is used throughout. The one-flat key signature at the beginning signals an unambiguous D-minor tonality, and the later two-sharp signature effects a move to the bridge color of the parallel tonality of D major. Ma also employs Italianate expression and dynamic markings typical of the Western canon, such as *allegro*, *forte*, *piano*, *diminuendo*, *crescendo*, and *accelerando*. The texture of this rondo is homophonic, where the violin part is the dominant melody and the piano gives strong support underneath. The piano part introduces the four-bar phrase structure, which was commonly used in the classical era, and the violin part follows the structure through the whole piece. The title of this piece, *Rondo No.1*, is a standard form within the Western classical tradition, having a clear theme and many refrains throughout the entire piece. Even though the title gives clues to the structure, the structure is not merely a standard rondo form. Indeed, it is a rondo in a compound ternary form in which three parts are indicated by tempo markings and key signatures (see figure 2.4).

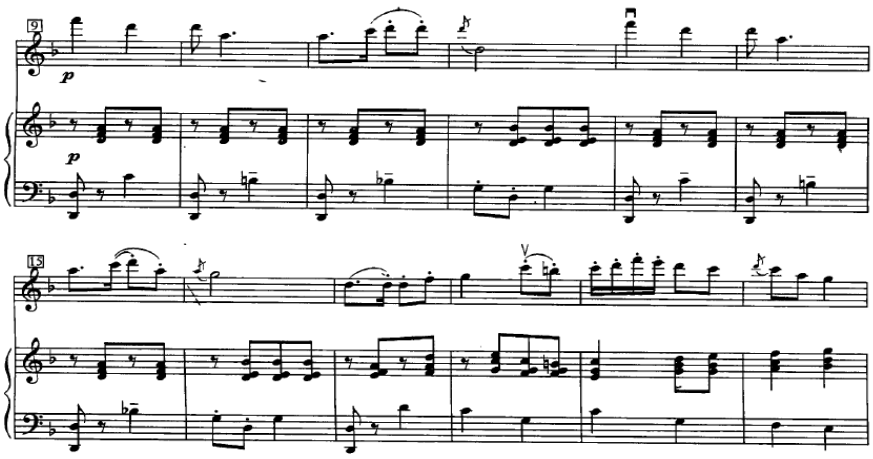
Figure 2.4. The structure of *Rondo No.1*



Chinese identity in Ma Sicong's music is the most significant element in his works, and this is a unique feature to distinguish him from western composers. According to musicologist Tang Qiong, the theme of the *Rondo No.1*, shown in figure 2.5, derives from a Mongolian short tune; the original tempo of this tune was slow, but Ma speeded it up to faster tempo in his *Rondo. No.1* to create a lively feeling.[41] Another distinct feature is the grace note in measure twelve, in which the accent is on the grace note instead of a downbeat note. This unusual accent is a gesture of traditional Chinese music that imitates the tone of the language and voice of singing.

[41] Qiong Tang, Ma Sicong zao qi xiao ti qin chuang zuo ping jie [A Review of Ma Sicong's Early Works] in *Lun Ma sicong* [On Ma Sicong], ed. by Ma Sicong yan jiu hui [Ma Sicong Assosiation], (Beijing: People's Music Publishing House, 1997), 238.

Figure 2.5. *Rondo No.1,* mm 9-20



[42]

Ma Sicong was a pioneer of Chinese violin music and education. He was the first violinist and composer to incorporate Chinese folk elements in music crafted according to Western conventions. His music became the representative Chinese violin repertoire. His *Song of Nostalgia*, the second movement of *Inner Mongolia Suite*, is the required piece for the China Arts Grade Examination, in the Shanghai Conservatory of Music Violin Division. Violinist and professor of Duke University, Hsiao-Mei Ku and pianist Ning Lu recorded *Rondo No. 1* and Ma's other Chinese classical violin compositions which were released in the Naxos Chinese Classicas series in 2007.[43] The compelete works of Ma Sicong were published by the Central Conservatory of Music Press in 2007.[44] Arranged in seven volumes,

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[42] Sicong Ma, *Ma Sicong quan ji* [Complete Works of Ma Sicong] vol.7, edited by Wang yuhe, (Beijing: Zhong yang yin yue chu ban she, 2007), 9.

[43] Sicong Ma, "Rondo No. 1" in *Ma Sicong (1912-1987) Music for Violin and Piano, Vol 1*, performed by Hsiao-mei Ku and Ning Lu, released July 1, 2007, Naxos: 8.570600, accessed April 25, 2022, Naxos Music Library. https://wisc-naxosmusiclibrary-com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/streamw.asp?ver=2.0&s=15335%2FWISC18%2F168376.

[44] Sicong Ma, *Ma Sicong quan ji* [Complete works of Ma Sicong].

this edition includes symphonies, concertos, operas, choral music, violin music, other instrumental music, chamber music, and a collection of his photos.

3. Yang Baozhi (杨宝智, 1935-)

Yang Baozhi is a renowned violinist, composer, and educator. His compositions include music for solo violin, concertos, duets, trios, quartets, and quintets for strings. His compositional style is nationalistic as he uses existing Chinese traditional music to compose for Western instruments. He transcribes and rearranges folk tunes and Chinese classical instrumental music for the violin. For example, he uses ricochet on the violin to mimic the sound effects of the bamboo flute, like double-tonguing and flutter-tonguing. In addition, he has composed for Chinese instruments collaborating with Western symphony orchestras. *Chuanjiang*, or *Sichuan River*, is a concerto composed for the erhu and a symphony orchestra. The erhu is a two-stringed fiddle, which is a traditional Chinese instrument. Yang believes that combining Chinese and Western elements is a creative experiment that both revitalizes Chinese music and popularizes Western instruments. As an educator, he was a violin professor at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Sichuan Conservatory of Music, and Central Conservatory of Music respectively. Also, Yang has published different kinds of violin technique, method, and exercise books. Since his retirement in 1997, he has continued

teaching, performing, composing, writing, and holding lectures and seminars for violin education.

Yang Baozhi was born into an intellectual family in Guangdong province in the south of China. His father was an educator and the principal of Foshan Huaying Middle school; his mother was a musician who published *Rhythm Training for Children* and taught music at the South China Normal University.[45] He learned piano with his mother when he was a child. Yang saw two movies when he was around thirteen years old, *The Magic Bow* and *Carnegie Hall*. *The Magic Bow* is a story about violinist and composer Nicolo Paganini. Through *Carnegie Hall*, Yang heard and fell in love with the *Violin Concerto No.1 in D major* composed by Tchaikovsky and performed by Jascha Heifetz. These two movies inspired him and led him to study the violin. With his passion and love of classical music, he was admitted to the Central Conservatory of Music at the age of sixteenth. He studied with Professor Ma Sicong (see above), a first-generation Chinese violinist, composer, and educator. Yang studied piano, violin, and composition with Professor Ma.

The compositional style of Yang Baozhi was influenced by his teacher and mentor Ma Sicong, who, as noted above, incorporated Chinese elements into his violin compositions. Yang has transcribed and rearranged Chinese traditional instrumental and folk music for

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[45] Baozhi Yang, "Ji yi zhong de Ma Sicong [In Memory of Ma Sicong]," *Journal of the Central Conservatory of Music*, no. 4, (2010): 45 & 49. https://www.cnki.net/kcms/doi/10.16504/j.cnki.cn11-1183/j.2010.04.020.html

violin and piano. His composition collection, *Selected Violin Works,* was published in 2005 and includes twelve compositions inspired by Chinese classical tunes.[46] Traditionally, these classical tunes were played on Chinese instruments, such as the guqin/the seven-stringed zither, pipa/the four-stringed plucking lute and dizi/the side-bowled bamboo flute, but Yang transcribes their melodies on the violin. For example, *Shi mian mai fu*, *Ambush from Ten Sides* is a virtuosic piece to express the battle of two armies within ancient China. An intense battle feeling emerges through short and repeated notes. In the traditional repertoire, pipa techniques included sweeping, rolling and circular fingering to express conflict within the scene. Transcribing and rearranging *Ambush from Ten Sides* on the violin, Yang used rolling chords, tremolo, and spiccato to imitate the sound of pipa techniques.

As an educator Yang Baozhi not only has taught individual students, but also has written and edited textbooks. Thus, as an author he has played an important role in introducing the violin. He wrote and edited textbooks about violin teaching. In 2004, he was the co-author of *A History of String Art* with Zhang Beili, which became the primary Chinese textbook in colleges for music majors.[47] This book presents the origin and development of string instruments in Western countries through the twentieth century. In this text, Western musical style, performance, techniques, and pedagogy of strings are demonstrated for the baroque,

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[46] Baozhi Yang, *Zhong guo xiao ti qin du zou qu xuan* [Selected Chinese Violin Works] (Beijing: Zhong yang yin yue xue yuan chu ban she, 2005), 1.

[47] Beili Zhang and Baozhi Yang, *Xian yue yi shu shi*. [A History of String Art] (Beijing: Gao deng jiao yu chu ban she, 2004).

classical, romantic and twentieth century periods. In addition, in chapter six, the authors focus on the development of the violin in China and explain the styles of Chinese violin works created by Chinese composers in the twentieth century. This chapter is frequently referenced. Also, Yang was the co-editor of a series of training books for the violin for teenagers. These training books consist of Western and Chinese violin works, and each chapter has a technique exercise goal.[48] For example, chapter two focuses on shifting and vibrato and the related music is the Johann Sebastian Bach's *Air on the G String*. In chapter sixteen, the focus is on learning Chinese violin music and the selection included is Ma Sicong's *Song of Nostalgia*. These exercise books have helped both violin educators and players approach the study of violin more efficiently.

***Xi xiang feng, The Joyful Reunion* (喜相逢, 1956)**

Xi xiang feng, *The Joyful Reunion*, is a traditional piece written for the dizi, bamboo flute. In 1956, Yang Baozhi transcribed this piece for violin and piano. *Xi xiang feng* indicates the joyful reunion of family and friends after a long period of time. It was originally a folk tune and later was incorporated into one of the traditional operas sung in northwestern China called Er ren tai (二人台). Thus, *The Joyful Reunion* developed into a more formalized

[48] Baozhi Yang. Xiao ti qin ru men ti gao: *Lin yao ji, yang bao zhi jiao xue he xin ke cheng* [Introduction and Skill Developing of Learning the Violin: Lin Yaoji and Yang Baozhi Method] (Beijing: Lan tian chu ban she, 2003.)

titled tune——qupai. Qupai (曲牌) refers to a pre-existing named melody which could be found in folksongs, instrumental music, and traditional operas across China.[49] These pre-existing melodies could then be transformed into any vocal or instrumental music. For example, Feng Zicun (冯子存, 1904-1987) composed a solo bamboo flute theme and variations based on the skeleton melody of *The Joyful Reunion* in 1953. The premiere of this piece was so successful that it helped the bamboo flute develop the status of a solo instrument. The repertoire for solo bamboo flute before the mid-nineteenth century can only be found in descriptions in literary works and historical documents instead of actual music.[50] Bamboo flute music has two typical styles, the northern school and the southern school. Music of the northern school features dazzling techniques including glissando, tremolo, flutter-tonguing, and double- and triple-tonguing.[51] *The Joyful Reunion*, which is written in the style of the northern school, has a fast tempo and brilliant techniques. Yang Baozhi then transcribed this bamboo flute music and arranged it for violin and piano.

The Joyful Reunion takes the form of a theme with four variations. Each variation has a distinct tempo as well as techniques to match its character (see table 2.2).

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[49] Rachel Harris, *Singing the Village: Music, Memory and Ritual among the Sibe of Xinjiang*. (New York: British Academy by Oxford University Press), 77.

[50] Frederick Lau, "Instruments: Dizi and Xiao," in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 7 - East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea*, ed. Robert C. Provine, Yosihiko Tokumaru, and Lawrence J. Witzleben, (New York: Routledge, 2002), 222.

[51] Ibid.

Table 2.2. The structure of *The Joyful Reunion*

	Theme	Variation I	Variation II	Variation III	Variation IV
Measures	1-32	33-64	65-96	97-136	137-170
Tempo/Character	Con anima	Allegretto	Allegretto	A Tempo	Allegro
Key	A gong	A gong	A gong	E zhi	A gong

The theme of this piece is in a five-note pentatonic scale based on pitch A in gong mode. In the Chinese pentatonic scale, the pitch of notes is not fixed until the pitch of the tonic is identified. The tonic corresponds with a mode that has fixed intervals between five notes. This pentatonic scale and modulation will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Transforming music from a wind instrument to a string instrument requires matching the character and articulations. Double-and triple tonguing are widely used in bamboo flute music to demonstrate lively and joyful feelings. Composer Yang used ricochet to imitate the articulation of double-and triple tonguing. Ricochet is a single bow stroke that bounces several notes in a row. The northern music style of the bamboo flute includes shrill tones with accents, and Yang uses the martelé stroke on the violin to match these tones. In addition, he uses harmonics on the violin to produce an effect similar to the overblowing, high pitch sounds of the bamboo flute. Music examples will be introduced and analyzed in chapter three.

4. Li Zili (李自立, 1938-)

Li Zili is an active educator, composer, and instrumentalist. He was born into a family of intellectuals. His parents were graduates of Beijing Normal University, one of the most

prestigious universities in China. They were good at writing, calligraphy and linguistics, and interested in music; they were the piaoyou (票友) of Peking opera.[52] Piaoyou are the amateur Chinese Opera singers who perform with high standards as a hobby but do not perform for a living. The family atmosphere sowed the music seeds for Li's childhood. His childhood was also affected by a fourteen-year war between China and Japan. Although it was hard to have a stable life with study and music training during wartime, he was lucky to be accepted to the performance troupe of the People's Liberation Army because of his musical talent. In the troupe, he was an active and versatile performer on stage. As a singer, he performed folk music and opera; as an actor, he performed stage plays; as an instrumentalist, he performed on a variety of traditional Chinese bowed, two-stringed fiddles, including the erhu, jinghu, and banhu.[53]

The People's Liberation Army troupe performed in many regions, which helped Li to hear a broad variety of folk tunes. As a result, folk music became one of the essential elements of his compositions. Interestingly, Li never received formal compositional training and his real violin training did not start until the age of seventeen. In 1955, he finally had an opportunity to study violin at the Zhongnan Conservatory of Music middle school, which is

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[52] Aiaun Li and Huiling Mo, "Ta jian xing le zhong guo jing shen——ji Li Zili de chuan qi ren sheng [He Showed Chinese Spirit——The Musical Life of Li Zili]," *Journal of Xinghai Conservatory of Music*, No. 2 (2013):115. https://oversea-cnki-net.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFD2013&filename=XHYY201302018&uniplatform=OVERSEAS_EN&v=kzWzAmHkr916mpkPIXI24uEc-bhSXslJGIVzzK-zPMOUJyVne38Lyre-B1at3CN7.

[53] Ibid.

now the Attached Middle School of Wuhan Conservatory of Music, and in 1962, he studied with Professor Yang Muyun at the Central Symphony orchestra.[54] Because he was already seventeen when he started training on the violin, it was not easy to achieve a high level of performance proficiency. When he first got to Central Symphony Orchestra, no teacher wanted to work with him due to his poor posture and techniques. Thus, he spent as much time as he could practicing independently. Finally, his determination convinced Professor Yang to accept him as a student.

Limited formal musical training did not diminish Li's enthusiasm for violin composition. He did not have training in the piano either. Therefore, all the piano portions were composed by his pianist colleagues. In 2000, he published the *Li Zili, Violin Work Collection* with piano accompaniment, which includes twenty pieces.[55] The works are mainly adapted folk tunes, and many of them were composed for students. For instance, *Xiao tao qi, A Little Rascal*, was composed for children and beginners. The theme is based on a lively and joyful folk tune from Hunan province in the south-central part of China.[56] The techniques focus on basics, like bow coordination, shifting, and string crossing. As a composer, Li has

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[54] Ibid, 117.

[55] Zili Li, *Li Zili xiao ti qin qu ji* [Li Zili's Violin Work Collection] (Guangzhou: Hua cheng chu ban she, 2000).

[56] Xu Luo, "Li Zili xiao ti qin yin yue zuo pin de te dian [The Musical Style of Violin Works by Li Zili]," *Musical Works*, no. 8 (2012): 142. https://oversea-cnki-net.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFD2012&filename=YYCZ201208026&uniplatform=OVERSEAS_EN&v=MNDfBhTl5UHCBcMLF3Vfg3vyP9fn-xTbUu3WC43Ts_orJw9xwv4xqG4AgSvRIhIe.

insisted that even though the violin is a Western instrument, the musical language of the violin should be understood by the Chinese people. For example, he adapted a fishing song to compose *Fisherman's Harvest Song*. Fishing songs are tunes originally sung during fishing to express the beautiful scenery and divert attention from tough work and life.

Popularizing music for the masses and composing nationalistic music were Li's career goals. He established the first amateur music school for young children in Guangzhou in 1982, and he gave lectures and masterclasses in many regions. He also launched the first national children's violin competition. His endeavor attracted more parents to encourage their children to learn the violin. His compositions have been a medium to broadly popularize knowledge of the violin to the Chinese people. These compositions are often selected as the standard repertoire for competitions and graded violin examinations in China.

Li Zili is still an active educator even though he has retired. He frequently teaches masterclasses and seminars about his compositions. A masterclass dedicated to *Fisherman's Harvest Song* was recorded in 2019 by the online music education organization, HKivs.[57] In addition, he recorded an online course for *Fisherman's Harvest Song* for Tencent Classroom.[58] This course effectively helps students understand and perform *Fisherman's Harvest Song*.

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[57] Zili Li, "Masterclass on *Fisherman's Harvest Song*" recorded by hkivs, accessed March1, 2022, https://www.bilibili.com/video/BV1W4411R7pB?share_source=copy_web.

[58] Zili Li, "Masterclass and performance of *Fisherman's Harvest Song*" recorded by Tencent Classroom, accessed March 1, 2022, https://ke.qq.com/course/331658.

Feng shou yu ge, Fisherman's Harvest Song (丰收渔歌, 1972)

Fisherman's Harvest Song is a short concert piece for violin and piano depicting the scenery of the South China Sea and expressing the excited and joyful feeling of people after a successful fishing harvest. In 1972, Li was a professional violinist at the Guangdong Opera and Dance Troupe and was interested in composing in his leisure time. With the nationalistic sentiment at the time, Li was asked to compose a violin work for the Chinese people. In Chinese, there is a special verb for collecting the folk tunes from various regions for documenting or composing, cai feng (采风) or gathering the wind.[59] Thus, Li went to cai feng in Shanwei, a small seaside town in the south of Guangdong province. At first, Li went to the local public art center in order to research and listen to folk music recordings, then he accompanied fishermen in the South China Sea on a sailing ship and heard them singing a particular piece. That piece gave him the inspiration for composing *Fisherman's Harvest Song*. Li composed the violin part in 1972, and later his colleague Hong Bici helped him to compose the piano part.

Li composed *Fisherman's Harvest Song* in ternary form which begins with a short introduction.

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[59] Jianzhong Qiao, "Folk Song in China," in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 7 - East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea*, 187.

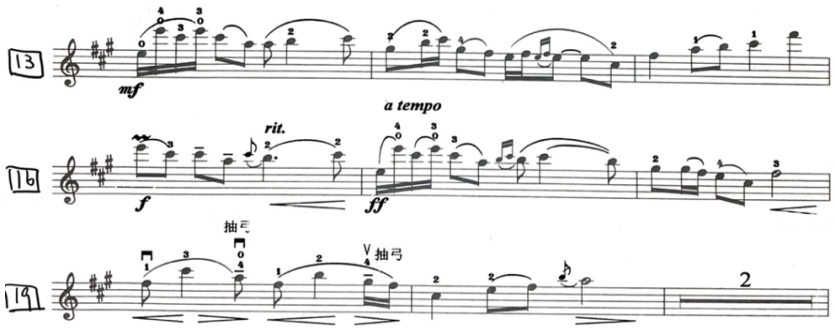
Table 2.3. The structure of *Fisherman's Harvest Song*

	Introduction	A	B	A1
Measures	1-4, 4-11	12-22, 23-30, 31-43	44-76, 77-113	124-137
Tempo	Moderato	Andante piu mosso Tempo 1	Allegro	Moderato
Meter	4/4, Cadenza	4/4	3/4+2/4, 2/4	2/2
Key	A major	A major	A major	D Major

The introduction starts with solo piano, a four-bar cadenza-like phrase starting with big ranges of arpeggios. The arpeggios going up and down imitate the continuous waves and lead to the violin solo. The violin cadenza emulates the similar feeling of piano arpeggios and introduces fragments of the theme. In the masterclass mentioned above, Li explains that section A, shown in table 2.3, is the fishing song that introduces the theme, and it is divided into three sections: the woman's solo, the man's solo, and a duet of both.[60] Measures 12-22 present the complete theme starting with one bar piano prefix, which is the first section of A. It is in a high register in which melody is mainly on the A and E strings to imitate the female voice. Figure 2.6 shows the eight-bar phrase theme in the violin part.

[60] Zili Li, "Masterclass and performance of Fisherman's Harvest Song" recorded by Tencent online classroom, accessed March 1, 2022, https://ke.qq.com/course/331658.

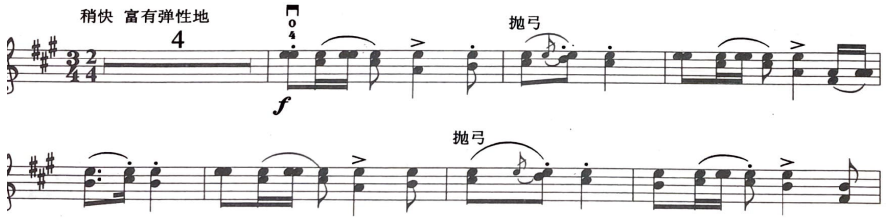
Figure 2.6. Theme of *Fisherman's Harvest Song*, violin entrance, mm 13-22



[61]

In contrast, the second section B, measures 23-30, starts on a lower register with the G string indicating the male voice. The rest of section A, measures 31-43 is a closing of the A section. The middle section B is a dancing and working moment that employs a faster tempo and a metric structure that alternates between 3/4 and 2/4, as shown in figure 2.7. Rhythm patterns include syncopations and combinations of eighth and sixteenth notes. The A1 section is the recapitulation of the singing theme in D major.

Figure 2.7. Meter 3/4 and 2/4 in *Fisherman's Harvest Song*, mm 44-54



[62]

Since the publication of *Fisherman's Harvest Song* in 1979, it has become a popular and typical Chinese violin piece for performances, competitions, and recordings. In 2021, the Hong Kong International String Competition included it among the standard Chinese

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[61] Zili Li, *Li Zili xiao ti qin qu ji* [Li Zili's Violin Work Collection], 43.

[62] Ibid, 109.

repertoire.[63] The youngest winner of the 2018 Yehudi Menuhin International Competition for Young Violinists, Christian Li, recorded *Fisherman's Harvest Song* in 2020 because of its singing and beautiful melody; this video and recording were released in his CD produced by Decca Classics.[64]

[63] Hongkong International Musician Association: International String Competition Repertoire List, accessed March 1, 2022, http://string-isc.com/?p=2238.

[64] "The Strad: 12-year-old Christian Li Plays Fisherman's Harvest Song", last modified May 22, 2020, https://www.thestrad.com/playing-and-teaching/12-year-old-christian-li-plays-fisherman-harvests-song/10699.article.

Chapter 3. Indigenous Elements in Chinese Violin Compositions

Chinese violin music incorporates a range of indigenous elements: characteristic scales or modes, traditional folk tunes and texts, and the distinctive timbres and special effects produced by Chinese instruments.[65] In this chapter, music examples from the four representative composers introduced in chapter two will illustrate how the composers apply these characteristic elements into their violin compositions.

Mode: Wu Sheng, Five-note Scale

Wu sheng, the five-note/pentatonic scale, is the primary element in Chinese music. These five notes derive from wu xing, or "five phases." In Chinese philosophy, the concept of the five phases is related to a wide phenomenon found in nature and essentially everything in the universe. Thus, the five elements of the five phases come directly from nature. The five notes that connect with these aspects of nature are gong, shang, jue, zhi, and yu which correspond to soil, metal, wood, fire, and water. The pitch of the five notes is not absolute, but the interval between the five notes is fixed. This interval is organized in a sequence of perfect fifths. For example, if the gong is pitch C, the five consecutive pitches are gong, zhi, shang, yu, and jue which is equivalent to C, G, D, A, E (see figure 3.1).

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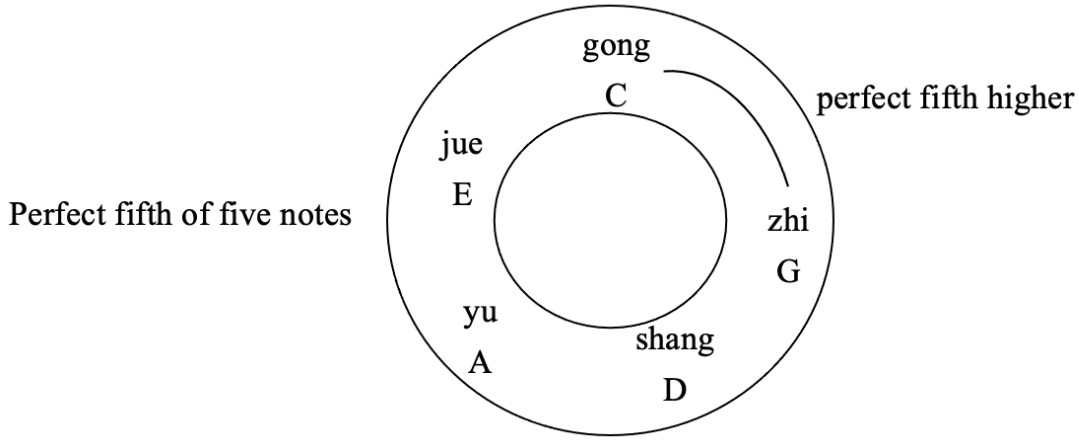
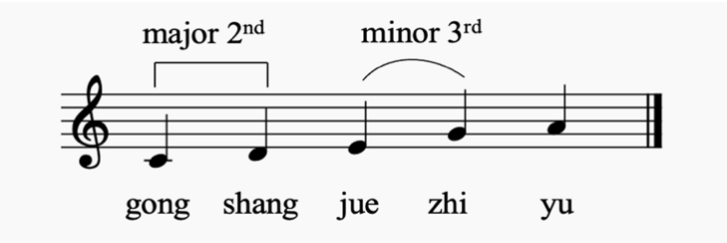
[65] "Indigenous elements" refers to the elements of the particular region, China. Indigenous elements used by native Chinese composers, represent the uniqueness of Chinese civilization.

Figure 3.1. Circle of fifth



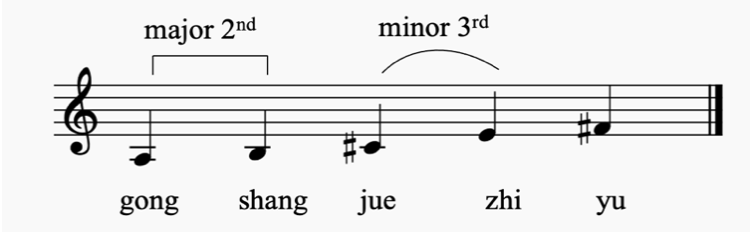
Importantly, rearranging these notes in one octave becomes the five-note/pentatonic scale C D E G A. The intervals between these notes are major 2nd, major 2nd, minor third, and major 2nd (see figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2. Gong mode scale



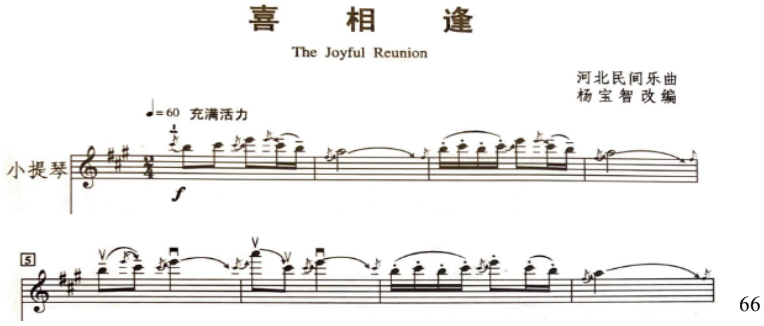
The pitch of gong can be any note. For example, the A gong scale uses A as gong, thus the scale would be A B C# E F# (see figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3. A gong mode scale



The theme of *The Joyful Reunion*, for example, is in A gong mode: it mainly uses B C E C# A which are from the A gong scale (see figure 3.4). A is like the tonic of this mode.

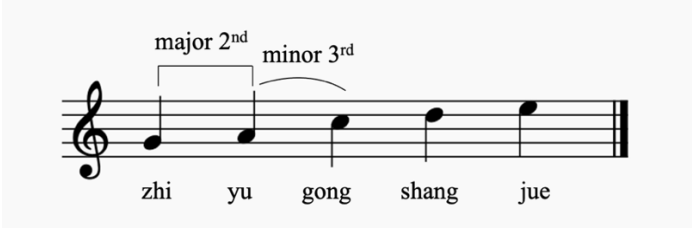
Figure 3.4. Theme of *The Joyful Reunion*, mm 1-8



[66]

In the pentatonic scale, any five of the notes could be used as the tonic to become a mode. For example, zhi mode scale is G A C D E. The interval between these notes is major 2nd, minor 3rd, major 2nd, and major 2nd (see figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5. Zhi mode pentatonic scale



Similarly, when zhi is equivalent to the pitch E, it becomes the E zhi mode scale (see figure 3.6). This example from the variation three of *The Joyful Reunion* shows how the melody uses the E zhi mode (see figure 3.7). E is like the tonic.

[66] Baozhi Yang, *Zhong guo xiao ti qin du zou qu xuan* [Selected Chinese Violin Works], 3.

Figure 3.6. E zhi mode scale

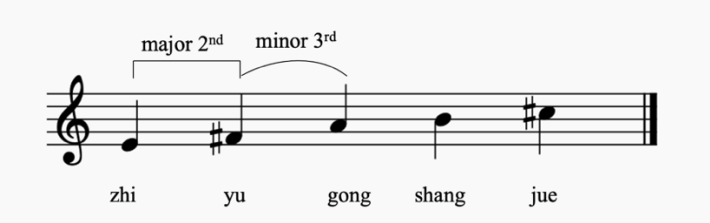
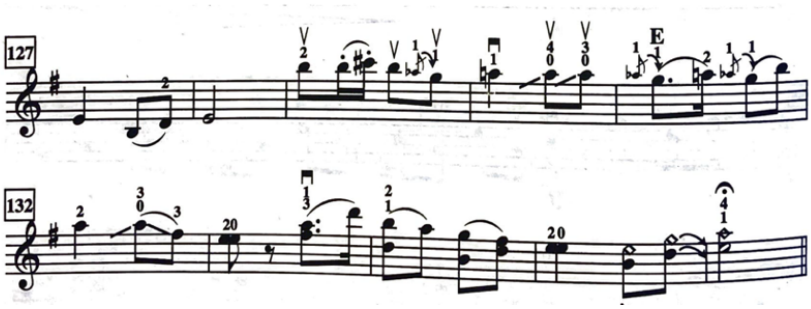


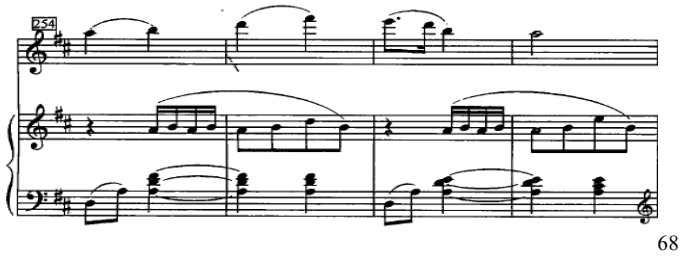
Figure 3.7. Excerpt from *The Joyful Reunion*, mm 127-136



[67]

In the middle section of *Rondo No.1*, Meno mosso (see figure 3.8), the melody is based on the D gong scale (D E F# A B). The melodic contour ascends and descends smoothly over the rhythmic piano accompaniment.

Figure 3.8. *Rondo No. 1*, Meno mosso, mm 254-257



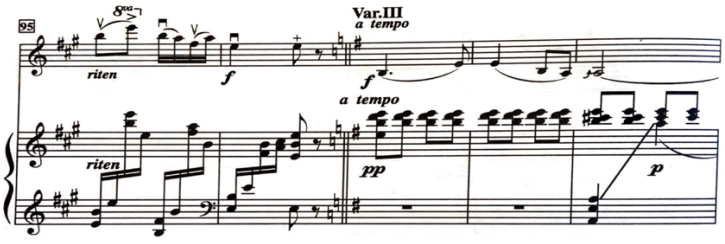
[68]

Since the interval among the five notes is based on the circle of fifth, one form of modulation in Chinese violin music uses a perfect fifth to connect two different keys. For example, in *The Joyful Reunion*, variation two is in A gong mode then variation three

[67] Ibid, violin part, 6.
[68] Sicong Ma, *Ma Sicong quan ji* [Complete Works of Ma Sicong], 15.

modulates to E zhi mode (see figure 3.9). Since E is the tonic in E zhi mode, in the end of variation two (mm 95-96), the phrase ends on E instead of tonic A in A gong mode. By using the interval a perfect fifth above A, the modulation can go smoothly from A gong mode to E zhi mode.

Figure 3.9. *The Joyful Reunion*, mm 95-99

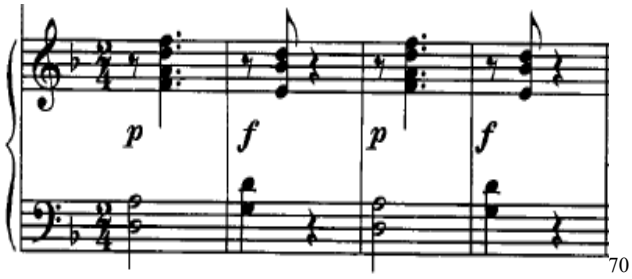


[69]

The five-note scale also influences harmony in Chinese music. In Western classical music, composers seldom use parallel fifths and parallel octaves in harmony. However, in Chinese music, composers use parallel fifths to create a special color. This unique color is sometimes created by parallel-perfect-fifth motion in the piano left hand. In figure 3.10, for example, the left hand moves between the perfect fifths D-A and G-D. The uncertainty of the piano introduction gives audiences expectations of the whole piece.

[69] Baozhi Yang, *Zhong guo xiao ti qin du zou qu xuan* [Selected Chinese Violin Works], 8.

Figure 3.10. *Rondo No.1 for Violin and Piano*, mm 1-4, piano part



[70]

Folk Tunes

Folk tunes, which are by definition music of the people, provided composers one of the most powerful means for rendering compositions for violin accessible to Chinese audiences. According to Ma Sicong, "Chinese composers need to learn not only western compositional techniques but also learn from our Chinese people because they represent lands, mountains, fields, and rivers; new music is not the job among a small portion of composers but represents the heart of forty million people."[71] As previously noted, Ma used a Mongolian folk tune in his *Rondo No.1*, and similar use of folk tunes constitutes an essential element of many other Chinese compositions for violin.

Li Zili learned a fishing song by ear originally and wrote down the melody (see figure 3.11). Inspired by this melody, Li then composed *Fisherman's Harvest Song*.

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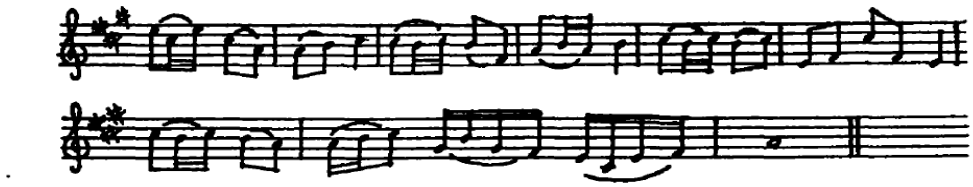
[70] Sicong Ma, *Ma Sicong quan ji,* [Complete Works of Ma Sicong], 9.
[71] Ibid, 1; My translation.

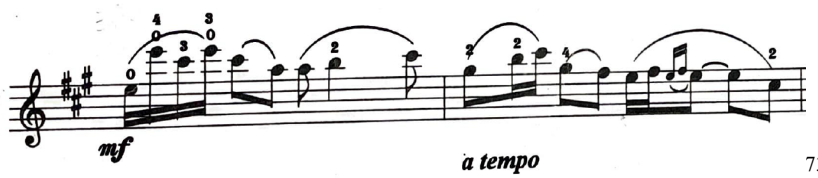
Figure 3.11. Fishing song melody



[72]

The first two measures of the theme (see figure 3.12) are similar to the first line of the melody that Li Zili wrote down. He elaborates by increasing the range of the melody to make it more violinistic and expressive.

Figure 3.12. Beginning of the theme of *Fisherman's Harvest Song*, mm 13-14



[73]

In figure 3.11, the meter of the last four measures of the melody is not the same. It switches between triple and duple, and that inspired Li to apply it in the middle section of his *Fisherman's Harvest Song*. In the middle section of *Fisherman's Harvest Song* (see figure 3.13), the meter is marked 3/4 and 2/4. The Chinese character Li uses here indicates the faster tempo and leggiero. The character of this section is lively and cheerful. It echoes that the fishers were happy after the harvest in which the fish had jumped into the fishing nets.

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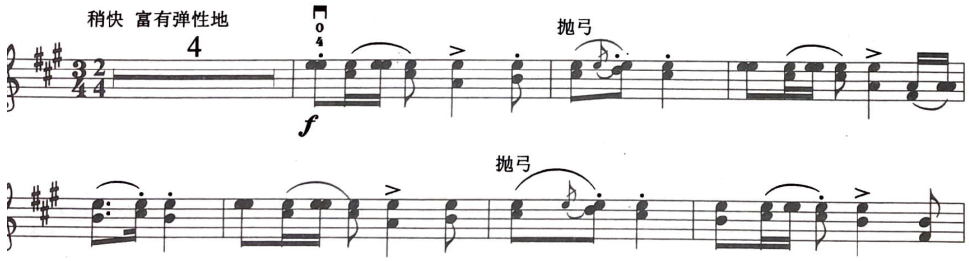
[72] Zili Li, "Yue qu jie zhao ji yan zou——feng shou yu ge [The Introduction and Performance of Fisherman's Harvest Song]," *Journal of Xinghai Conservatory of Music*, no. 2 (1979): 78. https://oversea-cnki-net.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CJFD&dbname=CJFD7984&filename=XHYY197902010&uniplatform=OVERSEAS_EN&v=an-9cR3AZdwXEkM_dUgzL9Gc93TXzJM2T7bITH18pN7BW0jso4VZAc5YXViBKCmc.

[73] Zili Li, *Li Zili xiao ti qin qu ji* [Li Zili's Violin Work Collection], violin part, 28.

Figure 3.13. Middle section of *Fisherman's Harvest Song*, mm 44-54



[74]

Fishing songs are a typical type of folk tune in the seaside area of Guangdong province. Composer Chen Yi also utilized a similar fishing song in her *The Fisherman's Song* for violin and piano in 1980 and a recording of this can be found in the Naxos Music Library.[75]

Chinese Literature

Chinese literature is an essential element from which composers drew inspiration for their music. In ancient China, literati wrote poems to express their feelings. They typically used words depicting nature and scenery as the vehicle to express their emotions. This metaphoric use of nature was widely prevalent at that time. For example, a classical poem, *The End of the Sky*, written by Li Shangyin (李商隐) from the Tang Dynasty and translated by Xu Yuanchong (许渊冲), used the sun and birds to express his feelings.

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[74] Ibid, violin part, 29.

[75] Yi Chen, "The Fisherman's Song for Violin and Piano" in *Pieces & Passages*, perfomed by Scott Conklin and Alan Huckleberry, released January 1, 2015, Albany: TROY1546, accessed April 25, 2022, Naxos Music Library. https://wisc-naxosmusiclibrary-com.ezproxy.library.wisc.edu/embedded/player/work?s=4167401.

The End of the Sky
Li Shangyin
Spring is far, far away
Where the sun slants its ray,
If orioles have tear,
Wet highest flowers here![76]

The first two verses set a gloomy feeling, and the tear in the second half indicates more emotions. Even though there is no word to directly express sadness, readers can get the emotion from the metaphor. Thus, all things in nature could be a symbol to express emotions. Musicians were inspired by these classical poems and their structures as they composed their violin music.

The classical poem structure typically used a four-phrase structure, and each phrase used a fixed number of words, such as five syllables or characters per phrase. This four-phrase structure is also widely used in Chinese folk tunes. In this four-phrase structure, each phrase is called qi, cheng, zhuan, and he. Their meaning corresponds to exposition, continuation, mutation, and summation.[77] According to the explanation of the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, the four phrases have the following functions. The first phrase serves as the introduction. The second extends the first phrase and leads to a cadence. The third slightly changes the theme by using a new mode to create a temporary feeling of instability. The

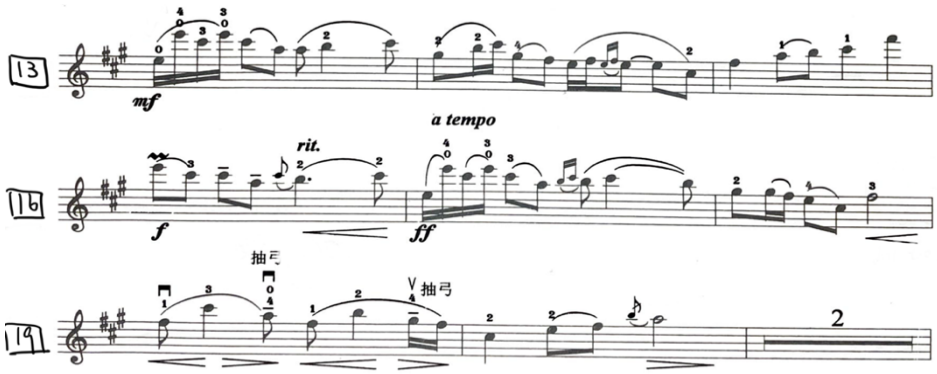
[76] Yuanchong Xu, trans., *Tang shi san bai shou* [300 Tang Poems: Classified by Theme], 48.

[77] Jianzhong Qiao, "Folk Song in China," in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 7 - East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea*,192.

fourth is a general conclusion, bringing the whole together, echoing the second phrase, and thus completing the entire tune.

The theme of *Fisherman's Harvest Song* is an eight-bar phrase melody that connects with the classical four-phrase structure, qi/exposition, cheng/continuation, zhuan/mutation and he/summation (see figure 3.14). Each phrase has two bars. The first phrase, measures thirteen and fourteen, is the introduction to present the musical idea around E, the fifth of A major. The contour goes up and down like the sea waves. Li uses a big leap going up, an octave of E, and thirds going down to draw the contour. The second phrase is a continuation of the first phrase. Starting from F#, Li uses thirds and a perfect fourth going to a peak F#. The third phrase begins like the first phrase but changes to lead the last phrase. The fourth phrase completes the entire tune and ends on the tonic, A major.

Figure 3.14. Theme of *Fisherman's Harvest Song*, mm 13-20



[78]

[78] Zili Li, *Li Zili xiao ti qin qu ji* [Li Zili's Violin Work Collection], violin part, 28.

Chinese Instruments

Chinese instruments have always been widely used as the accompaniment both in traditional operas and also in other traditional speaking and singing arts. Some of these Chinese instruments include erhu/the two-stringed fiddle, dizi/the bamboo flute, zheng/the plucked zither, and pipa/the four-stringed plucked lute. Traditional operas and other speaking and singing arts were popular and common entertainment in Chinese people's lives. Composers heard these performances when they were young, and some of them could play these traditional instruments. For example, as chapter two describes, Li Zili played two-stringed fiddles when he was in a performance troupe. Many composers found inspiration from Chinese instrumental music and applied this in their compositions.

One typical Chinese instrument is known as the zheng, the plucked zither (see figure 3.15). It was the accompaniment instrument for dancing or singing in ancient China. In the 1950s, zheng artists developed more advanced techniques and composed various pieces; then the zheng started to develop as a solo instrument. The modern zheng has sixteen to twenty-one strings which are supported by movable bridges and are tuned as an anhemitonic pentatonic scale.[79] Because of its construction, harp-like arpeggios and pentatonic scales can easily be played on it.

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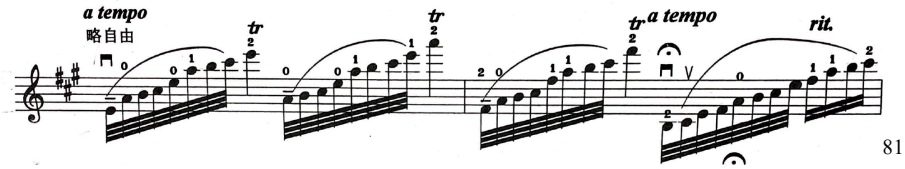
[79] "Instruments: Zheng," in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 7 - East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea*, 210.

Figure 3.15. Zheng Professor Sun Wenyan at a masterclass in 2020

 [80]

For example, in *Fisherman's Harvest Song*, the sixteenth notes form a harp-like pentatonic scale to imitate the sound of the plucked zither (see figure 3.16). The trills of quarter notes also imitate the tremolo sound of the plucked zither. Under *a tempo*, the Chinese character indicates the music is to be played with freedom.

Figure 3.16. *Fisherman's Harvest Song*, mm 37-38



[81]

Composers also have received inspiration from the wind instrument, dizi. The dizi is a side-blown bamboo flute (see figure 3.17). As previously described, Yang Baozhi transcribed the bamboo flute piece, *The Joyful Reunion*, for violin and piano. The bamboo flute techniques and musical styles mostly divide into two distinct traditions: the southern and

[80] Sun Wenyan Masterclass: The art of Zheng in Shanghai and Zhejiang style, accessed March 1, 2022, https://www.shcmusic.edu.cn/2020/1212/c1684a37131/page.htm.

[81] Zili Li, *Li Zili xiao ti qin qu ji* [Li Zili's Violin Work Collection], violini part, 29.

northern schools.[82] The music of the southern school is slow and expressive. The ornaments are predominantly mordents, trills, and appoggiaturas. In contrast, the music of the northern school has a rapid tempo with brilliant techniques including glissando, tremolo, flutter-tonguing, and double-and triple-tonguing. Some trills and flutter-tonguing are similar to the sound of birds. *The Joyful Reunion* is an example of the northern school tradition. In the next section, examples will show how composers skillfully use violin techniques to match the brilliant sound of the bamboo flute.

Figure 3.17. Shanghai Chinese Orchestra bamboo flute player, Qian Jun

 [83]

Sound Effects/Gestures

In Chinse traditional music, both in operas and instrumental music, glissando is widely used to express a broad range of emotions. Glissando connects the notes and creates various

[82] Frederick Lau, "Instruments: Dizi and Xiao," in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 7 - East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea*, 222.

[83] "Qian Jun, Bamboo flute soloist" Shanghai Chinese Orchestra, accessed March 1, 2022, https://www.shchineseorchestra.com/musician/qianjun/.

gestures, presenting the musical styles of different regions. Glissando can start from a lower note and go higher or vice versa. Also, the length and the speed of a glissando can vary depending on the music. In the notation, two kinds of writing indicate the direction of the glissandi (see figure 3.18). In the first line, the curved arrow and diagonal slash going up indicate the note slide from the lower note to the higher note. In the second line, the curved arrow and diagonal slash going down indicate the note slide from the higher note to the lower note.

Figure 3.18. Glissandi marking

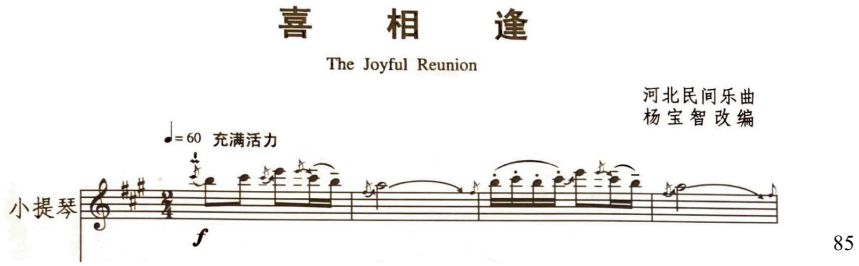
[84]

The Joyful Reunion uses gestures typical of music of the northern region. The musical style is bold, energetic and a bit humorous. The glissando in *The Joyful Reunion* functions to express these characteristics to match the sound of the bamboo flute. The first four measures of figure 3.19 include curved arrows in two directions. These markings indicate the glissando sliding up and down. In this example, the interval of glissando is a minor third. In measure one, the glissando slides from C# up to E then goes back to C#, and in measure two, F# slides up to A then goes back to F#. These glissandi create a gesture to connect the notes in order to

[84] Baozhi Yang, *Zhong guo xiao ti qin du zou qu xuan* [Selected Chinese Violin Works], 158.

make the music lively and joyful. The speed of the slide depends on the rhythmic patten. For example, the speed of the glissando in measure two should be slower than that of measure one because the length of the half note in measure two is longer than the eighth note and the sixteenth note in measure one. Also in measures 1-4, in general, the slide going up is faster than the slide going down.

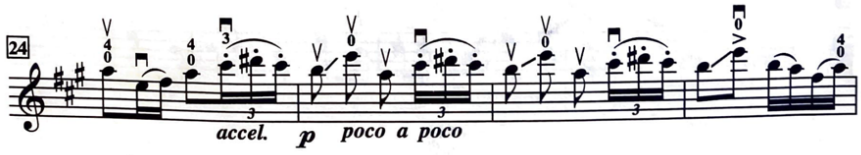
Figure 3.19. *The Joyful Reunion*, mm 1-4



[85]

The diagonal slash also indicates a kind of glissando which is faster and lighter than the curved arrow. In measure twenty-five of *The Joyful Reunion*, the diagonal slash mark between B and harmonic E indicates a perfect fourth glissando, which is a gesture to connect the two notes (see figure 3.20), a fast glissando to reach harmonic E as a grace note.

Figure 3.20. *The Joyful Reunion,* mm 24-27

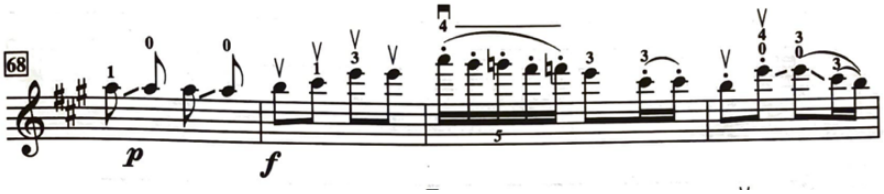


[86]

[85] Ibid, 3.
[86] Ibid, violin part, 3.

In addition to having a minor third or a perfect fourth glissando between two notes, the interval can also be an octave or a perfect fifth. In measure sixty-eight, the diagonal slash between A on the E string and harmonic A on the A string is an octave glissando that connects two different tones of A to create more color in this phrase (see figure 3.21).

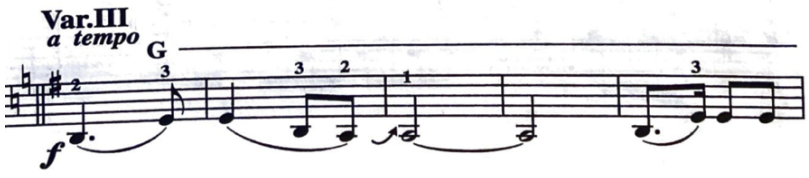
Figure 3.21. *The Joyful Reunion*, mm 68-71



[87]

In figure 3.22, the gesture, a curved arrow before A on the G string indicates a slow glissando from lower G# to A. Even though there is no exact note indicated for the grace note, the fingering and the direction of the curved arrow are the clues to indicate how it should be played. The function here is to insert a grace note between two pitches which are the same. The gesture is more important than the pitch of the lower note to A.

Figure 3.22. *The Joyful Reunion*, mm 97-101



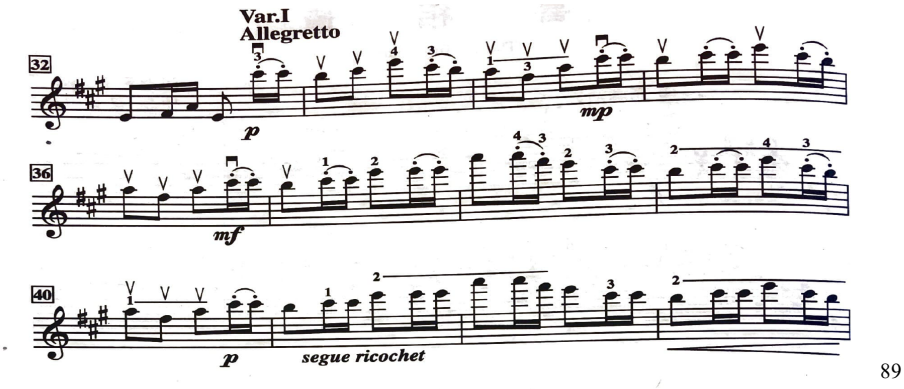
[88]

In addition to glissando, ricochet is a useful sound effect in Chinese traditional music, especially in fast tempo. Ricochet on the violin can imitate the sound of double-tonguing on

[87] Ibid, 5.
[88] Ibid.

the bamboo flute. The short and active sound aids the pace of the music to lean forward (see figure 3.23).

Figure 3.23. *The Joyful Reunion*, mm 33-40



[89]

In figure 3.24, measure 160 is an example to imitate the flutter-tonguing of the bamboo flute. In this case, the bow hand needs to do the ricochet and the left hand does a glissando with the bow in tempo to keep the clear sound so that it can imitate the leggiero flutter tonguing of the bamboo flute. This is yet one more example of how applying violin techniques to imitate the sound of Chinese instruments is commonly used in Chinese violin compositions.

Figure 3.24. *The Joyful Reunion*, mm 158-162

[90]

[89] Ibid, violin part, 4.
[90] Ibid, violin part, 7.

Chapter 4. Conclusion

The history of the violin in China has gone through exploration and development since the violin first arrived into China in the mid-seventeenth century. Chinese composers have experimented with different kinds of music on the violin and formed a unique style that applies indigenous Chinese elements in compositions. Chinese violin music not only fuses Chinese and Western cultures, it also observes its own aesthetic and philosophy. The four representative composers and their works examined in this study reflect these characteristic features. *Tough Journey* expresses Li Siguang's concern about the future of his country and integrates a Chinese classical poem. Ma Sicong's *Rondo No.1* and Li Zili's *Fisherman's Harvest Song* utilize folk tunes. Yang Baozhi has ingeniously transcribed the music originally conceived for Chinese instruments for performance on violin and piano. From knowing nothing about the violin in the mid-seventeenth century, to creating Chinese-style violin compositions in the early twentieth century, has been a tremendous step.

Chinese music from the twentieth century often incorporates folk melodies and the concise formal structures common to them. Folk tunes, which were transmitted orally for many generations, constitute part of the cultural heritage of the people of China and its various regions. Not surprisingly, Chinese composers embraced folk music as an effective means both to communicate deeply with the Chinese people and to introduce Westerners to a vital component of Chinese music and culture. Reflecting the values of the folk material that

inspired it, Chinese violin music from the twentieth century favors forms that are concise and uncomplicated. The longest of the four violin pieces discussed in this study, *Fishermen's Harvest Song*, lasts only about six minutes in performance.

The harmony in Chinese violin music from that time period is mainly as the accompaniment to support the melody. Instead of applying functional harmonies for the key and color changes in Western music, Chinese music focuses on melodic phrasing more than on the harmony. Chinese folk tunes and instrumental music are mainly monophonic. Musicians skillfully improvise by adding ornaments to the folk tunes to decorate the melody in performances. In Chinese ensembles, tutti plays the melody together, and then instruments will alternate as the soloist to play the same melody with different ornaments. Ornaments enrich and freshen the tune and complete it with the original folk tune like a theme and variations. As previously noted, like the form of *The Joyful Reunion*, variation form is commonly used in Chinese music. For the key modulation, composers use the pivot note of the melody to modulate into a new key. Thus, the melody serves as the dominant function in Chinese violin music in the twentieth century.

Chinese violin music reflects the social and historical background of the time. For example, Li Siguang's *Tough Journey* reflects the May Fourth Movement. He used music to express his emotions about what he was seeing and hearing. Yang Baozhi and Li Zili were influenced by nationalism. After the People's Republic of China was established in 1949, the

ideal was to reestablish the home and increase national cohesion, and Chinese musicians hoped to engage with Chinese nationalistic music. These musicians hoped that composing nationalistic music was a way to connect closely with the Chinese people.

In the mid-twentieth century, one of the most successful achievements of nationalistic music was *The Butterfly Lovers' Violin Concerto* for violin and symphony orchestra, composed by Chen Gang and He Zhanhao in 1959. This concerto is based on an ancient Chinese legend, a tragic love story, and the melody is transcribed from a traditional Yue opera, which was originally from Jangsu province. Similar to compositional techniques in *The Joyful Reunion*, composers use folk tunes, glissandi, rolling chords, and ricochet to express various characteristics in their musical language, imitating the articulation of traditional Chinese opera and Chinese instruments. As explained, Chinese violin music has been influenced by Chinese instrumental music. Quite surprisingly, in turn, with *The Butterfly Lovers' Violin Concerto*, because of its typical Chinese features, beautiful melody, and dramatic story, composers have transcribed it for Chinese instruments such as the erhu/the two stringed-fiddle and pipa/the four-stringed plucking lute.

Thus, in future research, one main objective should be focusing on how Chinese instrumental composers have been inspired by violin repertoires. The interaction and fusion between Eastern and Western elements create unique and characteristic works, broadly expanding the repertoire for musicians. What started long ago with the introduction of one

violin has spread over time to multiple musical outcomes. This creativity and fusion of musical traditions will hopefully continue to flourish and inspire.

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