

# ***"Non-verbal Language": Analysis of the Musical Discourse of the Film Lust, Caution***

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**Abstract:** Ang Lee's film *Lust, Caution* blends romance, suspense, politics and spy war. Despite its complicated and braided storylines, the camera shots, movements and dialogues in it are rather simple and concise. Music has become a non-verbal discourse through which a myriad of unexpressed inner thoughts is subtly conveyed. Its original scores are classical compositions which created a sorrowful, obscure, heavy atmosphere and depicted a dark, damp, depressing, lustful, chaos and hopeless scene through the colorful orchestration and counterpoint technique.

## **1. Introduction**

*Lust, Caution*, a film directed by Ang Lee in 2007, is now considered a classic in film's history, especially the ingenious subtlety and delicacy of its music is still worth studying after more than a decade. The film starring Tony Leung, Tang Wei and Chen Chong is based on a novel by Eileen Chang, telling the story of a young intellectual woman Wong Chia Chi who disguises herself as Mrs. Mak attempting to seduce and assassinate Yee Mo Cheng, an important official in the collaborationist government led by Wong Jingwei, and their tempestuous stories in terms of politics, power, and sex. After its release, it received a great deal of praise by winning the Golden Lion Award at the 64th Venice-Film Festival and the Best Asian Film at the 27th Hong Kong Film Awards. The soundtrack also won the Best Original Film Music Award at the 44nd Golden Horse Awards in 2007 and the Best Original Music Award at the 2nd Asian Film Awards in 2008.

The existing studies on the music of the film mainly focus on its composition and aesthetics, while there is a need for insightful explanation and in-depth analysis of it. From the perspective of its musical discourse, this article explains the musical connotation and tension through the overall analysis of the music style and both score and underscore music in order to obtain a multi-dimensional perception of the artistic charm of the film.

## **2. The music style of Lust, Caution**

### **2.1 Composers with classical composing ideology**

The film score of *Lust, Caution* is composed by French composer Alexandre Desplat, a prolific

and multi-award-winning film composer. Desplat's distinctive style has led him to score more than 100 films, from Oscar hits *The Shape of Water*, *The King's Speech*, *Argo*, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, to *Fantastic Mr. Fox*, *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, and *Isle of Dogs* with Wes Anderson. He has been nominated for the Academy Award for Best Original Score eight times and won several Golden Globes, Grammy Awards and the César Awards.

Desplat brings Western classical music ideology into his compositions, infusing the elegance and rationality of classical music into his film music compositions. His works have a unique quality, spanning a wide variety of style choosing different instruments to subtly depict details and emotions for individual films. The instruments that are rarely used in orchestra, such as Mandolin, accordion, vibraphone, harp, and bass flute, now become the lead instruments in his film scores. His expertise in orchestration enables him to master the characteristics of each musical instruments. By using ethnic musical instruments from around the world, his composition developed a classical music with the feature of modern music.

Desplat believes that great film score may enable people to see a magnified life on delicate things, to discover the subtle feelings from big events, and guide the audience to see what they would have not been able to see clearly. When speaking of the inspiration of his composition, he said, "The image tells the story. Behind it there is not feelings, and I hope that could be expressed through the score".

## 2.2 Meaningful language of music

*Lust, Caution* is a film that requires the audience to watch it multiple times to look further for its meaning and implication, otherwise for some of us it only means a story with complicated plot. While the lust and assassination are what we see at first sight of this film, it is competition between humanity and desire that lies at the core. Ang Lee once said: It's hard to define *Lust, Caution*. I hope it could be a meticulous exploration of humanity<sup>[1]</sup>. Ang Lee deliberately hid a great number of clues in it, some of which are so well-concealed that only by seeking for those scattered details can the mystery be solved gradually. *Lust, Caution* also leaves some space at certain point for imagination and reflection within which more details would be found through reexamining it and deductive reasoning.

As such a profound and sophisticated film, the music language needs to be exquisite to integrate with it and add variation and power to its artistic expression. While the dialogue can convey the implicit emotions of the characters, a sophisticated soundtrack may help to express the unspeakable manifold tangles of love and desire which directly point to human nature<sup>[2]</sup>. This effect has perfectly achieved in the scores by Desplat achieves this effect, and he perfectly creates the musical feeling that Ang Lee wants. The music envelops the entire film, with vibraphone, harp, piano and strings combining to reveal the unique light and shadow of the era. Horror, temptation, mystery, entanglement, thrill and desire are all full of tension.

Music in the film not only plays the role of the score, but also, for the sound designer, it is a 'non-verbal language' that can reveal many connotations<sup>[3]</sup>. In the film's intertwined love and lust and assassination, music becomes a second language. The unspoken emotions, inner torment, entanglements, contradictions, tears and laments all flow slowly in the mood of the music.

Desplat visited Shanghai specifically when he was scoring for *Lust, Caution*, and he believed it is a city that inspires artists. He once said, "Shanghai, an increasingly modern metropolis with the Paris-like romantic mood, has evoked my imagination of *Lust, Caution*." The inspiration and mood he experienced are reflected in the film scores, in which oriental style and classical romance combined with each other and a historical painting scroll of music is gradually unfolded. It has an overall tone of depression, since the more depressed the theme of the film is – such as sex, undercover, death, dangerous and other else – the better it fits the content of the film. The entire film has 36 scores, each of which is appropriately helped to enrich and complement the film, instead of being pretentious and

overblown, to focus on the characters and the story itself.

### 2.3 Emotional atmosphere of sorrow

The soundtrack is titled *Lust, Caution* which is the same as the movie's; after slowly getting insight into this movie, the audience may notice that what it includes are more than the title tells. During that era dominated by wars, turbulence, and strife, in the face of intertwinement of intense filial piety and patriotism, every individual seemed small and powerless, and human nature is distorted and struggling under the background of that era, all of which, along with the conflict and tension between sensibility and rationality, cannot be fully expressed by the single word of "caution". The hero and heroine of the film, Mr. Yee and Wong Chia Chi, were acting at first then end up falling in love. Their love-hate relationship, the task and the feelings cannot be simply carried by the word of "lust". The music uses polyphonic texture to create multiple layers, where the themes, backgrounds, and rhythms are all contribute to depict the fate and destiny of the characters.

Instead of a point-to-point approach to forming the relation between the music and image, Desplat used emotional music to create a basic tone for the movie. He precisely expressed an atmosphere of tragedy with a sense of suspense and the aching beauty with a hint of sorrow, which lingers densely in many scenes as applying a makeup foundation for the film. The theme of the music is primarily played by strings, piano, vibraphone, harp, flute, and other major instruments. The melody of it, which generally appears as the repetition of short motifs evoking a feeling of pleasantly cool when raindrops dripping on the heart, is light and translucent with some implied throbbing and uneasiness. The basslines played by the strings are primarily sustained long notes, casting a shroud of unease and sorrow over the sentiment of the main characters. The melody played by piano, harp and violins in the treble register evokes the soft touch on the heart, while the aggressive darkness will eventually drown the hope. The tremolo effect by vibraphone, the tone color of which sometimes is bright, sometimes dim, expresses a sense of tender but prim and proper, evoking the disillusionment of trading on thin ice or a flying moth darts into the fire.

The charm in Desplat's composition lies in the power to deliver the immersive experience through the music and dialogue, deepening the emotional resonance of the audience. Even the score for the non-dialogue scenes is deeply affecting, leaving the endless echo strikes a chord with the audience. In addition, the soundtrack is sometimes a language with artistic conception, which indicating the multiple desires and melancholy that are deep inside of the characters.

### 3. Underscore music: supporting the inner meaning

Underscore music, or music without sound source, is the music that cannot be seen and felt from the image and does not have an original sound source<sup>[4]</sup>. It is an expression, in a more profound way, which is behind the explicit to convey complex and unspeakable emotions, and to support the inner meaning. It is the 23 sessions of non-diegetic music that most reflected the composer's pursuit for artistic conception and developed a deeper relationship of homogeneity with the film.

#### 3.1 The title music: *Lust, Caution*

With the scene of swinging light circle projected on the blue background accompanied by two heavy, long notes by the strings, the film starts the narrative of a story that lies in the shadows. Following that, a descending two-note motif in the low register, a seemingly sigh from the deepest part of the heart or a prelude to the entire piece, silently come in, bringing in a tragic tone as the monochrome tonal rendering in a painting. The section after that is a three major part harmony with dim, long notes in the low register, a bitter melody, which implies the endless pain from the heart, in

a minor key by violin in the middle voice, and the melody by vibraphone in the first voice, where the trembling timbre creating an impression of a flickering light in the darkness, seemingly dazzling but then vanish into the eternal night.

After the opening credits, the main acts of the film begin with a close-up shot of a guard dog, then the vigilant security around Mr. Yee's house and the drivers chatting and smoking outside the front door, along with the two or three women shopping for groceries from street vendors, forming a scene in which politics and daily life are intertwined. With the music accompaniment continuing, the thickness of murderous atmosphere is reflected on that series of shots, where the feeling of suspense and horror is diffused in the anxiety and intensity.

Although the piece of music "Lust, Caution" (Lust, Caution) in the original soundtrack is only over a minute, it contains many important elements, such as the color, texture, atmosphere, and style of the entire film's scores, all of which have been revealed in it. This segment of music, with delicate levels and a strong sense of color, lays the groundwork of the tone and atmosphere for the entire film, serving as an introduction which contains the materials and motifs of multiple pieces of music in the film, and it appears repeatedly in the narrative of the film. Two contradictory emotions are involved in this piece, and this opposition is mainly expressed by the musical texture of polyphony, in which the contrast between different voices implies the relationship between Wong Chia Chi and Mr. Yee. In the movie, the participation and the connotation of this segment can be heard at critical moments in the development of their relationship.

For example, when Wong Chia Chi and Mr. Yee are in the tailor shop, Wong is intended to take off the cheongsam she just tried on, while Yee says, "keep it on" and the music began to play. The music here is basically derived from the material of the title, with a slight change on the orchestration becoming more soothing in the mood than it of the title. It fades out until the scene of the western restaurant where Wong Chia Chi and Mr. Yee started to dine. It is the scene that unveils their complicated relationship, and their story of love and hatred then begins to stage. In this section, the timbre of the vibraphone still gives an image of a dim glimmering of flame, which is illusory and unreal, but illuminate the night sky. After the long-lasting lament of the cello melody, the violin following that gives a melodic response, with the comparison of high and low, bright, and dark, the music become a discourse, reflecting the relationship between the hero and the heroine.

In the film score of *Moonlight Drive*, the progression and material of the minor melody played by the strings are somewhat similar to *Lust, Caution*. The harp melody flowing under that, along with the bright moon in the sky, shows the tenderness and romance of *Moonlight* in the style of Debussy. The tentative conversation between Wong Chia Chi and Mr. Yee in the car is somewhat absurd and funny. This unprofessional behavior they showed in Hong Kong was more pretending to be seductive and frivolous instead of heavy to all appearances.

Another example is that when Wong Chia Chi is in the car on her way to Mr. Yee's apartment on a rainy day, the drops of rain pounding on the window, and the moist air is filled with gloomy and intrigue atmosphere. At this time, *Lust and Caution* music swells, starting with the sound of plucking harp which is followed the melody by the strings with a sense of trepidation and sadness, in which the two lines which symbolize the different inner thoughts of Wong and Yee. The light sound of staccato by the harp seemed like Wong Chia Chi's heartbeat in panic. When she walks into the apartment seeing the dusty room which is eerie and horrific, the harp plucking music beats rhythmically, as if we could hear her breathing nervously.

### 3.2 The music of "Wong Chia Chi" theme

In addition to *Lust, Caution*, "Wong Chia Chi" theme has also appeared more than once and performed an important function of narrative. This piece is written in a minor mode with a melody

starts with an anacrusis, featuring the lingering and melodic phrases, the clear and concise harmony, the regular rhythm, and the rather slow tempo. The entire piece contains three different paragraphs that are developed from a material.

Example 1:



The melody above was composed in a particularly basic way: the tonic goes up a minor third and then falls back to the tonic. The whole segment is the repetition of this third minor motif, as an anxious mood swinging back and forth restlessly, in which the progression of minor third sounds dark and sad.

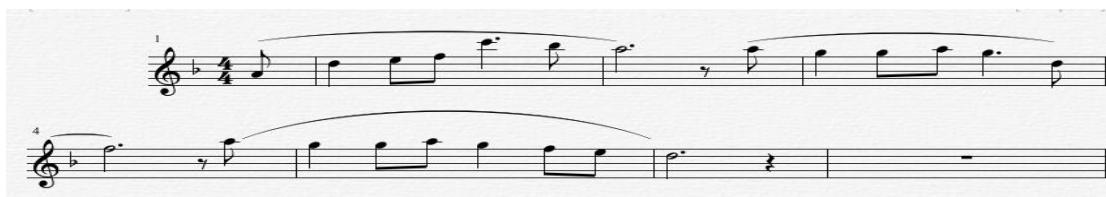
This material appears repeatedly at the decisive moments of Wong Chia Chi's mental activities. Sometimes it is played by the strings, sometimes by the piano; either alone or in combination with other passages; sometimes as the major voice, sometimes as an accompaniment part. The first appearance is when Wong Chia Chi and Lai Xiujin are chatting during the trip of school's relocation to Hong Kong. It begins with the piano, when the scene is switched to the school in Hong Kong, string voices starts to carry the smooth melody. Another time is when Wong Chia Chi receives a farewell call from Mrs. Yee saying the family is planning to return to Shanghai, the music starts, bringing out her mixed feelings of disappointment and forlornness.

Example 2:



The second paragraph is composed of two descending second motifs and an ascending second interval, which is repeated once to form a musical phrase, then the phrase is repeated three times to form a musical passage in which the emotion is gradually increased in each repetition. This piece had exhibits multiple times as an important material in the film, with slightly distinctions in the emotions of the different scenes through variations. It also closely related to the melody in some other passages, featuring the rapid repetition of the second-degree descending pattern which expresses nervousness and anxiety.

Example 3:



The material above is the climax of Wong Chia Chi theme music. This section with rather large leaps, which starts from a skip in a rising melody, forms a contrast with the small changes of example 1 and 2. The first time of it appeared in full length is in the scene of the tram that students are taking to return to the college after their big success of stage performance. The students are all delightfully reveling with each other, while Wong Chia Chi sticks her hand out of the window experiencing the raindrops falling on the palm. With the joy of secret love with Kuang Yumin, the music starts to swell.

After that, when Wong Chia Chi let go of Mr. Yee, she walks out of a jewelry store taking a tricycle, which is the time that the faint striking sound by vibraphone accompany with the velvet-like long notes by the strings as the background, combining with the scene of whirling windmill on the tricycle, the piano starts the music of *The Angle*. This music is basically the musical development of example 3 and example 1 and technically a variation of Wong Chia Chi theme music. At this time, it is muddled

and blank in her mind while the background of the strings is becoming clearer, then gradually starts competing with the leadline by the piano. With the addition of the strings, the music of piano progress toward being weaker and weaker to an extent that when the road, in the scene, is blocked, the noisy sound of the environment almost drowns the music. When the tricycle stops and a woman on the street yells to go home to cook, Wong Chia Chi take out the medicine hidden under the collar, and that is where the music plays again. The picture in her mind while she is pondering calls back the memories of being persuaded by her fellow students to join the small group in the college three years ago. Then the music is interrupted by a knock on the door when Mr. Yee is leaning on the door smoking.

As the closing credit rolling on the screen, Wong Chia Chi theme music is performed in its full length. To begin with, the strings play the first segment (example 1), within which there are four measures function as an intro. The second paragraph by the piano (example 2) is light and dazzling, which is contributed by the clear and translucent timbre of piano. The strings, following that, add a layer of murky sound effect in the low register with short motifs of harp occasionally interspersing throughout the piece. As the music is progressing forward, the background layer of the strings depicts increasing restiveness. The cello melody in the low range echoes the lead melody of the piano, creating a musical development in a discursive way. The texture of the music is becoming thicker with multiple layers including the quick, plucking sound of harp, the striking sound of the vibraphone, the heavy sound of the winds, and also the sound of piano which is wrapped in other lines and continues to develop. At the end, the music becomes dimmer until it slowly fades out.

“Wong Chia Chi” them music provides a sense of anxiety from the hidden bitterness and the lingering resentment: the lines by the piano in the high range is light and translucent, embodying her image of an innocent and virtuous college student. She lives cautiously in the world, but she was constantly being carried forward by the strings, sinking into the torrent of history and the whirlpool of death. This piece of music is played whenever Wong Chia Chi has an intense mental activity.

Many musical sections in the movie are closely connected to “Wong Chia Chi” them, which sometimes is in a way of changing and developing some of the selected materials, where the piano melody swings gently from the beginning to the end, symbolizing the state of Wong Chia Chi who is cautiously hiding her secret lies. Her nature of longing for freedom seems naive and powerless in front of the strong sense of inescapable fatalism represented by the music of the strings. The piano lines portray a naive young girl, while the strings epitomize the ruthless and impermanence of the era, and eventually the piano fades away within the strings, leaving a mournful sigh in the air. Wong Chia Chi theme music perfectly expressed the tragic atmosphere in the film with poignant and tragic in its beauty. The music touches the heart seemingly like a warm candle flame flickering in the darkness which is weak but exceptionally touchy.

### 3.3 Other representative background music

In addition to the repetition of *Lust*, *Caution* and *Wong Chia Chi Theme*, the score also includes some of characteristic passages which is full of delicate and ingenious ideas and designs, playing an important role in creating the overall atmosphere for the film and smoothly advancing the plot.

*Shanghai 1942*, accompanying with the series of scenes of from and citizens lining up to receive relief food on the street where is filled with victims suffering from starvation and the deceased in the days from 1939 in Hong Kong to 1942 in Shanghai three years. In this piece, the violin plays a few repeated melodies with descending second in tremolo, which are stern and sharp, forming a two-voice polyphony with heavy timbre of the cello. The two lines are intertwined and respond to each other, both pathetic and touching, depicting a miserable and tragic scene. The cello represents a huge torrent of the era, while the melody by the violin represents Wong Chia Chi, implying the helplessness and



sorrow as she is being pushed forward to walk with the times. A few of faintly plucking sound of the harp in the background of the music symbolize the heartbeat sound, and the heart is possibly the only thing that is still beating weakly in the insensible body.

*Dinner Waltz* first appears in the film when Wong and Yee are on a date in a restaurant. From the information revealed in the film, the date lasted more than half a day: from the lunch to the dinner, they talk from day to night. The background music at the beginning is Brahms' *Intermezzo in A major*, then when it turns to the scene of the waiter lighting candles, the background music switches to *Dinner Waltz*. It sounds like Brahms' work in temperament so that you may not notice the switch of music.

The second appearance was after the presentation of Wang Jiazhi's theme at the end of the film. At this time, the end of the film just scrolled to the music producer information. This time it is in the form of a piano and string ensemble (Traffic Quintet). The piano lead plays the melody of the high part, the music is soothing and beautiful, and the string group responds with a polytonic melody in the low part. The similarity with "*Wong Chia Chi*" Theme is that the piano part is still fresh and tactful, while the string music is thick and deep. The piano sometimes jumps off during the music and is sometimes overwhelmed by the heavy sound of strings. The clear rhythm of the three beats evokes a sense of dancing and flying. The beautiful phrases are intoxicating, as if to think of Wong Chia Chi sitting on a tram amidst the rain, basking in the happiness of simplicity. Her fate is reminiscent of this waltz, leaving behind lingering waves of ripples in Yee's heart at the song's end.

The second appearance of it comes after the presentation of "*Wong Chia Chi*" Theme at the end of the film, when the credits roll right into the music producer's message. This time it is in the form of Traffic Quintet. The lead piano plays the melody in the upper register, which is soothing and beautiful; the string section responds to it with a polyphonic melody in the lower register. The similarity between *Dinner Waltz* and "*Wong Chia Chi*" Theme lies in the piano part which is still fresh and melodic, while the strings are heavy and muffle. During the musical progression, sometimes the piano's melody is vibrant and witty, and sometimes it is overpowered by the thick and heavy sound of the strings. The triple meter has a sense of groove distinctively, with a desire to dance or even fly. The beauty of the phrases is intoxicating, picturing the images of Wong Chia Chi sitting on a tram with rain falling outside the window. She is delighted and simple, whereas her fate is somehow equivalent to this waltz which will eventually end and leaves only waves of ripples reverberating in Yee's heart.

#### 4. Score music: participate in the explicit narrative

Score music, or music with sound source: The original sound source of the music appears in the content of the event represented on the screen, so that the audience can see the existence of the sound source while hearing the sound of the music. The diegetic music participates in the development of plot, on the one hand, it sets off the contexts of the era, enhances the sense of the past, and highlights the narrative in the scene; on the other hand, it enriches the audio-visual experience of the film and plays a role in shaping the characters, which is a broadly diversified section of the soundtrack. In this film, there are about 13 pieces of diegetic music including *Graduation Song*, *Dadao March*, *Flowering Shadows* and *the daughters of fisherman* (sung by Zhou Xuan). These pieces of music are closely connected to the narrative of the film and appropriately lead the plot to move forward. In the following segment, we will take three representative pieces of music as examples and focus on their roles and meanings in the film.

##### 4.1. Brahms' *Intermezzo in A major*

In the western restaurant "the dishes are too unpalatable and there are no customers, but it is a great place to talk", Wong Chia Chi who is innocent but pretends to be feminine and Mr. Yee who is

sly and cunning first contact separately, and the live piano music in the restaurant has been endless. This is one of the few bright and beautiful music composed in a major key in the soundtrack which is dominated by the minor. In this scene, the young piano accompanist is just posing. The real player is French pianist Alain Planes, who specially recorded the piece for *Lust, Caution*.

*Intermezzo in A major* (Op118, No. 2) is a bagatelle by Brahms that is the closet to his inner world in his later years, and it is also a rare artistic gem of Romanticism. The work perfectly blends the rigorous Classicism spirit with the Romantic atmosphere, reaching a very mature state in terms of technique and content. Compared with his early and middle age of works, there is less enthusiasm, more tranquility and sadness, and the overall style is more depressing and sorrowful. The poignancy of the *Intermezzo in A major* is said to be something that could be performed only by an elderly pianist. Based on the piano theme composed by this intermezzo, the composer Alexander calmly built Wong Chia Chi's rebellion step by step. Every time when the "love" takes a step deeper, the piano music started to play. "When it comes to appearance and lust, love is the only way"; this is Li Ang's solution to the story of *Lust, Caution*.

The piece adopts a 3/4 time signature showing a distinct sense of operation in a regular pattern, which is suitable for the ambiguous atmosphere in the restaurant where two people immersing themselves and enjoying this atmosphere. The music naturally creates a romantic feeling in the fancy restaurant, and the sentimental music is compatible with the overall tone of the film. In this extremely significant conversation between Wong and Yee, in the face of the pretended flirtation, Yee shows a rare ease since he has been clear with Wong's life through a seemingly random talk. We could tell from Wong's eyes that she feels panic and scared while she is pretending to be calm in response to Yee to tease and temptation. All of their expressions and looks has its inner meaning, showing the precise control of depicting details.

Desplat put a great effort into scoring the film by choosing a piano piece of great significance for this act. This piano music is not the usual salon seems to be easy and full of social atmosphere of pop music, it has depth and thickness, the temperament of the music is understated and introspective, not flashy, and not vulgar. The triple time of the music accompanying with the conversation between the two people completely achieved the effect of seemingly simple and relaxed with hidden mystery in the core.

#### 4.2. Suzhou Pingtan (a storytelling and ballad singing in the Suzhou dialect)

The scene where Suzhou Pingtan make its debut is that Wong Chia Chi and Mrs. Yee as well as other people going to the Chinese opera after shopping. At this time, Wong Chia Chi is preoccupied for not knowing how Mr. Yee will treat her, and the direction of their relationship will develop toward, so that she starts to feel flustered. That is when Yee appears in the scene saying he invited some ladies to appreciate Suzhou Pingtan in the next box. This Chinese opera is accompanied by the Suzhou Pingtan "The Adulteress" in the "I want to tell my heart, but end up saying nothing", where the aria is the best narration of this play:

Female: A concubine body is like cotton and silk,

Male: A boy who loves water and wants to break his soul.

Man: One said "please"

Female: One "um"

Female: The woman is not speaking anything but her heart is in a turmoil,

Men: The man who is deeply pretentious,

Woman: The woman's body is soften as cotton and silk,

Male: The man's love is so deep into his bones

M: The man says "please",



Woman: A man “hmm”.

This scene contains other deeper meanings. The women are always secretly fighting in the presence of Mr. Yee, as fascinating as the opening mahjong scene of the movie, which are familiar yet with a bit differences and is seemingly an entertainment but, in fact, a secret contest between all parties. Wong Chia Chi says that returning to Hong Kong was clearly for Mr. Yee, but Yee pretends not to know about that. The “her heart is in a turmoil” and “is deeply pretentious” are the vivid portrayal of Wong and Mr. Yee. The exquisiteness of music is that it not only conforms to the dignitaries of that era, but also adds the charm of the national style of the film. At the same time, it also uses this pingtan to exaggerate the feelings of the heroes and heroines, showing the idea of expression of oriental culture.

### 4.3. The Wandering Songstress

The song of *The Wandering Songstress* is an episode of the 1937 film *Angels on the Road*, written by Tian Han and He Luting, and sung by Zhou Xuan, a famous singer who is known as “Golden Voice” in the 1930s and 1940s. “The musical elements of the song were derived from a popular folk tune in Southern Jiangsu at that time, and the graceful and slightly sad melody rooted in the folk music, which is a perfect match for the life of the singer in the film<sup>[5]</sup>.”

Wong Chia Chi sang this song “The Wandering Songstress” for Mr. Yee in the Japanese Geisha Hall, which can be seen as a turning point of their feelings for each other covered by the story they have been acting, showing that Yee has genuine feelings for Wong. Their sexual pleasure is eventually reaching the foothold of emotional communication. They return to “their selves” through eroticism, and at this time they are just fearing and greedy man and woman.

The song has a distinctive ethnic style and consists of three verses. When Wong Chia Chi is singing the first verse, Yee is smoking a cigarette and listening to the song with pleasure. At the end of it, she sings “My darling, we have the same heart”. The second section sings “Looking north to my hometown mountain”, which is more sentimental than the first section. When it comes to “My darling, love through adversity is always deep”, it is easy to be moved and the eyes of the murdering devil turned red, and his hand holding the cigarette trembles slightly. The third section is the climax of the song. Yee is rather calculating, and always keep a straight face without any emotions showing on it, but when he heard “I am like thread, you are like a needle. My darling, we are held together, never to be apart”, he cannot help but having tears in the eyes. He wipes away the tears with his hand, then take Wong's hand and strokes it repeatedly. In fact, both of them are the wandering songstress, whose fate is drifting with the wind, and they have to bear up to perform the act of life.

The graceful sentiment sung by Wong Chia Chi in this piece of music is the rare emotional part of the film that expressed tenderness. From that the audience see the emotional collision between the hero and heroine as a man and a woman who were always acting and pretending, and see Mr. Yee put down his grudge against Wong Chia Chi, starting to trust her and like her. From the ambiguity in the early stage, the fierceness in the middle stage, to the calm and warmth in the later stage, Li Ang laid a delicate and complete love line between Wong and Yee.

## 5. Conclusion

The score of the film *Lust Caution* has played an indispensable role in atmosphere creation, implicit thoughts expression, plot promotion, etc. It is a very important component of the film and another unique artistic language besides dialogue and text. The music adds tension to the film's mysterious atmosphere, heavy tones, love and hatred, and family and country grudges. The composition technique is subtle and ingenious, and the creative style of classical music is supplemented by the use of colorful instruments. The music is rich in the texture, where the lead line

is melodic, the harmony is simple and plain. The overall characteristics of the music are inward, unobtrusive and unadulterated, controlling the danger and despair that is about to erupt.

The meaning and contradictions of music are mainly reflected by the organization of timbre and melody of different voices. The arrangement of polyphonic voices serves as multiple development clues of the film, which are juxtaposed and lingering from the degree of shallow to deep. The seduction shown on the surface and the inner attachment, the genuine love covered by the fake story, the fact that both sides evade and avoid, all of this is interwoven in the dialogues and responses of the musical voices, allowing the audience to immerse themselves and dance along with the plot. The touching musical language, coupled with the suppressed and distorted lust and struggle, allows the endless overtone to deeply touch the valve of tear deep in the heart of the audience, and is immersed in the film for a long time to be unable to release.

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