

# On "Chinese elements" in Western Piano Works

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**Abstract:** China has a long history of art development, and the art form has a unique "Chinese color". Under this condition, many Western Piano artists will refer to the "Chinese elements" in China's art works to create in order to have a broader artistic creation and make the piano works richer. This performance shows that "Chinese element" has a unique value in the field of piano art creation. In order to understand the specific performance of "Chinese element" in western piano works, this paper will carry out analysis work.

**Keywords:** The West; piano; Chinese elements

## 1. Introduction

According to historical data, the integration of "Chinese elements" and Western piano works originated from the role of the 18th century. At that time, because the development of local culture by Western Piano artists was close to saturation, the mysterious and profound oriental culture became the object explored by western artists, among which China was one of the more representative goals. In the long-term cultural integration, "Chinese elements" are embodied in many western piano works, mostly in the form of music art, but also related to China's traditional culture, humanistic spirit, classic deeds, etc., so the embodiment of "Chinese elements" has diversified characteristics.

## 2. The application of "Chinese musical elements" in Western Piano Works

### 2.1 Scale application of Chinese mode

In the basic theory of music, the tonal scale can be defined as the "skeleton" of music, while in the perspective of the tonal scale, western music and Chinese music are quite different, that is, the Western tonal scale is 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, while the Chinese tonal scale is Gong, Shang, Jiao, Zheng, Yu. This tonal scale has a pure five degree interval relationship (see Figure 1). The basic the basic tone is composed of big two and small three, unlike the semitone in the western scale. Under this condition, piano works based on Chinese pentatonic scale have appeared in the field of western music art for a long time. For example, Schubert's unfinished Sonata in C major embodies pentatonic scale, that is, the triad at the Ninth Section of the score is pentatonic scale, through which the Impressionism color of this section is more distinct. Perhaps because of the success of the unfinished Sonata in C major, more and more western pianists began to use the pentatonic scale in the subsequent western piano works, such as the modern qierpin piano etude of pentatonic, which was in the process of qierpin's Chinese tourism, through qierpin's personal experience and his wife's influence (qierpin's too much Tai is a Chinese). Through the exhibition of the pentatonic scale, it once again shows the charm of the Chinese pentatonic scale to the western music art field, and at the same time enriches the creative thinking of the pianists.



Figure 1 interval relations of pentatonic modes (Gong, Shang, Jiao, Zheng, Yu from left to right)

## 2.2 Rhythm application in China

Rhythm is also an integral part of any musical works, but musical works in different cultural backgrounds are slightly different in rhythm, while the rhythm of Chinese musical works is very unique. Some western composers thought that rhythm is one of the basic characteristics of Chinese music [2]. In essence, many Western pianists or musicians believe that the rhythm of Chinese music is stable and average, which shows the way of neutralization that China always adheres to. With the development of Chinese music, some pianists began to create with the rhythm of Chinese music. At the same time, they used this rhythm in their works to highlight the yearning for freedom in western culture. For example, in Debussy's etude, the rhythm of Chinese music the performance is very obvious, and the performer's playing freedom is very high, so the whole work has a great space for artistic development. Figure 2 music score of Debussy's etude.

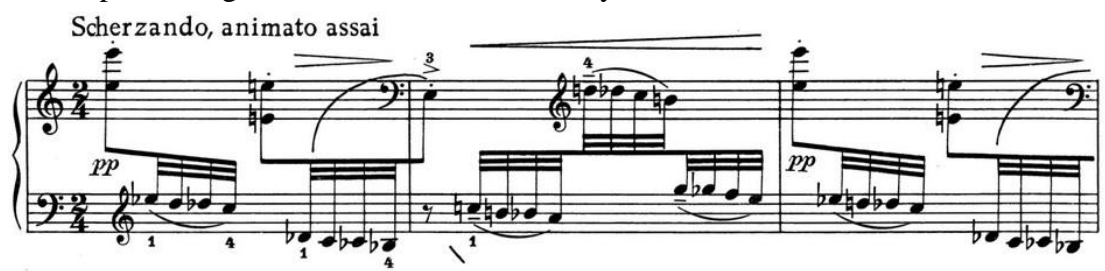


Figure 2 music score of Debussy's Etude

## 2.3 application of Chinese melody

Melody is very intuitive in music. It can be said that whether a music work can make the listener feel and have a profound impact on the listener depends on melody (to a certain extent) [3]. The melody of Chinese music works is closely related to Chinese culture, so influenced by the cultural uniqueness, there is a big difference between Chinese melody and Western melody, which causes a heated exploration of western piano music. For example, in Puccini's Turandot, there are fragments of China's traditional folk song "Jasmine", and the melody of this folk song is also used by arianski as an element of etude creation. In addition, Chinese melody is reflected in most western piano works in the form of Rondo, which can well integrate Chinese and Western melodies. For example, in ariansky's No. 25 etude, the Rondo is used, and the beginning of the tune uses the harmony of western major minor, which is very harmonious. Figure 3 the Jasmine in Turandot.



Figure 3 music score of jasmine

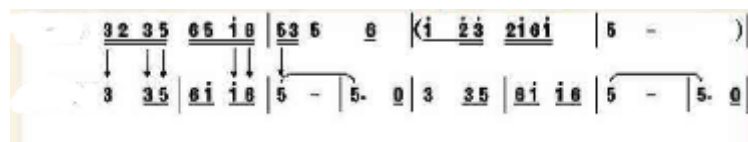


Figure 4 "Jasmine" in "Turandot" (from top to bottom are "Jasmine" and "Turandot")

## 3. The application of "Chinese cultural elements" in Western Piano Works

In addition to the application of "Chinese musical elements" in western piano works, there are also references to "Chinese cultural elements", such as Chinese stories, Chinese aesthetics, etc. These two points will be analyzed below.

### 3.1 Chinese story application

In the five thousand years of Chinese history, many cultural stories have been born. These stories represent the ideas and cultures of Chinese people in different historical periods. Through these stories, we can understand Chinese history. Under this condition, Western pianists are curious about Chinese culture, so they read these stories, and then many Chinese stories have emerged Basic Western Piano Works [4]. For example, zilpin's Piano Concerto No. 4 was born in the "Oriental room" of zilpin's Paris residence, where all the arrangements are Chinese style and a large number of traditional Chinese cultural stories are placed. In this environment, zilpin described the story of "Wu Song beating the tiger" in the first movement of "Oriental room dream" of Piano Concerto No. 4 In the process, firstly, the mood of China's rural areas is constructed by j-man board and Daguang, and then the story is promoted by the piano's homophonic and repeated performance skills, that is, first, the low tone represents the roar of the tiger, then a vigorous piece represents Wusong, and finally, the extremely fast rhythm represents the fighting process between Wusong and the tiger, so that the audience can experience it. In addition, qierpin's Piano Concerto No.4 also describes the story of Tang Minghuang and Yang Guifei, that is to say, the British tube reflects the story background through five sound steps, and describes the temperament and posture of Tang Guifei at the same time, and then describes the scene of Tang Minghuang and Yang Guifei crossing happy time through the light happy section of fast rhythm, and then there is a disharmony in the happy scene At the end of the chord, the story of Emperor Ming of Tang and concubine Yang is finished by a soft melody.

### 3.2 Chinese aesthetic application

Chinese aesthetics focuses on artistic conception, such as the pursuit of artistic conception, such as the combination of emotion and scenery, the combination of reality and reality, which has been used for reference by Western pianists and created many excellent piano works [5]. For example, Debussy is a typical "Chinese culture enthusiast" among Western pianists. He is very obsessed with the cultural expression in many Chinese art works, especially Chinese landscape painting. He thinks that the most attractive feature of such paintings is the sense of "specious", which has a great impact on Debussy's subsequent Piano Works, making it not After that, we began to use new chords to add "bricks and tiles of different colors" to the piano works, making the works more artistic.

## 4. Conclusion

To sum up, through this study, we can see that the use of "Chinese elements" in western piano works is diversified. Pianists will integrate different "Chinese elements" into their works in various ways, which can make piano works richer and provide new ideas for the creation of traditional western piano works. It can be seen that "Chinese elements" are of great importance to the West The creation of piano works has a profound influence.

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