

# Redefining Musical Creativity: The Pipa Solo Tradition in Republican China and During the Mao Era

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IN the recent century, the sight and sound of the pipa have been conducive to the consumption of Chinese music (*Zhongguo yinyue*) by Chinese and non-Chinese people alike. Such consumption has often been driven by a presumed connection between the pipa and a perceived authentic Chineseness. On the one hand, the pipa has been featured in Chinese porcelain and handicrafts as well as in Chinese literature and paintings past and present (Lai 2008, 57–59). As images of the pipa circulate in galleries, museums, and antique auctions worldwide, the pipa has emerged as a Chinese “key symbol” (see also Ortner 1973) with a certain cultural capital. On the other hand, the pipa could be found in global cinema not only as a sonic element in soundtracks that accompany Chinese and non-Chinese imagery of (ancient, imperial, or modern) China, but also as a visual element of traditional performance that authenticates various film narratives about China. Furthermore, in the cosmopolitan everyday life, one could sometimes hear the pipa in a Chinese restaurant or catch a glimpse of the pipa from an advertisement for a Chinese product. All these circumstances of the consumer society have contributed to a *doxa*<sup>1</sup> of the pipa that has rarely been disturbed by queries based on relevant cultural and musical knowledge.

[2] While one might dismiss such *doxa* as irrelevant to the musicianship of contemporary pipa players, the drastic changes of the pipa’s status in twentieth-century China suggest otherwise. Following the reformative compositional endeavors by Liu Tianhua (1895–1932) and the establishment of music conservatories in China since the late 1920s, the pipa was recognized as one of the most appealing icons of Chinese national music. Known as *guoyue* (“music of/for the nation”) in the Republic of China (*Zhonghua minguo*, hereafter ROC) and *minyue* (“music of/for the people”) in the People’s Republic of China (*Zhonghua renmin gongheguo*, hereafter PRC), Chinese national music embodied an urge for

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1. In *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977, 159–171), Pierre Bourdieu introduces *doxa* as a concept about an experience to be distinguished from an orthodox or heterodox belief that implies awareness and recognition of the possibility of different or antagonistic beliefs.

illuminating a national essence through “Chinese learning as substance, Western learning for application” (*zhong ti xi yong*), “making the past serve the present” (*gu wei jin yong*) while “making the foreign serve the Chinese” (*yang wei zhong yong*). The pipa was thus treated as a musical instrument with a remarkable past that nevertheless required renewal.

[3] Through analysis of three representative musical examples, this article reviews how the pipa solo tradition evolved in Republican China and during the Mao era. I argue that the pipa was subject to a torrent of modernization and nationalism despite its effectiveness in symbolizing authentic Chineseness. I will begin with a discussion on two classic traditional *taoqu* (“suites”)<sup>2</sup>, namely “Music at the Frontier” (“Sai shang qu”) and “Warm Spring, White Snow” (“Yangchun baixue”). I will illustrate how, for expression of musical creativity through renewal or refinement of preexisting materials, each of these two *taoqu* showcases a particular school of playing that complies with conventions such as *gongdiao* (“mode”)<sup>3</sup> consistency and the southern-northern regional distinction (Shen 1983, III). I will then look into “Dance of the Yi People” (“Yizu wuqu”), a famous arrangement for solo pipa by Wang Huiran (1936–). I will reveal how, while appropriating a couple of folk tunes from the Yi people in Yunnan, not only did Wang deploy traditional *bianzou* (“variation”) strategies in a way that rendered his arrangement comparable to any traditional pipa piece, he also adapted techniques of thematic development from the Western classical form for dramatic effect. Moreover, I will use this arrangement to exemplify compositional scoring for the pipa, through which ideas such as accuracy (*zhunque xing*), expressivity (*biaoxian li*), and innovativeness (*chuangzao li*) became elements that, alongside the use of descriptive notation with a redesigned well-tempered instrument, reinforced a new discourse on musical creativity. I will end with a brief assessment of pipa pieces composed in the 1970s and onward mentioning the impact of

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2. According to J. Lawrence Witzleben (1995, 78), “a *taoqu* can be thought of as a ‘suite,’ composed of any number of different sections, derived from the same or different *qupai*, usually with individual subtitles, and often contrasting in tempo or instrumentation.”

3. Despite the unknown origin of the term *gongdiao*, Xu Dachun (1693–1771) discussed in his *Yuefu chuansheng* (2006) about the possibility of identifying the definition of *gongdiao* through analyzing *qupai* lyrics (i.e., lyrics of labeled *qu* verses). Influenced by Yannan Zhi’an (?-?) of the Yuan dynasty and Wang Shizhen (1526–1590) and Wang Jide (1557–1623?) of the Ming dynasty, Xu related *gongdiao* to the dramatic content of the music. That said, the word *diao* from the term *gongdiao* has two distinct meanings: musical mode/scale and speech manner. This distinction explains why Wu Mei (1884–1939) later suggested in his *Guqu chentian* that *gongdiao* indicates the choice of a specific musical mode/scale.

avant-garde music on the expression of musical creativity among contemporary pipa players.

### THE MING-QING TRADITION

[4] First imported from the Kuchan and Persian regions during the Sui dynasty (581–618), the pipa gained popularity during the Tang dynasty (618–907) and became increasingly common in both music of/for commoners (i.e., *suoyue* in imperial China; *minjian yinyue* in modern China) and music for banquet entertainment in the imperial court (i.e., *yanyue*) (Cao 1957, 26–27; Lin 1993, 79). According to a survey of literary references that are collected in *Pipa shouce*, the pipa emerged as a solo instrument both inside and outside the imperial court during the Song dynasty (960–1279), and the instrument was widespread in late imperial China due to factors such as the rise of commercialism and new urban lifestyles (Lai 2008, 44). It took the pipa almost a millennium to change its status from a foreign musical instrument in China to a Chinese musical instrument as it is known nowadays.

[5] Unlike the qin, which had been referred to as a musical instrument for the literati (*wenren*), the pipa had been attracting interest from people of different social backgrounds. This is reflected in the active role that it played in narrative singing (*shuochang*) and traditional ensembles of different regions. Lin Shicheng (1922–2005), an influential player of the Pudong School who taught at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing for more than four decades since 1956, once claimed that Northern *dagu* (“big drum”), Suzhou *tanci* (“plucked-strings and *ci* verse”), and Sichuan *qingyin* (“lucid sounds”) were representative of the pipa as an important accompanying instrument in narrative singing performed by buskers and courtesans (Myers 1992, 22). He also asserted that Jiangnan *sizhu* (“silk and bamboo”), Fujian *nanguan* (“southern pipes”), Chaozhou *xianshi* (“poetic strings”), and Hakka *banyue* (“music of the Han people”) were exemplary of the pipa as an instrument for (mostly male) amateur players in traditional ensembles (*ibid.*).

[6] In comparison with the qin, the pipa took much longer to establish its own solo tradition. According to existing documents, the Southern and Northern Schools of pipa playing emerged in the seventeenth century during the transition between the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644) and the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911). These two Schools were then developed into the Five Eminent Schools between the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth

century: the Wuxi School, the Pinghu School, the Pudong School, the Congming School, and the Wang School (Lin 1993, 81–88). The masters of these five schools contributed to the development of the pipa solo tradition through generations of apprenticeship as well as music documentation. They treated the pipa solo tradition as either the one consisting of closely guarded family secrets, or the one to be shared among friends (Myers 1992, 23). They were mostly free from pretension, but they tended to have strong opinions on the music they played; their own reputation as pipa players was based on their expertise in music and their competence in playing music gracefully and idiomatically (Witzleben 1995, 30–31). Hua Qiuping (1754–1859), the founder of the Wuxi School, compiled *Pipa pu*, the first pipa music anthology available in print since 1818. Ju Shilin (~1736–1820), the founder of the Pudong School, left his successors his pipa music manuscript *Xianxu youyin* before his death (Li 1987, 81–82).

[7] For pipa players of the Five Eminent Schools, *Pipa pu* and *Xianxu youyin* provided materials essential to their expression of musical creativity. Stock tunes were documented in these collections of pipa music for new arrangements of *taoqu* or *bianzou* that would involve conventionalized practices such as re-contextualization of musical passages, expansion and contraction of preexisting melodies, and semi-improvisational ornamentation. These practices were nevertheless more important to expressing musical creativity than the documented stock tunes themselves, because the former was perceivable primarily to concerned participants and critical listeners (Lam 1998, 10-12) who were knowledgeable about pipa solo performance. In this light, pipa players of the Five Eminent Schools were concerned participants who had active and direct control of well-established stylistic boundaries that were associated with these practices. They “were expected to re-create, within well-established stylistic boundaries, a relatively novel version of an internalized musical outline each time [they] performed” (Stock 1996, 83–84). Their followers were instead critical listeners who, despite having no say in the evolution of such boundaries, articulated with sophistication their comments or opinions on pipa solo performance based on their knowledge of such boundaries.

[8] Overall, these concerned participants and critical listeners constituted what Tong Soon Lee might refer to as “persuasive performance through communal interaction” (2009, 92), which is a kind of performance that treats technical proficiency as more “a means of

educating and relating to others” (ibid.) and less a display of an individual’s artistic prowess. As I am about to illustrate in the next two sub-sections, Yang Shaoyi (1913–1974), a late master of the Pinghu School, performed “Music at the Frontier” as a stylized *wenban taoqu* (“civil suite”) based on five *xiaoqu* (“short pieces”) from *Pipa pu*, while Wei Zhongle (1909–1997), a renowned figure of the Wang School, rendered “Warm Spring, White Snow” a remarkable re-interpretation of “Liu ban” (“Six *ban*”)<sup>4</sup>, a *taoqu* documented in *Xiaoxu youyin*.

### MUSIC AT THE FRONTIER

[9] Yang Shaoyi’s rendering of “Music at the Frontier” is based on five *xiaoqu* from *Pipa pu*, namely “Reminiscence of Spring” (“Si chun”), “Zhaojun’s Resentment” (“Zhaojun yuan”), “Weeping for Yan Hui” (“Qi Yan Hui”), “By the Side of a Dressing Table” (“Bang zhuangtai”), and “Recounting Resentment” (“Su yuan”). These *xiaoqu* are all in the form of sixty-eight *ban* (“measures”)<sup>5</sup>, and they are all documented in *Pipa pu* as *Exquisite Tunes in Hangzhou* (*Wulin yiyun*), a *xi ban* repertoire that reflects a strong connection between southern-style pipa music and the traditional music (*chuantong yinyue*) of Hakka and Chaozhou peoples:

Hakka musicians use the term *xi diao* to refer to a sixty-eight-beat [sic] melodic form sharing all the salient features of the *xi ban* pieces found in [*Pipa pu*]. This form is believed to have been handed down from a period before the southeastern migrations of the Hakka and Chaozhou peoples during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Most of the *xi ban* still played today are now strung together as sections of suites (Myers 1992, 39–40).

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4. “Liu ban” is a *taoqu* collected in *Xianxu youyin*. It consists of *bianzou* of “Lao ba ban” (“The Old Eight *ban*”), which is the pipa version of a widespread traditional tune first documented in *Xiansuo beikao*, a manuscript of musical notations for various Chinese plucked-string instruments compiled by Rong Zhai (?–?), a Mongolian member of the Chinese literati, in 1814. Ju Shilin remarked in *Xianxu youyin* that “Liu ban” is based on “Qing liu ban” (“The Lucid Six *ban*”) and “Hua liu ban” (“The Flowery Six *ban*”)—both *bianzou* of “Lao ba ban”—from a certain *sizhu* score. See also the next footnote for more information about *ban* as a musical parameter.

5. In this article, I use “measure” as my translation of *ban* (literally meaning “clappers”), which refers to the time interval between two adjacent downbeats. For most of the pipa solo pieces from the Ming-Qing tradition that have been published during and after the Mao era, *ban* has been illustrated in cipher notation as a bar line that separates notes from one downbeat to the next downbeat.

[10] Owing to Li Fangyuan's (~1850–1901) initial effort to put the five aforementioned *xiaoqu* together with his stylistic and thematic elaboration, “Music at the Frontier” has been recognized as a signature piece of the Pinghu School. Although *Pipa pu* provides prescriptive musical notation that only illustrates skeletal notes and beats, Li was aware of how, for *Exquisite Tunes in Hangzhou* in particular, the collected *xiaoqu* were grouped together and displayed in a specific order based on melodic similarities in addition to the civil-martial (*wen wu*) classification. He selected for “Music at the Frontier” the first, second, third, eleventh, and fifteenth *xiaoqu* published in *Exquisite Tunes in Hangzhou* (ibid., 52; Han and Zhang 2013, 180), arranging them in a particular order (i.e., the first – the second – the fifteenth – the third – the eleventh) as thematized sections of a *wenban taoqu* that was documented in his *Nanbeipai shisantao daqu pipa xinpu* (hereafter *Pipa xinpu*) (see Examples 1 and 2).<sup>6</sup> He expanded on these *xiaoqu* by means of melodic refinement (*xuanlü runshi*), adding neighbor tones and expanding half notes into quarter notes without altering the form of neighbor tones and expanding half notes into quarter notes without altering the form of sixty-eight *ban* (Li 1987, 61). He also assigned a new title to each section of “Music at the Frontier” so that he could prescribe the story of Wang Zhaojun (52BC–19BC) to the musical narrative (Han and Zhang 2013, 181). He chose to begin “Music at the Frontier” with “Reminiscence of Spring in the Court Garden” (“Gongyuan si chun”), a *xiaoqu* that is based on “Reminiscence of Spring” from *Pipa pu*. He used the standard pipa tuning (*zheng diao*, see Figure 1) of sol-do-re-sol (A-D-E-A, with D as do) while “adding flowers” (*jia hua*) to the skeletal notes of “Reminiscence of Spring,” utilizing the open strings for timbral expressions while filling each *ban* with subsidiary notes within a hexatonic scale consisting of D (do), E (re), G (fa), A (sol), B (la), and C (ti) (see Example 3).

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6. Commenting on *Pipa pu*, Myers (1992, 40–41) states, “Although the Hua notations are simple, they contain the essence of the music; what the musicians thought was important enough to notate; that which would not be altered in the process of interpretation. . . . By preserving the skeletal outline of a piece in this kind of notation, a pipa master could use the notation to teach a simplified but structurally accurate version to a beginner, but could also restrict some aspects of its documentation. In this way, the finer details of melody and technique would not be notated, but reserved for the most advanced students and/or family members, who would preserve and extend various idiosyncratic nuances without distorting the fundamental qualities of the repertoire.”

## 12. 塞 上 曲

1=D (5̣ 1̣ 2̣ 5̣ 弦)

### 【1】 宫苑思春

$\frac{2}{4}$   $\overset{\cdot}{\underset{\cdot}{5}}$   $\overset{\circ}{5}$  |  $\overset{\cdot}{5}$   $\overset{\cdot}{5}$   $\overset{\cdot}{6i}$  |  $\overset{\cdot}{4}$   $\overset{\cdot}{6}$   $\underline{5645}$  | 2  $\overset{\circ}{2}$   $\overset{\circ}{24}$  |  $\overset{\circ}{2221}$   $\overset{\circ}{4}$   $\overset{\circ}{5}$  |  $\overset{\circ}{2242}$   $\overset{\circ}{1224}$  |

**Example 1.** The first six *ban* of “Reminiscence of Spring in the Court Garden” in “Music at the Frontier,” Yang Shaoyi’s performance score (finger-technique instructions are marked above and below the notes).

### *Zhaojun’s Resentment*

#### 【2】 昭君怨

$\overset{\cdot}{5}$   $\overset{\cdot}{5}$   $\overset{\cdot}{6i}$  |  $\overset{\cdot}{4}$   $\overset{\cdot}{6}$   $\underline{5645}$  | 2  $\overset{\circ}{2}$   $\overset{\circ}{24}$  |  $\overset{\circ}{2222}$   $\overset{\circ}{2222}$  |  $\overset{\circ}{5}$   $\overset{\circ}{2}$   $\overset{\circ}{1}$   $\overset{\circ}{b7}$  |  $\overset{\circ}{b7122}$   $\overset{\circ}{1245}$  |

### *Concubine Xiang in Tears (as Weeping for Yan Hui in Pipa pu)*

#### 【3】 湘妃清泪

$\overset{\circ}{5}$   $\overset{\circ}{b7i}$   $\overset{\circ}{5}$   $\overset{\circ}{4}$  | 2  $\overset{\circ}{2}$   $\overset{\circ}{24}$  | 5  $\overset{\circ}{5}$   $\overset{\circ}{56}$  |  $\overset{\circ}{5555}$   $\overset{\circ}{5}$   $\overset{\circ}{5}$  |  $\overset{\circ}{5}$   $\overset{\circ}{2}$   $\overset{\circ}{1}$   $\overset{\circ}{b7}$  |  $\overset{\circ}{b7122}$   $\overset{\circ}{1245}$  |

**Example 2.** The first six *ban* of “Zhaojun’s Resentment” and “Concubine Xiang in Tears” in “Music at the Frontier,” Yang Shaoyi’s performance score.

<i>Pipa pu</i>	5 5   <b>5</b>   4 5   2 4   2 4   2 1
<i>Pipa xinpu</i>	5 5   5 5 5 <sup>.</sup>   4 6 56   2 1 4 5   2 2 4   2 1224
Yang Shaoyi's performance score	5 5   <u>5</u> 5 <u>6</u> <sup>.</sup>   <u>4.6</u> <u>5645</u>   2 2 <u>24</u>   <u>2221</u> <u>45</u>   <u>2242</u> <u>1224</u>

Remarks:

- Notated in D scale, i.e., 1=D  

1 (do)	2 (re)	4 (fa)	5 (sol)	6 (la)
D	E	G	A	B
- Note in bold: Downbeat (*touban*)
- Note with a dot from above or below: An octave higher (above) or lower (below)
- Bar lines are used for grouping pitches within each *ban*; *ban* is thus being translated as “measure”
- Rhythms are not notated in either *Pipa pu* or *Pipa xinpu*; what I illustrate above is originally documented in gongche notation (*gongche pu*)
- For Yang Shaoyi's performance score, single-underlined notes are half notes while double-underlined notes are quarter notes

**Example 3.** The first six *ban* of “Reminiscence of Spring in the Court Garden” in “Music at the Frontier,” a comparison.



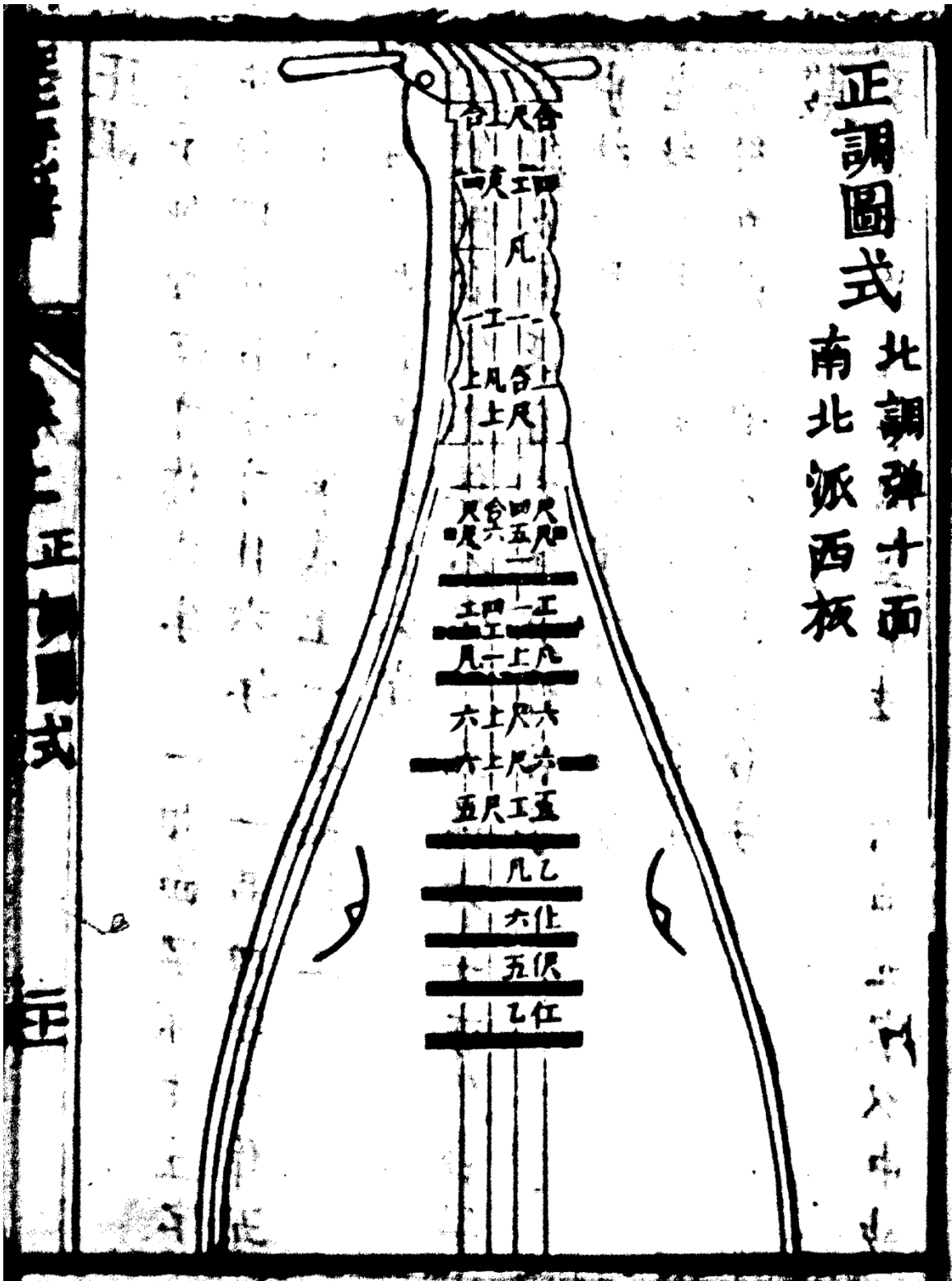


Figure 1. An illustration of the standard pipa tuning in *Pipa pu*.

[11] Yang Shaoyi's score illustrates how Li's rendering of "Music at the Frontier" provided the basis for a showcase of melodic embellishment and fingerpicking techniques (see Examples 1 and 3) that were characteristic of the Pinghu School. Not only did Yang retain the modal and thematic features in addition to the choice and sequence of *xiaoqu* that distinguish the Pinghu School from others (Han and Zhang 2013, 179), he also preserved the technical and stylistic subtleties he learned by rote as a disciple of Zhu Ying (1889–1954), a Pinghu School pipa master who studied with Li as a child prodigy (*ibid.*, 209).

### WARM SPRING, WHITE SNOW

[12] "Warm Spring, White Snow" is based on materials from "Liu ban" and "Man shangyin" ("The Prolonged *Shang* Tone"), both of which are documented as *taoqu* in Ju Shilin's *Xianxu youyin*.<sup>7</sup> That said, pipa players of the Five Eminent Schools created different versions of "Warm Spring, White Snow" consisting of seven, ten, or twelve "sixty-eight-*ban*" (*liushiba ban*) sections. This article analyzes the version that is most widely performed by pipa players nowadays, namely Wei Zhongle's seven-section version. Representative of the Wang School, Wei's version consists of reorganized materials from eight out of ten sections of "Liu ban," many of which are *bianzou* of "Lao ba ban," a pipa version of one of the most prolific generative melodies in Chinese traditional music.

[13] As with "Music at the Frontier," "Warm Spring, White Snow" is meant to be played in the standard pipa tuning that best utilizes the open strings for timbral expressions. Wei Zhongle deployed several traditional *bianzou* strategies, namely melodic refinement, pitch replacement (*jie zi*), and structural alteration (*jiegou bianhua*), so as to develop "a distinctive, concise, and fluid musical image" (*ibid.*, 239). The first section of "Warm Spring, White Snow" clearly shows the microscopic aspect of Wei's *bianzou*. As shown in part [A] in Example 4, Wei followed the structural alteration already made in "Liu ban" by Ju Shilin with only one note replaced; both Wei and Ju added imitative notes to prolong the time interval between the downbeats (*touban*, i.e., the first beats) in the first three *ban* of "Lao ba ban." Part

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7. The ten-section version by Li Fangyuan of the Pinghu School and the twelve-section version by Shen Haochu (1889–1953) of the Pudong School are known as "The Grand Warm Spring" ("Da yangchun"), whereas the seven-section version by Wei Zhongle of the Wang School is named "The Petite Warm Spring" ("Xiao yangchun"). Pipa players of today mostly refer to "The Petite Warm Spring" as "Warm Spring, White Snow."

[C] in Example 4 shows Wei’s pitch replacement, as he changed those pitches in scale degree 3 to scale degree 4. One could also notice from part [C] and other parts of the first section Wei’s melodic refinement through addition of neighbor tones and expansion of half notes into quarter notes.

<p><i>Lao ba ban</i></p> <p><i>Liu ban – Rolls</i></p> <p><i>Yangchun baixue – At the Peerless First Place</i></p>	<p>[A]</p> <p><u>3 3</u>      <u>6 2</u>   1              <u>5 6</u>   1 <u>6 1</u>   <u>1 3 2</u>  </p> <p><u>3 3</u>   <u>6 3</u>   <u>6 2</u>   <u>1 1</u>   <u>2 1</u>   <u>5 6</u>                <u>1 3</u>   <u>2 2</u>  </p> <p><u>3 3</u>   <u>6 3</u>   <u>6 2</u>   <u>1 2</u>   <u>1 1</u>   <u>5 6</u>              <u>1 3</u>   <u>2 2</u>  </p>
<p>[B]</p> <p><u>3 3</u>   <u>6 2</u>   1   <u>5 6</u>   1   <u>3 2</u>   <u>1 6</u>   5  </p> <p><u>3 3</u>   <u>6 2</u>   1                  <u>6 1</u>   <u>2 2</u>   <u>1 6</u>   <u>5 5</u>  </p> <p><u>3 3</u>   <u>6 3 6 2</u>   <u>1 2 1 1</u>   <u>6 1</u>   <u>2223</u>   <u>1 6</u>   <u>5 5</u>  </p>	<p>[C]</p> <p><u>5 5</u>   <u>3 3</u>   <u>5 3</u>   2   <u>2 3</u>   <u>2 1</u>   <u>6 1</u>   2  </p> <p><u>5 5</u>   <u>4 4</u>   <u>5 5</u>   2   <u>2 3</u>   <u>2 1</u>   <u>6 1</u>   2  </p> <p><u>5 5 5 5</u>   <u>4 4 4 4</u>   <u>5 6 6 5</u>   2   <u>2 2 4 5</u>   <u>4 2 1</u>   <u>6 1</u>   <u>2 2</u>  </p>
<p>[D]</p> <p><u>3 2</u>   <u>2 3</u>   5   <u>5 6</u>   1   <u>6 1</u>   <u>1 6</u>   5  </p> <p><u>2 1</u>   <u>2 2 3</u>   <u>5 5</u>   <u>5 6</u>   <u>1 1</u>   <u>2 2</u>   <u>1 6</u>   <u>5 5</u>  </p> <p><u>1 2</u>   <u>2 3</u>   <u>5 5</u>   <u>5 6</u>   <u>1 1</u>   <u>2 3 2 1</u>   <u>6 1</u>   <u>5 5</u>  </p>	<p>[E]</p> <p><u>5 6</u>   <u>5 3</u>   2   <u>2 3</u>   5   <u>5 6</u>   5   <u>3 2</u>  </p> <p><u>5 5</u>   <u>4 4</u>   2   <u>2 3</u>   <u>5 5</u>   <u>5 5</u>   <u>4 4</u>   <u>5 5</u>  </p> <p><u>5 5</u>   <u>4 5 5 4</u>   <u>2 2</u>   <u>2 3</u>   <u>5 5</u>   <u>5 5</u>   <u>4 5 5 4</u>   <u>5 5</u>  </p>
<p>[F]</p> <p><u>2 5</u>   <u>5 2</u>   <u>3 2</u>   1   <u>6 1</u>   <u>5 6</u>   <u>1 3</u>   2  </p> <p><u>5 5</u>   <u>4 2</u>   <u>1 2</u>   1   <u>7 6</u>   <u>5 6</u>   <u>1 3</u>   2  </p> <p><u>5 5</u>   <u>4 5 4 2</u>   <u>1 2</u>   <u>1 1</u>   <u>7 6</u>   <u>5 6</u>   <u>1 3</u>   <u>2 2</u>  </p>	<p>[G]</p> <p><u>2 5</u>   <u>5 2</u>   <u>3 2</u>   1   <u>6 1</u>   <u>1 2</u>   <u>5 6</u>   <u>5 3</u>  </p> <p><u>5 5</u>   <u>2 5</u>   <u>3 2</u>   <u>1 2</u>   <u>1 1</u>   <u>5 5</u>   <u>5 5</u>   <u>2 5</u>  </p> <p><u>5 2 2</u>   <u>2 2 5 5</u>   <u>3 3 2 2</u>   <u>1 2</u>   <u>6 1</u>   <u>5 5</u>   2   -  </p>
<p>[H]</p> <p>2   <u>6 5</u>   3   <u>2 3</u>   <u>7 6</u>   <u>5 6</u>   <u>1 3</u>   2  </p> <p><u>2 5</u>   <u>2 5</u>   <u>3 2</u>   1   <u>7 6</u>   <u>5 6</u>   <u>1 3</u>   2  </p> <p>2 -   <u>2 5</u>   <u>3 2</u>   <u>1 2</u>   <u>7 6</u>   <u>5 6</u>   <u>1 3</u>   <u>2 2</u>  </p>	<p>[I]</p> <p><u>2 5</u>   <u>5 2</u>   <u>3 2</u>   1   <u>3 3 6 2</u>   1  </p> <p><u>5 2</u>   <u>2 5</u>   <u>3 2</u>   1  </p> <p><u>5 2 2</u>   <u>2 2 5 5</u>   <u>3 3 2 2</u>   1  </p>

Remarks:

1. Notated in D scale, i.e., 1=D:  
 1 (do)      2 (re)    3 (mi)    4 (fa)    5 (sol)    6 (la)    7 (ti)  
 D            E            F#        G            A            B            C#
2. Note with a dot below: An octave lower; Note in bold with a dot below: Two octaves lower
3. For “Lao ba ban,” bar lines are used for grouping pitches within each *ban* (“measure”)
4. Single-underlined notes are half notes while double-underlined notes are quarter notes
5. “Lao ba ban” is originally documented in gongche notation (*gongche pu*)

**Example 4.** A comparison between “Lao ba ban,” “Rolls” in “Liu ban,” and “At the Peerless First Place” in “Warm Spring, White Snow.”

[14] Viewing “Warm Spring, White Snow” more broadly, one could see Wei’s more expansive rearrangement of and elaboration on materials from “Liu ban.” As shown in Table 1, Wei expanded or modified singular preexisting “Liu ban” sections (in sections 1, 4, 6, 7 of “Warm Spring, White Snow”) in a way similar to what Li Fangyuan did to the five *xiaoqu* selected from *Pipa pu* for “Music at the Frontier.” Wei also reorganized and combined truncated materials from several “Liu ban” sections to form new single sections (in sections 2, 3, and 5 of “Warm Spring, White Snow”).

“Warm Spring, White Snow”	“Liu ban”
Section 1: “At the Peerless First Place” (“Duzhan aotou”)	Section 1: “Rolls” (“Lunzi”)
Section 2: “Wind Shakes the Lotus” (“Fengbai hehua”)	Section 1: “Rolls” [The first sixteen <i>ban</i> ]  Section 3: “The Lower Frets” (“Xia ba”) [Excluding fourteen <i>ban</i> in between]
Section 3: “A Bright Moon” (“Yi lun mingyue”)	Section 3: “The Lower Frets” [The first thirty-six <i>ban</i> ]  Section 10: “Sweeping the Head” (“Sao tou”) [The last twenty-four <i>ban</i> ]
Section 4: “Apprehending Dhyāna Alongside a Jade Board” (“Yuban can shan”)	Section 2: “Striking the Board” (“Pai ban”)
Section 5: “The Sounds of an Iron Baton Battering a Block” (“Tie ce ban sheng”)	Section 5: “A Repeat” (“Fan tan”) [The last sixteen <i>ban</i> ]  Section 6: “Pick-Split Plucking” (“Zhi fen”) [The first fifty-two <i>ban</i> ]
Section 6: “Qin Sounds from a Taoist Abbey” (“Daoyuan qinsheng”)	Section 9: “Lucid Drops: (“Qingdian”)
Section 7: “Cranes Howling at the Countryside” (“Donggao heming”)	Section 10: “Sweeping the Head”

**Table 1.** Connections between “Warm Spring, White Snow” and “Liu ban.”

[15] In the second section of “Warm Spring, White Snow” (i.e., “Wind Shakes the Lotus”), Wei combined the first sixteen *ban* in the first section of “Liu ban” (i.e., “Rolls”) with all except fourteen *ban* in the third section of “Liu ban” (i.e., “The Lower Frets”) (see Example 5) for his further elaboration. Such musical collage could be regarded as an outcome of structural truncation (*fen’ge*), a specific kind of structural alteration that is intended for “evoking the listener’s familiarity with the unfamiliar” (Li 1987, 81).



[16] In the third section of “Warm Spring, White Snow” (i.e., “A Bright Moon”), Wei merged the first thirty-six *ban* in the third section of “Liu ban” (i.e., “The Lower Frets”) with the last twenty-four *ban* in the last section of “Liu ban” (i.e., “Sweeping the Head”). He retained the melodic contour of the latter despite replacing some tones while altering the overall rhythm (see Example 6). He changed those quarter notes originally played in a fast tempo to long notes played in a slower tempo with the “rolling fingers” (*lun zhi*) technique (see Part I in Example 6). He substituted the alternating adjacent quarter notes with long notes (see Part II in Example 6). He extended the tonic and treated it as a “deceptive” note of emphasis that precedes a short transitional phrase connecting the third and fourth sections (see Part III in Example 6). In short, he transformed the last section in “Liu ban” into a development section in “Warm Spring, White Snow” (Li 1987, 101–102).<sup>8</sup> This transformation is creative not only because of Wei’s interesting alterations of preexisting musical elements, but also because of how he notably reshaped the dramatic characters and structural functions of such elements.

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8. As suggested by the title “Sweeping the Head” and its abundance of quarter notes, the last section of “Liu ban” is supposed to be played in a very fast tempo. Wei’s replacement of quarter notes with long notes and his decision to adapt this passage in the first half of the third section of “Warm Spring, White Snow”—as demonstrated in the audio recordings of Wei, his Wang School colleagues, and other succeeding pipa players—render the renewed passage slower and more melodic.

## [PART I]

*A Bright Moon*

3/4  $\overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{3} \overset{\wedge}{6} \overset{\wedge}{i}$  | 2/4  $\overset{\wedge}{2} - | \overset{\wedge}{2.} \overset{\wedge}{3'}$  |

2 1 5 | 2 2 2 2 | 1 1 |

(ii) (iii)

## [PART II]

3/4  $\overset{\wedge}{i.} \overset{\wedge}{3'}$  | 2/4  $\overset{\wedge}{2} - | \overset{\wedge}{2.} \overset{\wedge}{3'}$  |

1 1 | 2 2 2 2 | 1 1 1 1 |

(ii) (iii)

*Sweeping the Head*

0  $\overset{\wedge}{i}$  | 0  $\overset{\wedge}{i}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{3} \overset{\wedge}{3}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{3} \overset{\wedge}{3}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i}$  |

2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 |

0 5 | 0 5 5 | 6 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 |

(ii) (iii)

$\overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{3} \overset{\wedge}{3} \overset{\wedge}{3} \overset{\wedge}{3}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{3} \overset{\wedge}{3} \overset{\wedge}{3} \overset{\wedge}{3}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{3} \overset{\wedge}{3}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i}$  |  $\overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{3} \overset{\wedge}{3}$  |

2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 |

5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 |

(ii) (iii)

## [PART III]

*A Bright Moon*

$\overset{\wedge}{i} - | \overset{\wedge}{i} - | \overset{\wedge}{i} - | \frac{3}{4} \overset{\wedge}{6} \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{6} \overset{\wedge}{6} \overset{\wedge}{5}$  ||

$\overset{\wedge}{6} \overset{\wedge}{1} \overset{\wedge}{6} \overset{\wedge}{1} \overset{\wedge}{6} \overset{\wedge}{1} | 5$

(ii) (iii)

*Sweeping the Head*

$\overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} | \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} | \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} | \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{2} \overset{\wedge}{3} \overset{\wedge}{3} | \overset{\wedge}{i} \overset{\wedge}{0}$  ||

2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 2 2 2 2 |

5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 0

(ii) (iii)

Example 6. A comparison between “A Bright Moon” in “Warm Spring, White Snow” and “Sweeping the Head” in “Liu ban.”



[17] The fifth section of “Warm Spring, White Snow” (i.e., “The Sound of an Iron Baton Battering a Block”) is Wei’s more radical collage of materials from “Liu ban.” The music begins with repetition and truncation of materials from the last sixteen *ban* of the fifth section of “Liu ban” (i.e., “A Repeat”). It then continues with reorganization of the first fifty-two *ban* of the sixth section of “Liu ban” (i.e., “Pick-Split Plucking”) which involves various alterations of rhythmic and melodic patterns. Wei deployed the passage that connects the fifth and sixth sections of “Liu ban” as the first half of the fifth section in “Warm Spring, White Snow” (see Example 7); this deployment prepares the music for both an abrupt change of rhythmic patterns and a distinctive use of syncopation and “pick-split” (*zhi fen*) technique (see L-shape symbols in Example 8) that expressively symbolizes the section title.

### The Sounds of an Iron Baton Battering a Block

【五】铁策板声

$\frac{2}{4}$   $\dot{2}$   $\dot{2}'$   $\underline{6\ 6}$  |  $\underline{i\ i'}$   $\underline{6\ 6}$  |  $\underline{\dot{2}\ \dot{2}'}$   $\underline{6\ 6}$  |  $\underline{i\ i'}$   $\underline{6\ 6}$  |  $\underline{i\ i}$   $\underline{\dot{2}\ \dot{2}}$  |  $\underline{6\ 6}$   $\underline{i\ i}$  |  $\underline{6\ 6}$   $\underline{6\ i}$  |

! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! !

*ff* (x)

### A Repeat

$\dot{2}\ \dot{2}$  |  $\underline{6\ 6}$  |  $\underline{i\ i}$  |  $\underline{6\ 6}$  |  $\underline{i\ i}$  |  $\underline{6\ 6}$  |  $\underline{6\ 6}$  |  $\underline{i\ i}$  |  $\underline{\dot{2}\ \dot{2}}$  |  $\underline{6\ 6}$  |  $\underline{i\ i}$  |  $\underline{6\ 6}$  |  $\underline{i\ i}$  |  $\underline{6\ 6}$  |  $\underline{6\ i}$  |  $\underline{5\ 5}$  ||

$\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$  ||

: : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : (x)

(x) I

### The Sounds of an Iron Baton Battering a Block (continued)

$\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{4\ 4}$  |  $\underline{3\ 3}$   $\underline{2\ 2}$  |  $\underline{1\ 1}$   $\underline{2\ 2}$  |  $\underline{3\ 3}$   $\underline{2\ 2}$  |  $\underline{1\ 1}$   $\underline{2\ 2}$  |  $\underline{2}$  - |

! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! ! !

I

### Pick-Split Plucking

【六】拨分

$\frac{1}{4}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$  |  $\underline{4\ 4}$  |  $\underline{3\ 3}$  |  $\underline{2\ 2}$  |  $\underline{4\ 4}$  |  $\underline{2\ 2}$  |  $\underline{1\ 1}$  |  $\underline{2\ 2}$  |  $\underline{4\ 5}$  |  $\underline{5}$  |  $\underline{2}$  |  $\underline{2}$  |  $\underline{2}$  |  $\underline{2}$  |  $\underline{2}$  |

$\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{5\ 5}$   $\underline{6}$   $\underline{6}$   $\underline{6}$   $\underline{6}$   $\underline{6}$  |

: : : : : : : : : : : : : : : : I

I (x) 0 I -

Example 7. A comparison between “The Sounds of an Iron Baton Battering a Block” in “Warm Spring, White Snow” and “A Repeat” and “Pick-Split Plucking” in “Liu ban.”

The image displays three systems of musical notation for Example 8. Each system consists of a top line of rhythmic notation and a bottom line of fingerings. The notation includes various rhythmic values (e.g., 3/4, 2/4, 3/4, 1/4) and symbols like accents, slurs, and dynamic markings. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 0-5 and symbols like double lines and 'X'.

**System 1:**

- Top line:  $\frac{3}{4}$  0 1 0 6 5 3 |  $\frac{2}{4}$  2 3 5 5 |  $\frac{3}{4}$  0 1 0 6 5 3 |  $\frac{2}{4}$  0 3 0 3 | 0 3 3 2 | 1 2 1 1
- Bottom line: 0 1 | 0 5 | 0 1 | 0 1 | 0 3 3 2 | 1 2 1 1

**System 2:**

- Top line: 2 1 2 1 | 2 - |  $\frac{3}{4}$  2 - | 2 3 |  $\frac{2}{4}$  1 2 1 1 | 5 2 3 5 | 5 3 2 2
- Bottom line: 2 2 2 2 | 1 0 1 | 5 5 5 5 | 5 5 5 5

**System 3:**

- Top line: 3 5 3 2 | 1 2 1 1 | 2 1 2 1 | 2 - |  $\frac{3}{4}$  2 - | 2 3 |  $\frac{1}{4}$  1
- Bottom line: 5 5 5 5 | 1 0 1 | 2 2 2 2 | 1

Example 8. The remaining half of “The Sounds of an Iron Baton Battering a Block” in “Warm Spring, White Snow.”

[18] Other than his extensive showcase of traditional *bianzou* strategies illustrated above, Wei treated his *bianzou* of the first eight *ban* of “Lao ba ban” as the “co-beginning phrase” (*he tou*) in four of the seven sections in “Warm Spring, White Snow” (i.e., the first, second, fourth, and seventh sections), which functions as a transitional passage between different *xiaoqu* within a *taoqu* (see Example 9). This practice is likely to be borrowed from the “medley” form (*qupai liantao ti*) of the classical kunqu opera, in which a designated melodic bridge is placed between two *qupai* (“labeled tunes”), so that a drama episode in a specific *gongdiao* (“mode”) can progress smoothly from one *qupai* to another. Some listeners might however argue that the co-beginning phrase of “Warm Spring, White Snow” functions as a theme that characterizes and unites the whole piece, thanks to its apparent association with “Lao ba ban” (see parts [A] and [B] in Example 4) and Wei’s consistent use of the same fingerpicking techniques in all the four renditions of the phrase.

## SECTION 1: THE FIRST RENDITION

## 【一】独占鳌头

生动活泼地 中板  $\text{♩} = 100$ 

$\frac{2}{4}$   $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{3}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{3}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.3}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.2}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.2}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.1}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{5.6}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.3}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{2.2}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{3'3}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.3}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.2}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.2}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.1}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.1}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{2223}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.6}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{5.5}}$

$\text{mf}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$

(三) (三) (三) (三) (三) (三) (三) (三)

## SECTION 2: THE SECOND RENDITION

【二】风摆荷花  $\text{♩} = 130$ 

$\frac{1}{4}$   $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{3}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{3}}$  |  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.3}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.2}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.2}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.1}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{5.6}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.3}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{2.2}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{3'3}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.3}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.2}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.2}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.1}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.1}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{2223}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.6}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{5.5}}$

$\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$

(三) (三) (三) (三) (三) (三) (三) (三)

## SECTION 4: THE THIRD RENDITION

## 【四】玉版参禅

$\frac{1}{4}$   $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{3}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{3}}$  |  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.3}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.2}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.2}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.1}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{5.6}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.3}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{2.2}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{3'3}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.3}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.2}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.2}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.1}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.1}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{2223}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.6}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{5.5}}$

$\text{mf}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$

(三) (三) (三) (三) (三) (三) (三) (三)

## SECTION 7: THE FOURTH RENDITION

【七】东皋鹤鸣 快板  $\text{♩} = 150$ 

$\frac{1}{4}$   $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{3}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{3}}$  |  $\frac{2}{4}$   $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.3}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.2}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.2}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.1}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{5.6}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.3}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{2.2}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{3'3}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.3}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.2}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.2}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.1}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{6.1}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{2223}}$  |  $\overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{1.6}} \overset{\vee}{\underset{\cdot}{5.5}}$

$\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$   $\text{f}$

(三) (三) (三) (三) (三) (三) (三) (三)

Example 9. The four renditions of the “co-beginning phrase” (*he tou*) in “Warm Spring, White Snow”

[19] Although Wei assigned titles to sections of “Warm Spring, White Snow” by borrowing those from Li Fangyuan’s ten-section Pinghu School version that was documented in *Pipa xinpu*, Wei did not always refer to Li’s treatment of preexisting materials. This is apparent in the cases of “The Sounds of an Iron Baton Battering a Block” and “Cranes Howling at the Countryside.” For the former, Wei’s version includes extra materials from the fifth section of “Liu ban” (i.e., “A Repeat”). For the latter, Wei’s version is entirely different from Li’s.

[20] The sequence of titles in Wei’s version is not the same as that in Li’s version either (see Table 2), as Wei wanted to put more emphasis on representing various scenes of the spring season and projecting energetic and cheerful moods through the music. For Wei, “Wind Shakes the Lotus,” “A Bright Moon,” “Apprehending Dhyāna Alongside a Jade Board,” and “Qin Sounds from a Taoist Abbey” are the sections intended for depicting the spring season. Among these sections, “Qin Sounds from a Taoist Abbey” uses repeating melodic and rhythmic patterns that serve to highlight the presence of overtones reminiscent of qin sounds. “At the Peerless First Place,” “The Sounds of an Iron Baton Battering a Block,” and “Cranes Howling at the Countryside” are instead the sections for setting the mood. “At the Peerless First Place” commences the whole piece with materials derived from “Lao ba ban” to be played in a moderate but gradually increasing tempo, which fits well with the title denoting that some people or animals are eager to be the first to welcome the spring season. “The Sounds of an Iron Baton Battering a Block” is, as described three paragraphs above, characterized by abruptness and force. “Cranes Howling at the Countryside” ends the whole piece with the fastest tempo and with a coda whose sudden slow-down comes before a sequence of quarter notes being played even faster and louder until the end.

Section titles	Positions within the <i>taoqu</i> sequence	
	Wei Zhongle’s version	Li Fangyuan’s version
“At the Peerless First Place”	1 <sup>st</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>
“Wind Shakes the Lotus”	2 <sup>nd</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
“A Bright Moon”	3 <sup>rd</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>
“Apprehending Dhyāna Alongside a Jade Board”	4 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
“The Sounds of an Iron Baton Battering a Block”	5 <sup>th</sup>	10 <sup>th</sup>
“Qin Sounds from a Taoist Abbey”	6 <sup>th</sup>	7 <sup>th</sup>
“Cranes Howling at the Countryside”	7 <sup>th</sup>	9 <sup>th</sup>

**Table 2.** The different assignments of the same titles in two versions of “Warm Spring, White Snow.”

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## THE TRANSITION PERIOD BETWEEN THE MING-QING TRADITION AND THE END OF THE MAO ERA

[21] During the New Culture Movement in the 1910s and 1920s, there was an urge for modernizing and nationalizing traditional music while politicians and intellectuals were pushing for social and cultural reforms. On the one hand, *guoyue* was introduced and promoted by music practitioner and researchers associated with groups and organizations such as the Great Unity Music Club (Datong yuehui) and the Society for Improvement of National Music (Guoyue gaijin she). In this regard, Liu Tianhua, who taught at Peking University during the 1920s before he helped establish the Society for Improvement of National Music, was remarkable as both a composer and a music reformer. Not only did he incorporate elements of Western art music into his composition of études and solo pieces for erhu and pipa, he was also known for his essays on developing *guoyue*, his Westernized approach to music pedagogy, and his interest in both the redesign of Chinese musical instruments (especially erhu and pipa) and the transcription of folk and traditional music with the use of staff notation. He was inspired by his first erhu and pipa teacher Zhou Shaomei (1885–1938) toward such reformative endeavor (Wang 1990, 25), but he was not a reformer who viewed traditional music as a mere vestige of Chinese feudalism (*fengjian*) or imperialism. On the one hand, for expression of musical creativity, his pipa solo pieces adapted techniques of qin playing in addition to elements of Western art music (Han and Zhang 2013, 201). On the other hand, at Peking University, his regular public performance of solo pipa always included pieces from *Yingzhou gudiao*, a collection of pipa pieces compiled by Shen Zhaozhou (1858–1929), an iconic figure of the Congming School who he studied with during summer in 1918 (*ibid.*).

[22] The New Culture Movement was also the moment when social reformers were preoccupied with the hope for national transformation and the fear of extinction, both of which caused fundamental changes in music education and research in China. Leipzig-trained music educator Xiao Youmei (1884–1940) was widely known for shifting music education in China from the traditional emphasis on spiritual growth to a new emphasis on theoretical and practical study of music. He was key to establishing the National College of

Music (Guoli yinyue yuan) with a Europeanized curriculum.<sup>9</sup> Berlin-trained musicologist Wang Guangqi (1891–1936) was an ardent advocate of *Vergleichende Musikwissenschaft*. He was keen to identify and define musical features that were uniquely Chinese and thus representative of China as a culturally advanced nation-state.<sup>10</sup> Both Xiao and Wang were pioneers of music institutionalization in China; they were influential to reformulating the study of folk and traditional music in China.

[23] Later, the Talks at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art in 1942, which took place after the establishment of Lu Xun Academy of Literature and Art in 1938, were noteworthy for leading the development of music in China toward a political and utilitarian direction until the end of the Cultural Revolution. With the intention to possess music from non-Han minority people (*shaoshu minzu*) and dissociate traditional music from the Confucian social structure, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) revoked the differentiation between folk music and traditional music by replacing *guoyue* with *minyue* as the name of national music. The CCP also promoted a mode of music production that adhered to its idiosyncratic division of labor and system of social stratification. It prioritized specialization and professionalization of music participants, with an aim to create an environment for renewing folk and traditional music systematically. It advocated explicit musical representation of Communist China, to displace the Confucian emphasis on the aesthetic and symbolic aspects of musical practices in ascribing social values (Lee 2009, 89). It also gave no room for maintaining the basic Confucian premise that a person who performs music for amusement and self-cultivation is socially superior to a person who does the same for a living. Many renowned Chinese folk and traditional musicians were recruited by newly established national and provincial music conservatories soon after the establishment of the PRC. Pipa masters such as Cao Anhe (1905–2004) of the Congming School (Qiao 2005, 18), Li

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9. Xiao Youmei was one of the very few early-twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals who was knowledgeable about Western art music. He was appointed by the government of the time to establish the National College of Music, and he published numerous essays and textbooks that demonstrated his reformist-nationalist philosophy of music.

10. Previously a social activist, Wang Guangqi devoted his life to social reform until he changed direction to studying music in 1922. He studied with renowned musicologists at Berlin University, including Erich von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs. As a pioneer of comparative musicology in China, his publications revealed his belief in the existence of national essence in music, which made a significant impact on how Chinese musicologists studied and valued Chinese folk and traditional music throughout the twentieth century.



Tingsong (1906–1976) of the Wang School, Lin Shicheng of the Pudong School, and Zhu Ying of the Pinghu School, were appointed as music conservatory professors. They gave up their respectable non-music careers (e.g., physician, teacher, accountant, etc.) and dedicated themselves to music teaching and performance. In the name of modernization, they adapted pedagogies and performance practices from Western art music. For the sake of political correctness, they expanded the pipa solo repertoire and made the music more accessible and politically meaningful to the masses (*qunzhong*) by means of radio broadcast, gramophone recording, and public concert performance (Stock 1996, 83).

### DANCE OF THE YI PEOPLE

[24] Completed in 1960 during the Great Leap Forward, “Dance of the Yi People” became an instant pipa solo classic after Wang Huiran, a former student of Li Tingsong, performed it at the Beijing Concert Hall in 1963 (copyright-china 2011a). This piece was later rearranged for many other Chinese plucked-string instruments and is still widely performed.

[25] Although “Dance of the Yi People” has been conceived as traditional by many enthusiasts of Chinese music, the music demonstrates several traits that are not found in the pipa traditional repertoire. First, despite Wang Huiran’s insistence on the (traditional) use of open strings for timbral expressions (as manifested in the predominance of the notes D, E, and A throughout), the piece deploys a diatonic minor scale with occasional use of semitones (i.e., C# and D#) as ornaments; it could only be played on a well-tempered pipa that has existed since the late 1940s, not to mention that diatonic functionality is obviously of Western origin.<sup>11</sup> Second, despite the piece’s melodies being a showcase of traditional

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11. For Myers (1992, 24-25), the modern period in the history of pipa began with three distinctive trends of development in pipa music since 1948, i.e., the addition of frets that rendered pipa a completely chromatic instrument, the use of pipa to play music that was heavily influenced by Western concepts, and the rise of pipa as an instrument in the modern Chinese orchestra. With regard to the renewed instrument design, he notes that “[w]hile the classical pipa repertoire was limited to one or two model groups (usually transcribed in D or C), a contemporary lesson book (1984) includes charts for such previously unheard-of-signatures as Bb and Eb.” He also explains that some pipa soloists use a chromatically fretted instrument only for modern pieces because “the effect [of reaching microtones through string bending] is not the same [as that on an instrument fretted in the old manner], especially not in legato passages in which the left hand sounds the string.” Lui Pui-Yuen (1932–) is one of such pipa soloists. In his pipa and qin solo recital at the University of Hong Kong on December 7, 2014, he played only pipa pieces from the Ming-Qing tradition, and he asked one of his former students to lend him a

*bianzou* strategies such as structural alteration (see red and light blue ellipses in Example 10), pitch replacement (see light green ellipses in Example 10), and expansive embellishment (*fangman jiahua*) (see color rectangles in Example 10), these melodies are presented in the typical theme structures (i.e., sentence and period) of the Western classical form (see Example 11).<sup>12</sup> Third, the resemblance between the piece's beginning first and second sections and its ending eighth and ninth sections alludes to a kind of structural symmetry common in Western art music but alien to the pipa traditional repertoire (see Examples 12 and 13). Fourth, the piece's changes of tempo and dynamics are clearly indicated in the score (see dark blue ellipses in Example 10), which mark a departure from the practice of determining such musical changes in accordance with conventions of a particular school of pipa playing. Fifth, the piece's explicit appropriation of music of the Yi people renders non-Han people—who were labeled as “barbarians” (*yi*) in the ancient and imperial Chinese past—a new subject matter in the pipa solo tradition.

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pipa that is fretted in the old manner, i.e., with four (instead of six) inverted frets (*xiang*) and ten, twelve or thirteen (instead of twenty-four) bamboo frets (*pin*): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dz5SJ2skj7w>. He also mentioned during an interview on December 2, 2014, that he found pipa solo pieces after “Dance of the Yi People” too modern for him to play. In other words, “Dance of the Yi People” is the most modern pipa solo piece he would play, and he would use a chromatically fretted pipa to play it:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCXzOsKn3Po>

12. In his discussion on the repertoire of *Jiangnan sizhu*, Witzleben (1995, 71) describes *fangman jiahua* as follows: “When expanded, the original melody is slowed in tempo and, as the original notes become farther apart temporally, other notes are interpolated. The result is a new piece that may have sixteen or more notes corresponding to each note in the original *qupai*. Chinese scholars call this process *fangman jiahua*, ‘making slow and adding flowers’... Expansion may be metrically strict (in which each beat of the original *qupai* corresponds to a given metrical unit in the new piece) or free (in which the correspondence is not consistent and/or some phrases are deleted or interpolated. In some cases, expansion may be metrically strict but melodically free.”

THE OPENING PHRASE IN SECTION TWO, THE FIRST HALF  
VERSUS THE OPENING PHRASE IN SECTION THREE, THE FIRST HALF

【二】 优美地

$\text{♩} = 60$

6 66 122i | 6667 676 5

0 333 3

(X)

6666 565 2

0333

6 333 3 5 |

0 111 1

(X)

【三】 欢快地

$\text{♩} = 180$

6 66 6 i | 6 i 6 5 | 6 66 6 i | 6 i 6 5

0 333 3

(X)

6 66 6 i | 5 6 5 2

0 333 3

3 33 3 3 | 3 5

0 333 3 3

(X)

THE OPENING PHRASE IN SECTION TWO, THE SECOND HALF  
VERSUS THE OPENING PHRASE IN SECTION THREE, THE SECOND HALF

6 66i 232i |

0 333

6 66 6 i | 2 3 2 i

0 333 3

6667 676 5

0333

6 66 6 i | 6 i 6 5

0 333 3

6 222 7 6 5 3 |

0 555

6 22 2 2 | 7 6 5 3

0 333 3

6666 6 6 |

0333 3 3

6 66 6 6 | 6 6

0 333 3 3

(X)

Example 10. "Dance of the Yi People," a comparison between the opening phrases in the second and third sections.

## 8-BAR PERIOD

【二】 优美地

♩ = 60

## 8-BAR SENTENCE

激情地

(x)

## 12 (8+4)-BAR SENTENCE

## 8-BAR PERIOD

【三】 欢快地

渐慢

♩ = 180

Example 11. "Dance of the Yi People," the second section, periods and sentences.

## THE SECOND HALF OF THE FIRST SECTION

悠揚地

双弦

Musical score for the second half of the first section. The score is written for double bass (双弦) and includes a treble clef staff. The tempo is marked '悠揚地' (Ad libitum). The score consists of two systems. The first system starts with a bass line containing a half note G (6) and a whole rest, followed by a series of notes (6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6) with various rhythmic markings and slurs. The treble staff contains complex rhythmic patterns and melodic lines, including sequences like '432=176', '2 1 2 2', '1 3', '1 3 13131', and '1 2 432'. The second system continues with similar patterns, ending with a double bass line marked 'pp' and a treble staff with notes like '7', '5', and '6'.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE EIGHTH (LAST SECOND) SECTION

【八】节奏自由 朦胧地。

Musical score for the beginning of the eighth (last second) section. The score is written for double bass (双弦) and includes a treble clef staff. The tempo is marked '【八】节奏自由 朦胧地。' (Ad libitum, ethereal). The score consists of two systems. The first system starts with a bass line containing a half note G (6) and a whole rest, followed by a series of notes (6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 6) with various rhythmic markings and slurs. The treble staff contains complex rhythmic patterns and melodic lines, including sequences like '432=176', '2 1 2 2', '1 3', '1 3 13131', and '1 2 432'. The second system continues with similar patterns, ending with a double bass line marked 'mf' and a treble staff with notes like '7', '5', and '6'.

Example 12. “Dance of the Yi People,” a comparison between the first and eighth (last second) sections (see also Example 13).

## THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND SECTION

### 【二】 优美地

♩ = 60

$\left| \begin{array}{c} \overset{\wedge}{6} \overset{\wedge}{66} \overset{\wedge}{\dot{1}\dot{2}\dot{2}\dot{1}} \\ \vdots \\ \text{(X)} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{c} \overset{\wedge}{6667} \overset{\wedge}{676} \overset{\wedge}{5} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{0333} \ 3 \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{c} \overset{\wedge}{6666} \overset{\wedge}{565} \overset{\wedge}{2} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{0333} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{c} \underline{6} \ \underline{333} \ \underline{3} \ \underline{5} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{0} \ \underline{111} \ 1 \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{c} \overset{\wedge}{6-66\dot{1}} \overset{\wedge}{2\dot{3}\dot{2}\dot{1}} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{0} \ \underline{333} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{c} \overset{\wedge}{6667} \overset{\wedge}{676} \overset{\wedge}{5} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{0333} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{c} \overset{\wedge}{6^{\#}222} \overset{\wedge}{7^{\#}6^{\#}53} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{0} \ \underline{555} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{c} \underline{6666} \ \underline{6} \ \underline{6} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{0333} \ \underline{3} \ \underline{3} \end{array} \right|$

## THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINTH (LAST) SECTION

### 【九】 柔美、幸福地

♩ = 60

$\left| \begin{array}{c} \overset{\wedge}{6} \ \overset{\wedge}{66} \ \overset{\wedge}{\dot{1}\dot{2}\dot{2}\dot{1}} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{6} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{c} \overset{\wedge}{6667} \ \overset{\wedge}{6765} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{0333} \ 3 \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{c} \overset{\wedge}{6666} \ \overset{\wedge}{5652} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{0333} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{c} \underline{6333} \ \underline{3} \ \underline{5} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{0111} \ 1 \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{c} \overset{\wedge}{666\dot{1}} \ \overset{\wedge}{2\dot{3}\dot{2}\dot{1}} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{0333} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{c} \overset{\wedge}{6667} \ \overset{\wedge}{6765} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{0333} \ 3 \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{c} \overset{\wedge}{6222} \ \overset{\wedge}{7^{\#}6^{\#}53} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{0555} \end{array} \right| \left| \begin{array}{c} \overset{\wedge}{6666} \ \underline{6} \ \underline{6} \\ \vdots \\ \underline{0333} \ \underline{3} \ \underline{3} \end{array} \right|$

渐弱、渐远

Example 13. "Dance of the Yi People," a comparison between the second and ninth (last) sections (see also Example 12).

[26] In many ways, “Dance of the Yi People” manifests musically the social and political conditions of the PRC during the mid-twentieth century. Wang Huiran imposed on the piece not only elements of Western art music, but also a conception of musical creativity that emphasizes individual authorship (Stock 1996, 83). Both of these initiatives were considered modern (*xiandai*) or even advanced (*xianjin*) by the CCP. Wang once insisted that the core part of the piece was a result of his own creative effort, and he dismissed a conviction for the act of appropriation in his compositional treatment of the two folk tunes of the Yi people he collected in Yunnan during fieldwork (copyright-china 2011b). Such insistence and dismissal are useful for understanding his contempt for “999 Roses,” a signature song of Taiwanese pop singer Samuel Tai (1966–), as a plagiarized version of “Dance of the Yi People” that lacks formal integrity (*ibid.*). Wang used the traditional *bianzou* strategies no less extensively than his predecessors, but he conceived of these strategies as techniques that helped establish an original work (*yuanchuang zuopin*) rather than performative acts that renewed preexisting materials.

[27] “Dance of the Yi People” also exemplifies how Chinese Communist “music workers” (*yinyue gongzuozhe*) transformed music of minority people into intangible cultural heritage of a multi-ethnic nation-state. Mao Zedong once declared folk song as a medium reflecting the ideal life of his fellow countrymen, and he demanded that such “concealed artifact” originating in segregated rural communities be made articulate, revolutionary, and highly accessible to commoners all over the country (Mao 1975, 20, 32). Wang Huiran was a core member of the Song and Dance Troupe of the Ji’nan Military District’s Department of Politics; his status as a “music worker” of military background seemed to have contributed to his politicized musical creativity as reflected in “Dance of the Yi People.” He incorporated some highly recognizable characteristics of both Chinese traditional music (e.g., the traditional *bianzou* strategies) and Western art music (e.g., diatonic functionality) into the pipa piece, representing minority people (i.e., the Yi people) as a noncreative community with a stationary tradition by situating indigenous folk tunes in the *minyue* national music idiom<sup>13</sup> to be played by a modern(ized) Chinese musical instrument (i.e., the pipa). Such

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13. Despite its frequent appearance in the academic discourse on Chinese music, *minyue* is yet to be clearly defined as a term. Many scholars have used *minyue* to identify the modernized Chinese instrumental music itself or the style of such music. Here, *minyue* refers to “a sonic texture that can be found in many genres of (modern)

representation is indeed analogous to minority people being assimilated into a unified nation-state, in which changes of pipa music were deemed necessary for survival in the modern world where Western ideas would “help institute change and the possibility of freedom from rigid structures of the past” (Cannon 2022, 39). With a so-called systematized appearance brought about by compositional scoring in (Western) cipher notation, borrowing of musical elements from the Western classical form, and utilization of a well-tempered pipa, “Dance of the Yi People” was celebrated as a manifestation of the pipa’s liberation from the civil-martial classification designated by the Chinese literati of the late imperial past.

### **EPILOGUE: THE PIPA SOLO TRADITION AFTER THE MAO ERA**

[28] Beginning in around the 1970s, the pipa solo tradition has been dispersed and branched off outside the PRC. The Suzhou-born brothers Lui Tsun-Yuen (1931–2008) and Lui Pui-Yuen (1934–) settled in the United States and devoted themselves to teaching and performing the pipa traditional repertoire there. Wong Ching-Ping (1948–2013), a former student of Lui Pui-Yuen, moved to Taiwan in the late 1960s and began his long-term collaboration with Law Wing-Fai (1949–), a Hong Kong-based composer, as a pipa soloist. Wong Chi-Ching (195?–), a former principal pipa player of the Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, was Law’s another frequent collaborator; they co-founded the Wuji Ensemble, a Chinese plucked-string ensemble, in 2003. Wu Man (1963–), a U.S. based pipa player who received the first master’s degree in pipa performance conferred by the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing in 1987, has been known for her collaborations with the Kronos Quartet and the Silk Road Ensemble as well as for her performances of new works by composers such as Lou Harrison (1917–2003), Philip Glass (1937–), and Tan Dun (1957–).

[29] The end of the Cultural Revolution was crucial to depoliticizing music composition and other musical activities in the PRC since then. While pipa virtuosi such as Liu Dehai (1937–2020) devoted themselves to inventing fingerpicking techniques for enhancement of the pipa’s musical expressiveness, professional composers such as Zhu Jianer (1922–2017) started using twentieth-century composition techniques in addition to those originating in the Western classical form, to explore new possibilities of presenting the pipa in concert halls

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Chinese music that is reminiscent of traditional practices but also evocative of Western concert music of eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe” (Lam, 2008, 43).



around the world. New pipa pieces written in the *minyue* national music idiom became out of fashion when professional composers began to supersede prominent players in creating pipa pieces that, through abstract symbolism instead of musical practices, reflected a new sensibility toward traditional culture. Law Wing-Fai's pipa pieces, for example, show the composer's interest in calligraphy and his attempt to translate artistic view into musical expression:

Although both music and calligraphy have something to do with time, they are two distinct kinds of art. Therefore, Law generalizes three instructions of feelings for appreciation [of his pipa pieces]: 1. The sensation of ink brush. The technique of sweeping strings (*sao xian*) in pipa playing arouses excitement. Yet, sonically speaking, [the deployment of] this technique alludes to the diffusion of ink [on a paper]. 2. The strong perception of contour. The ups and downs of melodic contours is similar to the cursive script in Chinese calligraphy. 3. The feeling of spirit and atmosphere (*qi yun*) as progressing all at once with high musical tension such that foreigners can also recognize (Chow 2011).

The case of Law demonstrates contemporary pipa pieces being more composer-oriented than their predecessors (Lau 2008). In whatever sense, these pieces leave pipa players with less creative freedom than those from the pipa traditional repertoire.

[30] The dominance of conservatory-style pedagogy in the PRC, Taiwan, and Hong Kong in the late twentieth century and onward has resulted in significant changes in the pipa solo tradition as well. First, the replacement of learning by rote with the use of standardized syllabi and detailed scores renders musical training less accommodating to a player's development of stylistic traits. Second, the development of the *minyue* national-style repertoire in the mid-twentieth century, followed by the globalization of avant-garde music composition, resituate the pipa traditional repertoire as stylistic instead of canonical. Third, the demise of the Five Eminent Schools of pipa playing fosters a division of creative labor that emphasizes originality and innovation. One could attribute all these changes in the pipa solo tradition to the sociopolitical transformation in China throughout the twentieth century. These changes were irreversible because they were inseparable from particular social, political, material, and economic conditions. One could no longer answer questions such as how pipa players should engage with the traditional repertoire and how composers should

write new pipa pieces without rethinking what creativity means in the musical world nowadays (Cannon 2022, 42–53). What is the relationship between tradition and creativity? How is such relationship mediated by the changing understanding of either tradition or creativity? Is tradition a set of boundaries that give rise to a certain understanding of creativity? How malleable are such boundaries? To what extent does modernization and nationalism involve in shaping such boundaries? These questions prompt us to rethink whether the notion of tradition is still applicable to musical performance in general and pipa solo performance in particular.

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