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Sounds of Coexistence: Traditional East Asian Flutes and Their Impact on Contemporary
Western Flute Repertoire and Performance Practices

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of
Musical Arts

by

Jennifer Minsoo Jo

2024

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Sounds of Coexistence: Traditional East Asian Flutes and Their Impact on Contemporary
Western Flute Repertoire and Performance Practices

by

Jennifer Minsoo Jo

Doctor of Musical Arts

University of California, Los Angeles, 2024

Professor Jan Noelle Berry Baker, Chair

This dissertation examines the integration of traditional East Asian flutes from Korea, Japan, and China into contemporary Western flute repertoire. It explores how Asian composers, trained in Western musical traditions, incorporate elements from their cultural heritage into their compositions. The research begins with an in-depth analysis of the performance techniques and acoustic characteristics of traditional East Asian flutes. Subsequently, it explores the compositional trends within each country and how contemporary composers like Paul Yeon Lee, Zhou Long, and Kazuo Fukushima blend these traditional elements into their works. Additionally, the study addresses the ethical considerations of cultural globalization, focusing on the delicate balance between preservation and innovation. By thoroughly investigating the fusion of Eastern and Western influences in contemporary flute compositions, this study aims to contribute to the cultural diversity within classical music, spotlight underrepresented flute

repertoire, and promote a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics involved in cross-cultural musical exchanges.

This dissertation of Jennifer Minsoo Jo is approved.

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University of California, Los Angeles

2024

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family members, supportive boyfriend, and esteemed mentors, whose profound guidance, unwavering support, and invaluable assistance have been instrumental in shaping me into the musician and individual I am today.

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JENNIFER JO

Jennifer Jo is a Korean-American flutist and educator based in Los Angeles. She is the Teaching Associate for the Woodwind Chamber Music course at UCLA and previously served as a TA for the Art of Listening course. Jo has been a fellow with UCLA's Gluck Foundation—performing chamber music throughout LA—and with the UCLA Music Partnership Program—teaching flute lessons at the Hollywood Boys and Girls Club and assisting with managing the program at multiple sites.

An active orchestral and chamber musician, Jennifer has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Walt Disney Hall and the Hollywood Bowl under the direction of Gustavo Dudamel, the Pacific Symphony, and the Civic Orchestra of Los Angeles under Anthony Parther. She previously held the Piccolo Fellow Chair with the American Youth Symphony.

Jo has won First Prizes in many prestigious competitions, including the 2021 Southern California Philharmonic Concerto Competition, where she performed as a concerto soloist with the orchestra. Additionally, she received First Prizes in the 2019 San Francisco Flute Society Competition, the 2019 South Carolina Flute Society Competition, the 2020 Sacramento Flute Club Competition, and the 2016-17 Carnegie Mellon University School of Music Concerto Competition, performing as a concerto soloist with the Wind Ensemble. Jo has also won top prizes in the 2022 Berkeley Piano Club Winds and Brass Competition, the 2021 Florida Flute Association Young Artist Competition, the 2021 New Jersey Flute Society Young Artist Competition, the 2016 Yamaha Young Performing Artists Competition, and the 2016 National YoungArts Competition. She will appear as a concerto soloist with the Orchestra Santa Monica at the Redlands Bowl Grand Finals in June 2024.

Jo has performed at festivals such as the John F. Kennedy Center and Tanglewood Seiji Ozawa Hall and internationally in Switzerland, France, Norway, and Canada. She also performs with the New York Flutists in Manhattan. She will appear at the Festival Napa Valley in the summer of 2024.

Jo graduated with a Master of Music degree from UCLA in 2022. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Flute Performance with a minor in Psychology from Carnegie Mellon University, where she graduated with both University and College Honors and was the recipient of the Pi Kappa Lambda National Music Honors Award upon graduation. Her teachers include Benjamin Smolen, Sarah Jackson, Alberto Almarza, Denis Bouriakov, Maria Tamburrino, and Jeanne Baxtresser.

As an educator, she serves on the faculty at the California Summer School for the Arts at CalArts and manages a thriving private studio in LA. Her students have won First Prizes in national and international competitions, as well as Principal Chairs in top youth orchestras and California All-State honor bands.

Jo is a Haynes Flutes Young Artist and plays on a custom 14k-gold Haynes flute.

INTRODUCTION

My fascination with traditional flutes started from an early age. For over a decade growing up, I dedicated my weekends to attending Korean School—an initiative brought upon by my parents to deepen and maintain my connection with my heritage and ease communication with my family. As a part of the school's extracurricular offerings, I chose to immerse myself in various traditional Korean art forms, taking weekly classes in traditional Korean fan dancing (*buchaechum*), drumming (*samulnori*), and calligraphy (*seoye*).

Around this time, I gained exposure to the captivating sounds of the Korean *daegeum* flute, which I heard on a trip to Korea at a traditional *gugak* performance. In the eighth grade, a few years after my initial introduction to the flute with the fifth-grade band, my fascination led me to enroll in weekly *daegeum* classes at my Korean school. My early exposure to traditional music kindled my interest in exploring this area, and during my studies at UCLA, I enrolled in the Music of Korea Ensemble class within the Ethnomusicology department. Under the expert guidance of Dr. Gamin Kang (who is a special advisor for this dissertation and also the official holder of Korea's Important Intangible Cultural Asset No. 46), I learned and performed on various traditional Korean instruments, such as the *danso*, *piri*, *gayageum*, and *jangu*.

Performing *Arirang* on the solo *danso* was a full-circle moment for me.

Furthermore, during my Master's studies at UCLA, I had the opportunity to perform a solo on the Japanese *ryuteki* flute with the UCLA Wind Ensemble under the direction of Dr. Travis Cross, furthering my curiosity and appreciation for traditional East Asian flutes.



Figure 1-1. Performance with the UCLA Music of Korea Ensemble, 2023.¹

Building on my experience in traditional East Asian musical praxis, I present a comparative study of various traditional East Asian flutes from Korea, Japan, and China—such as the *daegeum*, *shakuhachi*, and *dizi*. In the initial section (Chapters 1-3), I delve into the historical origins of these flutes, accompanied by an exploration of how the historical and political circumstances of the respective countries have shaped the evolution and cultural preservation of musical traditions. Following this, I analyze the unique acoustic characteristics and performance techniques associated with these flutes. This thorough investigation encompasses technical intricacies, including embouchure, breath control, and specific playing techniques.

In Section 2 (Chapters 4-6), I explore the philosophical, religious, cultural, aesthetic, and political influences that have shaped each East Asian country's rich musical legacy. Moreover, I

¹ UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, *UCLA Music of Korea Ensemble Concert*, June 2023, June 2023.

examine the lasting impact of these influences on the contemporary music scene in each country. This exploration is essential in comprehending the origins of musical traditions and gaining a more nuanced understanding of the musical evolution within each East Asian country, transcending superficial stereotypes of East Asian music.

In Section 3 (Chapters 7-9), I examine the philosophies, culture, and musical styles of three notable East-Asian composers, Paul Yeon Lee (South Korea), Zhou Long (China), and Kazuo Fukushima (Japan), and discuss how their influence of Eastern traditions, coupled with their Western education, culminate in a unique musical style. By examining each composer's lesser-known or newer works for the flute, I explore how the composers replicated traditional performance practices and sounds on the modern-day flute through various compositional techniques. Furthermore, I examine how each composer used music to express their experiences of war, colonization, immigration, globalization, and the broader political and philosophical movements of their time.

Moreover, my dissertation highlights the juxtaposition and interplay between Eastern and Western music theory, notation, and instruments and how these traditional musical techniques inspired composers like Lee, Zhou, and Fukushima to integrate these traditions into modern-day flute playing. Given the popularity of Historically Informed Performances (HIP), “a way of playing early music that would approximate, as close as possible, what the piece would have sounded like when performed in its original time and place,”² it is crucial to be aware of cultural intentions and traditions to deeply understand and enhance the performance of the work.

² Alison DeSimone, “Historically Informed Performance: A Short Guide,” Carnegie Hall, accessed May 21, 2024, <https://www.carnegiehall.org/Explore/Articles/2022/04/29/Historically-Informed-Performance>.

As I explore the nuances between traditional and modern flute performance practices, I will also briefly delve into the ethical considerations surrounding the globalization of classical music with East Asian influences and its effects on cultural preservation and homogenization. With the recent but long-overdue awakening to create diverse programming of works by underrepresented composers, there has been a global resurgence of awareness and interest in composers of Asian descent. While this cross-cultural exchange has led to the creation of popular, contemporary genres of both Eastern and Western elements that may be appealing to Western audiences, it is crucial to navigate these exchanges delicately, maintaining aesthetic sensibility, preserving historical and intellectual contexts, and avoiding sweeping generalizations of Orientalism.

In my dissertation, I ask: To what extent can we maintain cultural sensitivity and ethnological identities when writing and performing contemporary music? How do we refrain from making sweeping generalizations of East Asian countries? In what manner can we honor the core of traditions without necessarily playing on the traditional instruments that it was intended for? Finally, how can we celebrate the uniqueness of traditional music and balance contemporary creativity without appropriating elements that merely cater to the Western preconceptions of traditional acoustics and aesthetics?

Through this research, I aim to contribute to the promotion of cultural diversity and greater representation in classical music and shed light on flute repertoire that often goes overlooked. As an East Asian flutist, this research has allowed me to deepen my connection with and appreciate my heritage, and I aspire to contribute my distinct perspective and experiences to enhance the overall richness of the musical landscape.

PREFACE

EAST MEETS WEST: MUSICAL EXOTICISM

But there is neither East nor West,
Border, nor breed, nor birth,
When two strong men stand face to face,
Tho' they come from the ends of the earth.³
—Rudyard Kipling, *The Ballad of East and West*

In the opening line of his 1889 poem, *The Ballad of East and West*, Rudyard Kipling writes, "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," which captures the sentiment often associated with cultural division and irreconcilable differences. Against the backdrop of the late 19th century—a time marked by colonialism, imperialism, and Eurocentrism—Western powers often asserted their superiority over other cultures. Kipling's ballad reflects these attitudes, portraying the East as enigmatic, exotic, and fundamentally distinct from the West. However, within this dichotomy lies a deeper narrative of human connection and understanding.

The 20th century was a period of significant cultural evolution. There was a growing interest in exoticism and Orientalism, with Western composers integrating Eastern traditions, techniques, and melodies into their work. The incorporation of Eastern elements in 20th-century classical music was nuanced and intricate; it not only infused Western classical music with a fresh flair but also sparked debates on cultural sensitivity. At its core, this cross-cultural musical exchange allowed composers to break boundaries, preserve cultural traditions and aesthetics, and

³ Rudyard Kipling, "The Ballad of East and West," The Kipling Society, 1889, https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/poem/poems_eastwest.htm.

push the boundaries of artistic expression.⁴ However, Western composers' portrayal of the East often carried underlying assumptions and power dynamics, raising questions about authenticity, appropriation, and the perpetuation of stereotypes.

Throughout history, 'the Orient'⁵ has often been depicted as an enigmatic and mysterious realm, juxtaposed against the perceived rationality, progress, and sophistication of the West.⁶ Said delves into how European culture fortified its identity by positioning itself against 'the Orient', almost as a mirrored reflection. He distinguishes between 'the Orient' (also known as 'The Other' or 'the East') and 'the Occident' (primarily Britain and France due to their colonial empires until World War II), emphasizing the enduring dichotomy and its global impact.⁷ This intentional dichotomy allows the Occident to define its essence through its supposed opposition to 'the Orient,' viewing it as a kind of "surrogate" or "underground self."⁸ Said underscores the deep entanglement of European material civilization and culture with elements from 'the Orient,' highlighting how this dynamic interplay shapes 'the Occident's' self-perception.⁹ Consequently, 'the Occident' constructs its identity by deliberately contrasting itself with 'the Orient,' using this dichotomy as a mechanism to shape its self-image and identity.

⁴ W. Anthony Sheppard, *Extreme Exoticism: Japan in the American Musical Imagination* (Oxford University Press, 2019), 2.

⁵ The term 'the Orient' historically refers to regions of Asia, particularly East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. It has been widely used in historical and literary contexts. However, it is important to note that the term has often been associated with a Eurocentric perspective that exoticizes and generalizes diverse cultures and peoples under a single label, thereby perpetuating stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings. In this paper, the use of the term 'the Orient' is strictly academic and geographical, intended to refer specifically to the regions as defined in historical contexts relevant to the discussed time periods. It is not used to endorse or perpetuate the outdated and stereotypical views that have historically been associated with the term and seeks to reclaim and neutralize the term within an academic context.

⁶ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 2004), 57.

⁷ Burney, Shehla. "CHAPTER ONE: Orientalism: The Making of the Other." *Counterpoints* 417 (2012), 23, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42981698>.

⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

⁹ Said, *Orientalism*, 2

Moreover, Orientalism, as discussed by Said, emerges from the Western tendency to view and portray the East through a lens of assumed superiority. As Said discusses in his book, *Orientalism*, this phenomenon represents "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and exercising authority over 'the Orient.'"¹⁰ (In this context, 'the Orient' encompasses any population diverging from the mainstream European perspective.) 'The Orient,' thus, becomes a canvas upon which some Western composers improvise their perceptions, often projecting fears and disliked attributes onto it, thereby stripping the East of its authentic voice and culture.

Orientalism and exoticism are closely related—the term 'exoticism' pertains to the imitation of elements in locations or environments that are perceived as distant from the observer's familiar context.¹¹ In the musical sense, exoticism takes shape as a collection of stylistic elements attributed by composers and listeners—whether accurately or inaccurately—to distant cultures or peoples.¹² These stylistic elements that register as "exotic" include, but are not limited to, whole tone scales, chromaticism, distinctive rhythmic or melodic patterns deriving from the dances from the country, quick ornaments, and complex and undefined chords.¹³ Regardless of how innocuous or impartial this definition may appear, the portrayal of difference carries significant historical and political connotations.¹⁴ The enchantment with the mystique of 'the Orient' was driven by the fascination for its distinct sounds, instruments, and traditions. Whether through the use of "exotic" modes, the implementation of distinct instrumental sounds, or even the visual spectacles in dramatic operas, composers have sought to evoke the essence of

¹⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, 3

¹¹ Ralph P. Locke, "A Broader View of Musical Exoticism," *The Journal of Musicology* 24, no. 4 (2007), 479, accessed March 15, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1525/jm.2007.24.4.477>.

¹² Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 43.

¹³ Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, 51-54.

¹⁴ Kristy Riggs, "Review of Ralph Locke. 2009. *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press," *Current Musicology*, no. 88 (2009): 120, <https://doi.org/10.7916/cm.v0i88.5169>.

the "Other" through various means. In Jonathan Bellman's book, *The Exotic in Western Music*, he emphasizes that "Exoticism is not about the earnest study of foreign cultures...The exotic equation is a balance of familiar and unfamiliar; just enough 'there' to spice the 'here' but remain comprehensible in making the point."¹⁵

While these typologies simplify the concept, they also present a tension between reality and imagination, as composers, librettists, and performers strive to create believable settings grounded in actual or perceived locations, allowing for the projection of imaginative scenarios.¹⁶ Some musical works categorized as "Oriental" undeniably perpetuate varying images of the region and its inhabitants, spanning from idealized depictions to one-sided truths and even to derogatory and defamatory portrayals. Works like *Aida* and *Madame Butterfly* continue to shape Western perceptions of the countries they portray—often reinforcing limited, distorted, or entirely fictional and self-serving Western stereotypes of foreign cultures—frequently rooted in colonialist narratives.¹⁷ It also encourages the propagation of sexist stereotypes regarding East Asian women, portraying them as submissive and passive.

Western narratives have frequently portrayed the confluence of the West and the East as a triumphant tale of conquest: the dominant Western male encounters the fragile Eastern woman. Giacomo Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly* exemplifies this narrative, portraying the protagonist, Cio-Cio-San, as submissive and exotic. Despite Puccini's attempts to incorporate Japanese elements, critics argue that his portrayal falls short, relying on musical orientalism to assert Western dominance over the East. Ultimately, the opera symbolizes the triumph of the

¹⁵ Jonathan Bellman, *The Exotic in Western Music* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1998), xiii.

¹⁶ Ralph P. Locke, "Exoticism and Orientalism in Music: Problems for the Worldly Critic," in *Edward Said and the Work of the Critic: Speaking Truth to Power*, ed. Paul A. Bové (New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2000), 267, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822380092-014>.

¹⁷ Locke, "Exoticism and Orientalism in Music," 280.

West over the East, reinforcing power imbalances and stereotypes. She is portrayed with markings of exoticism and fragility, a common stereotype of Asian women during the 19th and 20th centuries. Despite Puccini's efforts to incorporate Japanese melodies, Japanese instruments, and Eastern compositional techniques, critics say that Puccini struggled to capture the essence of Japan musically as best he could.¹⁸ Ultimately, Pinkerton triumphs over Butterfly, both in a literal victory through his abandonment of her and in a symbolic sense, mirroring the dominance of 'the Occident' over 'the Orient' and underscoring the opera's underlying narrative of cultural hegemony.

Furthermore, in a term that musicologist Barbara Mittler terms "pentatonic romanticism,"¹⁹ composers cloak their compositions in exoticism, relying heavily on pentatonic scales and other stereotypical elements associated with non-Western music to evoke a sense of the "Other."²⁰ This perpetuates the notion of certain cultures as exotic and primitive, reinforcing power dynamics and hierarchies between the West and the rest of the world. The reality of the East encompasses not only the lives and cultures of its people—as perceived by the West—but also the harsh realities they face due to Western colonization.

In the realm of postmodernism, the integration of East Asian cultural elements into Western art music has effectively bridged cultural divides and ushered in a new sonic landscape. Composers like Benjamin Britten, John Zorn, Olivier Messiaen, and Karlheinz Stockhausen explored Japanese culture in their works. Britten's *Curlew River* (1964), inspired by his interest

¹⁸ Dorinne K. Kondo, "'M. Butterfly': Orientalism, Gender, and a Critique of Essentialist Identity," *Cultural Critique*, no. 16 (1990): 10, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1354343>.

¹⁹ Barbara Mittler, "Mirrors and Double Mirrors: The Politics of Identity in New Music from Hong Kong and Taiwan," *Chime* 9 (1996): 46–56.

²⁰ Christian Utz and Laurence Sinclair Willis, *Musical Composition in the Context of Globalization: New Perspectives on Music History in the 20th and 21st Century* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2021), 40.

in *Noh* theater, is a church parable that intertwines elements of *Noh* with English medieval religious drama. John Zorn's *Forbidden Fruit* (1987) blends Japanese texts with the sounds of a string quartet and turntables, showcasing a postmodern synthesis. Similarly, Messiaen's *Sept Haikai* (1962) draws from *gagaku*, Japanese imperial court music, while Stockhausen's *Telemusik* (1966) embraces Japanese music through universalism and collage techniques.

Meanwhile, American composers like Lou Harrison, Harry Partch, and John Adams turned their gaze to China. Harrison's *Pipa Concerto* (2008) shows the influence of the microtonal pitch of East Asian music and the traditional Chinese *pipa* instrument. Partch explored Asian tuning and just intonation, infusing his compositions with Eastern philosophy and performance techniques. Adams' opera *Nixon in China* (1987) commemorates the historic meeting between President Nixon and Mao Zedong, illustrating Western composers' creative engagement with Chinese themes.²¹

Within this intersection, we must also examine the composers' roles, their relationships with traditions, and how they are perceived across different cultures. These considerations offer insights into their musical choices. Often, issues regarding a composer's true identity and perception are sidelined. Composer Tan Dun said, "In Europe and even Japan, everyone thinks I'm an American composer...But in America, I'm a Chinese composer."²² This underscores how composers may be categorized based on identity as a selling point rather than evaluated solely on their creative output.

²¹ Min-gyeong Son, "Western Composers' Encounter with Korean Traditional Music - With a Focus on Compositional Aspects and Aesthetics of Music in the Global Era" (DMA diss., Seoul National University, 2021), 69.

²² Frederick Lau, "When a Great Nation Emerges: Chinese Music in the World," *China and the West*, May 9, 2017, 272, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1qv5n9n.16>.

In recent years, there has been a noticeable surge in the preference for more diverse compositions, even using ethnic classifications as marketing tools. The once clear-cut dichotomy between Eastern and Western musical traditions has become increasingly blurred. To truly grasp the intent and meanings of the composer, it is essential to delve into the multifaceted meanings embedded within their compositions and the geopolitical and cultural contexts in which they operate. Composer Michael Tenzer has recognized the intricacies inherent in such cultural musical exchanges, emphasizing the importance of “distinguish[ing] between hybrid music that [is] exploitive and those that are genuine, those that are slapdash and those designed with care, those that are experimental novelties and those with the potential to endure.”²³

While the boundaries between cultural appreciation and appropriation may sometimes appear ambiguous, it is imperative for creators and performers alike to navigate these intricacies with care and sensitivity. Maintaining cultural sensitivity and ethnological identities in contemporary music involves deeply understanding the cultural contexts and traditions of the music being incorporated or referenced. It requires thoughtful consideration of how cultural elements are portrayed and utilized in compositions and performances to ensure they are represented authentically and respectfully. Balancing contemporary creativity with traditional music requires a respectful approach that acknowledges the origins and cultural contexts of traditional musical elements. We can better appreciate its significance and relevance by contextualizing the composition within its cultural milieu. This approach involves engaging with specific cultural contexts, histories, and perspectives rather than relying on oversimplified or distorted representations.

²³ Derek B. Scott, “Orientalism and Musical Style,” *The Musical Quarterly* 82, no. 2 (1998): 9, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/742411>.

However, how do we even define ‘authenticity’ as it pertains to musical performance? In his book *Authenticities*, Peter Kivy tackles the challenge of defining authenticity:

1. Of authority, authoritative.
2. Original, firsthand, prototypical.
3. Proceeding from its reputed source or author: of undisputed origin, genuine.
4. Belonging to himself, own, proper.
5. Acting of itself, self-originated, automatic.²⁴

Kivy identifies two main approaches to achieving authenticity in musical performance: the first involves adhering closely to historical or composer-intended norms, while the other emphasizes the performer's own interpretation and expression. Although achieving absolute authenticity may pose challenges, the pursuit of it enriches our understanding and connection to music. Without authentic portrayal, elements such as emotions, moods, or imagery may stray from their intended essence, and the value of the musical experience becomes compromised.²⁵

In my own pursuit of authenticity, I adopt Christian Utz’s intercultural approach to analyze the musical works in my dissertation, integrating insights from the composers’ backgrounds with an examination of cultural, social, and historical contexts. Utz defines the word ‘intercultural’ as “the interaction of two or more cultural discourses – a form of interaction that must inevitably critically question the lines separating “cultural entities.”²⁶ He advocates for a more nuanced and respectful approach to intercultural music, encouraging us to move beyond superficial stereotypes and engage deeply with the rich diversity of musical traditions worldwide.

²⁴ James Young and Peter Kivy, "Authenticities: Philosophical Reflections on Musical Performance," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 54 (1997): 3, <https://doi.org/10.2307/431098>.

²⁵ John Hendron, "A Place for Authenticity in Education: Taking a Musical Debate One Step Further," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 7, no. 2 (1999): 94-100, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40327140>.

²⁶ Utz, *Composition in the Context of Globalization*, 38.

By doing so, we can challenge outdated notions of cultural superiority and foster genuine appreciation and understanding across cultural boundaries.

Edward Said's notion of the contrapuntal, which he explores in *Culture and Imperialism*, provides a compelling framework that complements this approach. Said borrows from the musical technique of counterpoint, where independent melodic lines weave together to create a rich, complex harmony. He extends this concept to literary and cultural analysis and suggests that we should read texts and cultural phenomena with an awareness of their multiple, intersecting histories and contexts. Said describes the contrapuntal approach as incorporating spatial or geographical and rhetorical practices—inflections, limits, contrasts, intrusions, inclusions, prohibitions—that reveal a complex and uneven topography. This approach is not modeled on a symphony, which tends to show a unified and harmonious whole, but rather on an atonal ensemble, allowing a plurality of voices to coexist in dynamic interaction. This method acknowledges the interwoven and sometimes contradictory elements within cultural artifacts, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of cultural exchange and power dynamics.²⁷

This concept aligns well with the intercultural methodology. Both frameworks highlight the importance of multiple perspectives and the dynamic interaction between cultural discourses. They challenge us to consider how different cultural narratives intersect, overlap, and sometimes conflict, offering a richer and more nuanced understanding of cultural production and exchange.

Yayoi Everett pushes this intercultural approach to analysis further in her article, *From Exoticism to Interculturalism: Counterframing the East–West Binary*, by advocating for the development of analytical methods that reflect the diverse cultural perspectives of composers,

²⁷ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 318.

audiences, and analysts. Additionally, she emphasizes the importance of creating institutional structures that enable scholars from diverse backgrounds to specialize in non-Western musical traditions and promote the publication of theoretical works centered on non-Western music.²⁸

By contextualizing the compositions within the broader framework of their cultural heritage, I aim to uncover the intricate interplay between musical expression and societal influences. Through meticulous research and analysis, I seek to highlight the complexities of cultural exchange and appropriation in contemporary music, move beyond superficial representations and Orientalist narratives, and emphasize the importance of respecting and honoring diverse musical traditions. Through a critical examination of the power dynamics inherent in cultural exchange, I seek to foster a more inclusive and respectful dialogue that celebrates diversity and promotes cross-cultural understanding in the realm of music composition and performance. Ultimately, by exploring the multifaceted layers of meaning embedded within the music, my dissertation endeavors to contribute to a deeper understanding of the cultural dynamics shaping musical creativity in our globalized world.

In the third line of the epigraph that opens this chapter, "When two strong men stand face to face, Tho' they come from the ends of the earth," a powerful narrative unfolds, suggesting the potential for transcending cultural barriers. This is echoed visually in the way the British soldier and Afghani warrior look at one another, face to face. Within their interaction appear glimmers of mutual respect and comprehension, challenging the notion of irreconcilable differences. This resolution highlights the potential for empathy and reconciliation, serving as a profound reminder of the shared human experience and our ability to bridge cultural divides. This

²⁸ Yayoi U. Everett, "From Exoticism to Interculturalism: Counterframing the East–West Binary," *Music Theory Spectrum* 43, no. 2 (Fall 2021): 336, <https://doi.org/10.1093/mts/mtab001>.

narrative holds profound implications in the realm of music performance and analysis, underscoring the importance of embracing and honoring diverse musical traditions.

Allow me to conclude this preface with a thought from Toru Takemitsu, a renowned Japanese composer known for his innovative approach to blending Eastern and Western musical traditions. Takemitsu once remarked: “The role of the artist is to serve as a bridge for all men to accomplish this, and the artist must be fully and completely aware of this task. For the Japanese to be learning from the West and for Westerners—Europeans and Americans—to be deepening their appreciation of “Oriental” culture is a difficult undertaking, a very serious one that we must all confront. I'm not sure that our mutual intercultural understanding is complete or has reached an ideal state yet. There are still problems that separate us: senses of differences of race and color. These are the things which we must strive to transcend.”²⁹

This dissertation serves as a gateway to understanding the interplay of Eastern and Western musical traditions, emphasizing the importance of cultural sensitivity and mutual respect. As you delve into my dissertation, you will explore the tangible impact of Eastern traditions within the contemporary music landscape and experience the resonance of diverse cultural influences. In the spirit of Takemitsu's vision, let us advance with a commitment to not only celebrate the diversity of our global heritage but also to transcend barriers, cultivating authentic intercultural dialogue and enriching our collective insights.

²⁹ Tōru Takemitsu, “Contemporary Music in Japan,” *Perspectives of New Music* 27, no. 2 (1989): 204, <https://doi.org/10.2307/833410>.

SECTION ONE

EAST ASIAN FLUTES: THEN AND NOW

EAST ASIAN FLUTES: THEN AND NOW

Traditional East Asian flutes have been recognized over time for their hauntingly beautiful tone color and ethereal voice. Embedded deeply within the fabric of East Asian cultures, the *daegeum*, *dizi*, and *shakuhachi* flutes have played pivotal roles in traditional court music, ritual ceremonies, and folk performances. The meditative and introspective qualities of these flutes have gained significant attention in contemporary settings, making them popular choices for modern film scores and orchestral and operatic compositions.

In this section, I will delve into the unique characteristics and cultural significance of the East Asian flutes from Korea, China, and Japan. These flutes serve as emblematic representations of their respective cultures, embodying centuries of tradition and artistic expression. The objective of this section is to provide critical background knowledge for composers and performers who are studying and composing flute music with traditional East Asian influences.

Starting with Chapter 1 on Traditional Korean Flutes, I will discuss the significance of the *daegeum* flute, which stands as a symbol of both cultural heritage and spiritual resonance. Crafted from bamboo, the *daegeum* produces a rich, resonant sound that resonates deeply with Korean folklore and spirituality.

In Chapter 2, Traditional Chinese Flutes, I explore the *dizi* flute and its prominence in Chinese musical tradition. Characterized by its distinctive buzzing membrane, the *dizi* produces a diverse range of timbres and expressive capabilities. Its origins trace back thousands of years, to when it was used in imperial courts, temples, and village festivities alike. Today, the *dizi*

continues to captivate audiences with its emotive power, featuring prominently in both traditional and contemporary Chinese music compositions.

Lastly, in Chapter 3, Traditional Japanese Flutes, I examine the *shakuhachi*'s profound sense of spirituality and introspection. Originally used as a tool for meditation, the *shakuhachi* has found its way into modern musical contexts, enriching compositions across various genres with its distinct voice.

By exploring the historical significance and artistic versatility of these East Asian flutes, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the intricate interplay between tradition and innovation in contemporary music written by composers of East Asian descent. Additionally, I will provide insights into the background of traditional music in each country, along with a comprehensive analysis of the structure, tonality, traditional notation, performance techniques, fingering, posture, vibrato, and contemporary applications of the *daegeum*, *dizi*, and *shakuhachi* flutes.

CHAPTER ONE: KOREAN TRADITIONAL FLUTES

1.1 Background on Korean Traditional Music

This section provides a background overview of Korean traditional music, followed by an examination of the *daegeum* flute and its performance practices. The aim is to offer readers and performers a comprehensive understanding of works influenced by Korean traditional music and the *daegeum* flute.

Traditional Korean music is characterized by its intricate and diverse rhythms and melodies. Within Korea, two distinct musical cultures exist: *gugak*, a style dedicated to preserving traditional music, and *yangak*, one that embraces Western musical traditions.

Gugak, the traditional music of Korea, is a complex and rich musical tradition that has evolved over centuries, capturing the essence of Korean cultural identity. Rooted in the country's historical, spiritual, and social contexts, *gugak* encompasses a diverse range of genres, each with its unique characteristics and cultural significance. From the refined court music of *jeongak* to the ritualistic villagers' music of *nongak* to the soulful vocal music of *pansori* and the rhythmic melodies of *sanjo*, *gugak* reflects the nuanced expressions of Korea's collective experiences. Beyond its musical aspects, *gugak* plays a vital role in various cultural practices, becoming an integral part of rituals, ceremonies, and communal celebrations.³⁰ The word 'gugak' was coined following Korea's liberation in 1945 in an effort to conserve and promote traditional performing arts.³¹

³⁰ Sarah Kim, "The Historical and Cultural Influences of Gagok 가곡 (Korean Art Song): A Musical Guide," Digital Scholarship@UNLV (dissertation, 2019), <https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/thesesdissertations/3815/>.

³¹ Ihn-gyo Bae, "National Music," Global North Korea, The East Asia Institute, July 29, 2021, 2.

Yangak, the musical culture in Korea that embraces Western music, represents a transformative fusion of traditional Korean identity with Western musical influences. This cultural phenomenon emerged as Korea underwent significant modernization in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During this time, Western music found its way into Korea through Christian missionaries, who introduced Christian hymns and missionary schools that taught Western music.³² In 1901, Franz Eckert (1852-1916), a German composer and conductor, laid the foundation for European-style instrumental music in Korea by establishing a Western-style military band.³³ Public concerts were held weekly from 1902 to 1915, and the military band musicians were educated with the Western music theory system.³⁴ The practice of Korean traditional music began to diminish as Western music appeared in both primary and higher-level education. During Japanese colonial rule from 1910-1945, Korean cultural heritage sites and historic structures were destroyed, and the use of the Korean language was prohibited.³⁵ Music critic Pak Yong-ku has said of this period, “What followed [after the annexation] was almost inevitable. Korea then had no choice but to swallow what must be categorized as a ‘Japanised’ version of Western music. So forceful was this process that our fundamental tradition in music nearly died away.”³⁶ As a result, Japanised Western music became more familiar to Korean

³² Mun Soo Kim, “Use of National Folk Music in a Style Utilizing Original and Modern Procedures: A Case Study of Korean Contemporary Art Music 16 Arirang Variations for Piano Solo by Bahk Jun Sang” (dissertation, 2013), 7.

³³ Kim, “Case Study of Korean Contemporary Art Music,” 8.

³⁴ Jeong-Ha Kim, “Korean Primary School Music Education during Japanese Colonial Rule (1910-1945)” (thesis, 2013), 89.

³⁵ Tobias Janz and Chien-Chang Yang, eds. *Decentering Musical Modernity: Perspectives on East Asian and European Music History*. 1st ed. transcript (Verlag, 2019). 4, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv371c0rn>.

³⁶ Roald Maliangkay, “Their Masters’ Voice: Korean Traditional Music SPs (Standard Play Records) under Japanese Colonial Rule,” *The World of Music* 49, no. 3 (2007): 54, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41699788>.

children than the traditional *gugak*, and this forced assimilation contributed to an erosion of Korean cultural identity.³⁷

With the rapid popularity of *yangak*, traditional Korean music was being pushed to the background. In response to the shifts towards *yangak* music, composers sought to revive the traditional soundscape by incorporating modern instruments and contemporary compositional techniques. Following Korea's liberation from Japanese occupation in 1945, the Korean government undertook a dedicated initiative to revitalize *gugak*. In the 1960s, the government-sponsored composition competitions established the National Gugak Center and the Cultural Properties Protection Law. This momentum from the government paved the way for a new national genre of music called *changjak gugak* (also known as *sin gugak* or “new traditional music”)—a fusion of traditional musical instruments with Western compositional styles—to be born and continuously developed.³⁸

The birth of the first Korean traditional instruments orchestra made headlines on July 23, 1964, marking a significant milestone. This orchestra aimed not only to perform classical and folk music repertoires but also newly composed pieces. To address the lack of orchestral compositions, government and academic institutions organized calls and commissions, leading to a rapid increase in available pieces. By the 1980s, the number of Korean music composers rose as universities offered separate degrees in Korean music composition. Composers experimented by blending Western classical principles with traditional elements, facing early critiques and prompting stylistic shifts in pursuit of balance. The Korean orchestra's evolution continues to shape the education system, and over its fifty-year development, the modern Korean traditional

³⁷ Hilary Vanessa Finchum-Sung, “Designing a Fresh Tradition: Young Kugak and Sonic Imaginings for a Progressive Korea.” *The World of Music* 1, no. 1 (2012): 121–44, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41699979>.

³⁸ Finchum-Sung, “Designing a Fresh Tradition,” 123.

orchestra has shown resilience, adapting to modernization, cultural promotion, and globalization.³⁹

1.2 The Daegeum Flute

The *daegeum* is one of the most important woodwind instruments in Korea, integral to both traditional court and folk music. Crafted from bamboo, the *daegeum* traces its origins back to the seventh century and is renowned for its unique, resonant sound. Its distinctive tonal quality sets it apart as a prominent musical instrument in various Korean cultural performances and ceremonies throughout time.

According to Korean folklore, King Sinmun of Silla made a remarkable discovery through his ocean caretaker, who reported seeing a small island moving towards a Buddhist temple in the East Sea. Upon investigating, the caretaker learned the island was the transformed body of a dead king who had become a sea dragon, protecting Silla with his two warriors. Intrigued, King Sinmun visited the island and found a unique bamboo tree that would split into two reeds by day and merge into one by night. The sea dragon revealed that if the king crafted a flute from this bamboo and played it, it would bring peace to his nation.⁴⁰

1.2.1 Structure

The *daegeum* is a large transverse flute (31 inches long) featuring six finger holes known as *ji gong* (지공), a large blowing hole called *chwigu* (취구), and an additional hole termed *chung gong* (청공). This additional hole is covered by a thin, translucent membrane made from

³⁹ Mikyung Park, “Modern Orchestra of Korean Instruments from Its Birth to the Present: A Critical Survey.” *The World of Music* 1, no. 1 (2012): 70–80, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41699976>.

⁴⁰ Yoo Hong, “대금,” Yoo Hong, accessed May 16, 2024, <http://www.yoohongmusic.com/instrument.html>.

reeds, which imparts a characteristic buzzing timbre to the instrument. A curved metal plate protects this delicate membrane and also adjusts the flute's sound by varying how much of the membrane is covered. Towards the lower end of the daegeum, there are typically one or two unaltered holes known as *chilsung gong* (칠성공), which control the pitch. The flute is typically wrapped with silk or nylon to enhance durability and aesthetics.⁴¹



Figure 1-2. Membrane hole (*cheonggong*) of the daegeum.⁴²

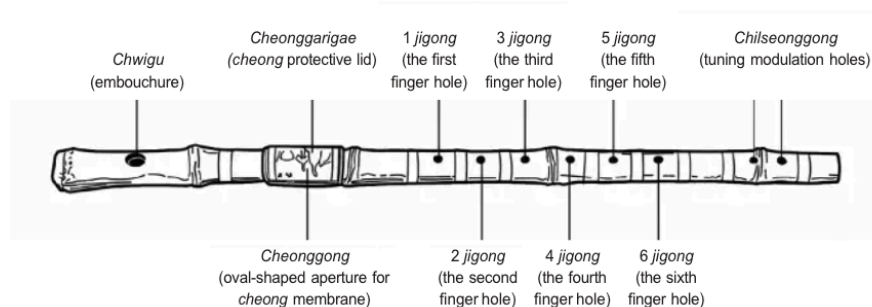


Figure 1-3. Structure of the daegeum.⁴³

⁴¹ Jeon In-wook, “Dae-Geum: The Korean Traditional Musical Instrument,” Naver Blog, 2008, <https://blog.naver.com/inmyseoul/120057909025>.

⁴² Hyungwon Kang, *Daegeum Cheong*, January 1, 2022, *The Korea Herald*, January 1, 2022, <https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20211229000781>.

⁴³ Hee-sun Kim et al., *Traditional Korean Instruments: A Practical Guide for Composers* (Seoul, Rep. of Korea: The National Gugak Center, 2020), 142.

Typically, the *daegeum* is crafted from a rare type of bamboo known as *ssanggoljuk* (쌍골죽), which is distinguished by its thickness and uniform internal diameter, making it ideal for crafting flutes due to its ease of drilling and ability to produce a clear, robust sound.⁴⁴ While the demand for this double-groove bamboo is high, it is scarce, found in only about one in ten thousand bamboo shoots.⁴⁵ *Daegeum* maestro Jang-hyun Won noted, “The harder and stronger the bamboo, the more refreshing the sound of the instrument.”⁴⁶ Additionally, *daegeum* maker Choi Woo-suk explains that constructing a *daegeum* involves harmonizing the yang—represented by the strong bamboo—and the yin, signified by the delicate white membranes of reed grass.⁴⁷ The interplay between the yin-yang principle and Korean traditional music is explored further in Chapter 4.

There are two types of *daegeum* flutes: the *sanjo daegeum* (산조 대금) and the *jeongak daegeum* (정악 대금). The traditional *daegeum* flute used for court music is called the *jeongak daegeum*. This is used more in ensemble settings due to its pitch flexibility. In contrast, the *sanjo daegeum*, developed in the 19th century for folk music, features a wider embouchure hole, shorter length, and larger finger holes, which allow for greater expressiveness and freedom in solo performances.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Kim et al., *Traditional Korean Instruments*, 142.

⁴⁵ Ah-young Chung, “Daegeum Artisan Creates Natural Sound,” *The Korea Times*, June 12, 2007, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/culture/2023/12/135_4565.html.

⁴⁶ Hyungwon Kang, “[Visual History of Korea] Daegeum: Korean Bamboo Flute Hits All the Right Notes,” *The Korea Herald*, January 1, 2022, <https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20211229000781>.

⁴⁷ Kang, “Bamboo Flute Hits All the Right Notes.”

⁴⁸ Kang, “Bamboo Flute Hits All the Right Notes.”

1.2.2 Sound and Range

The *daegeum*, a traditional Korean bamboo flute, is celebrated for its unique timbre and wide musical range. This instrument features six finger holes—three on each side—each covered by the player's fingers. The sound produced by the *daegeum* is shaped by the amount of air blown through it and the mouth's formation. It produces a warm, resonant sound that is rich in timbral complexity, capable of a wide range of dynamics. Its large body contributes to its deep and mellow tone.

Its musical range spans nearly three octaves, divided into three registers: *jeochwi* (low), *pyeongchwi* (middle), and *yeokchwi* (high). In the *jeochwi* register, the *daegeum* offers a soft and warm sound, which transitions to a crisper, clearer tone in the *pyeongchwi*, or middle, register. In the highest register, *yeokchwi*, the sound becomes sharp and piercing, demonstrating the instrument's impressive versatility.⁴⁹

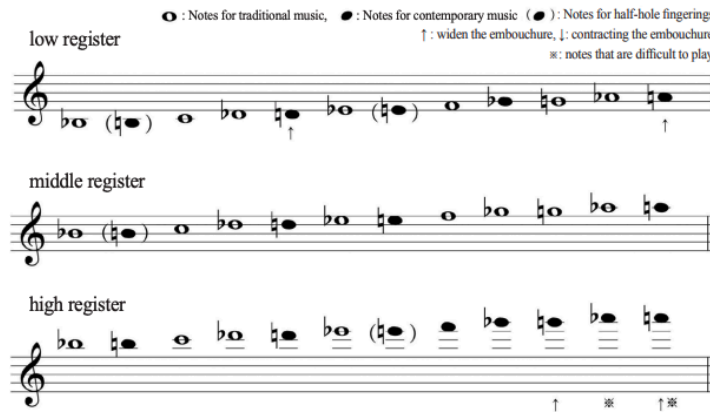
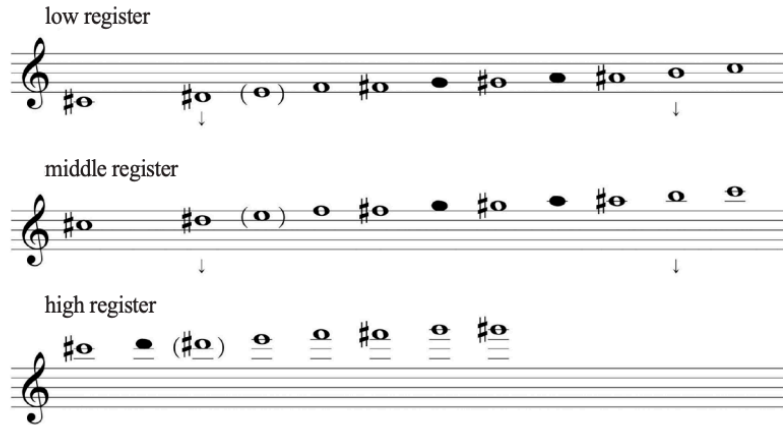


Figure 1-4. The register of the jeongak daegeum.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Young-joo Park and Zong-woo Geem, “Korean Traditional Music Instrument and Educational Mobile Tool,” *International Information Institute (Tokyo)* 20 (June 2017): 3889–99.

⁵⁰ Kim et al., *Traditional Korean Instruments*, 142.



*Figure 1-5. The register of the sanjo daegeum.*⁵¹

1.2.3 Korean Traditional Notation

Korean traditional music notation is a unique system that has evolved over centuries, reflecting the rich cultural heritage of the Korean peninsula. Unlike Western musical notation, which relies heavily on staff notation, Korean traditional music notation employs a symbolic representation that conveys both pitch and rhythm. One notable feature is the use of *jeongganbo*, a grid-based notation system that delineates rhythm and time, created by King Sejong (1397-1450) during the Joseon Dynasty of Korea. This system allows musicians to visualize the temporal aspects of the music, emphasizing the intricate rhythmic patterns inherent in Korean traditional compositions. Additionally, the pitch is denoted through specific symbols and characters, known as *yulmyung*, which offer nuanced portrayals of melodic elements. Rhythmic patterns are marked within each column, called *jeonggan*, and are read from top to bottom and right to left. Notably, *jeongganbo* is recognized as the oldest mensural notation in the East and

⁵¹ Kim et al., *Traditional Korean Instruments*, 142.

highlights Korea's pioneering development of a comprehensive ensemble score, a notable advancement ahead of Western practices at the time.⁵²



Figure 1-6. An example of Korean jeongganbo notation.⁵³

Typically, each box in the score represents one quarter note. If there are two characters in one box, the quarter note is divided into two eighth notes. Three notes in a box typically indicate an eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes.

⁵² Oh-sung Kwon, "History of Korean Notations," chapter, in *Musical Notations of Korea* (Seoul, South Korea: National Gugak Center, 2010), 12.

⁵³ Jon Silpayamanant, *Korean Chôngganbo Music Notation*, 2011, Mei Mai, 2011, <https://silpayamanant.wordpress.com/2011/11/07/korean-chongganbo-and-far-eastern-music-notation-systems/>.

In Korean traditional music, the twelve-note pitch system called *yulmyung* plays a crucial role in defining note names. *Yulmyung* refers to the specific names assigned to each pitch, encompassing a distinctive vocabulary. Unlike Western music, where note names follow the letters of the alphabet (A, B, C, etc.), Korean traditional note names carry cultural significance, often drawing inspiration from nature, emotions, or symbolic associations.

Traditional Korean music employs twelve note names, including *hwangjong* (*hwang*), *taeryŏ* (*tae*), *t'aeju* (*t'ae*), *hyŏpjong* (*hyŏp*), *kosŏn* (*ko*), *chungnyŏ* (*chung*), *yubin* (*yu*), *imjong* (*im*), *ich'ik*, *namnyŏ* (*nam*), *muyŏk* (*mu*), and *ǎngjong* (*ǎng*).⁵⁴ When notating music, Koreans use only the first part of each compound word, such as *hwang*, *dae*, *tae*, and so forth. These names correspond to yin and yang energies, with odd-numbered pitches associated with yang and even-numbered pitches with yin.⁵⁵ The pitch of *hwang*, the initial note of the twelve *yuls*, may vary between C or Eb depending on the specific instruments and genres employed. For instance, in *dangak* (traditional court music from the Tang Dynasty), the *hwang* is set to C, while in *hyangak* (traditional court music from the Three Kingdoms period), it is set to Eb.⁵⁶ Figures 1-7 and 1-8 below illustrate the various *yulmyeong* configurations with the *hwang* set to either C or Eb. However, this twelve-note *yulmyeong* system is rarely used in modern Korean music.

⁵⁴ Soo-Yon Choi, dissertation, *Expression of Korean Identity Through Music for Western Instruments* (2006), 30-31, http://purl.flvc.org/fsu/fd/FSU_migr_etd-3760.

⁵⁵ Park and Geem, "Korean Traditional Music Instrument," 3894.

⁵⁶ Kwon, "Korean Notations", 11.

Hwang=C

hwang tae t'ae hyŏp ko chung yu im ich'ik nam mu ũng

Figure 1-7. The twelve yulmyeong with the hwang set to C.⁵⁷

Hwang=Eb

hwang tae t'ae hyŏp ko chung yu im ich'ik nam mu ũng

Figure 1-8. The twelve yulmyeong with the hwang set to Eb.⁵⁸

Korean traditional music features various modes within these twelve notes, with each mode exclusive to particular regions or folk songs. Different regions possess distinct scales, not all of which adhere to pentatonic structures.⁵⁹ Unlike Western music, where modes and scales are often centered around a tonic, Korean music features a modal center known as cheong or gung. This central pitch serves as the foundation of the mode and significantly influences the melodic movement, directing it either upward or downward.⁶⁰

One notable mode is *pyeongjo*, which consists of five tones and is similar to the Western major scale. *Pyeongjo* conveys emotions of joy and tranquility, often used in pieces intended to

⁵⁷ Choi, *Expression of Korean Identity*, 31.

⁵⁸ Choi, *Expression of Korean Identity*, 31

⁵⁹ “[Korean Traditional Music Knowledge] What Is Gungsangakchui, and What Is Pyeongjo and Gyemyeonjo?,” web log, *Naver Blog* (blog), 2015, <https://blog.naver.com/gugak1951/220367203494>.

⁶⁰ Gamin Kang, *ADVANCED TECHNIQUES OF PIRI Korean Double-Reed Oboe*, trans. Ju-Yong Ha (Seoul: MINSOKWON Publishing Company, 2015), 75.

evoke a sense of calmness. In contrast, the *gyemyeonjo* mode, comprising five or fewer notes, evokes melancholy and introspection. This mode is often employed in more somber or reflective pieces, highlighting the expressive depth of Korean traditional music.⁶¹ This intricate system shows the importance of modal thinking in Korean musical tradition, setting it apart from the tonal focus commonly found in Western music.

1.2.4 Performance Practices and Techniques

This section will cover an in-depth exploration of the traditional performance practices of the *daegeum*. It will explore a range of techniques, from embouchure manipulation to fingering methods, through which *daegeum* players express the essence of Korean music. By examining these nuances of performance, the section offers valuable insights into the artistry and expertise needed to master the *daegeum*. Additionally, it will provide context on how contemporary composers might integrate some of these techniques into compositions for modern flutes, emulating the distinctive qualities of the *daegeum*.

Composers such as Isang Yun (1917-1995) and his students Sukhi Kang (1934-2020) and Byungdong Paik (b. 1936) have significantly influenced the fusion of Korean traditional music with Western classical composition. Yun, a pioneer in blending Korean traditional elements with Western classical music, laid the groundwork for Kang and Paik, who were profoundly influenced by his teachings and musical philosophy. These composers skillfully incorporate Korean traditional elements and bamboo flute techniques into their Western flute compositions.

⁶¹ Choi, *Expression of Korean Identity*, 30-31.

For instance, in works such as Yun's *Sori* for flute solo (1988), Kang's *Nong* for flute and piano (1970), and Paik's *Un-VI* for flute and piano (1981), they infuse their compositions with the essence of Korean traditional bamboo flute performance practices while embracing Western compositional techniques. Yun's *Sori*, in particular, captures the evocative colors of the *daegeum*'s sound, integrating various techniques such as vibrato, ornamentation, and pitch bends.⁶²

1.2.4.1 Posture and Fingerings

The *daegeum* flute is traditionally held over the left shoulder, with the mouthpiece positioned such that the performer can effortlessly manipulate decorative sounds known as *nongeumbeop*. As detailed in Section 1.2.2, the range of the *daegeum* is controlled through variations in airspeed and pressure. The softer, lower range, known as *jeochwi*, is produced with a slower airspeed, while the mid-range (*pyeongchwi*) and high range (*yeokchwi*) require a quicker airspeed.⁶³ Similar to playing the modern flute, players can experiment with sound by adjusting factors such as breath, mouth shape, airspeed, throat openness, and tongue position.

In terms of fingerings, known as *unji*, the *daegeum* employs a technique of either fully closing or partially covering the six finger holes (*bangyu*). Although there are 729 possible fingering combinations, traditional music typically utilizes only about 20 of these, focusing on those that best express the traditional musical repertoire.⁶⁴

⁶² Nayoong Choi, "Integration of Korean Traditional Music Elements and Daegeum Techniques into Western Flute Composition: *Sori*, *Nong*, and *Un-VI*" (dissertation, 2021), 8.

⁶³ Kim et al., *Traditional Korean Instruments*, 151-152.

⁶⁴ Kim et al., *Traditional Korean Instruments*, 152.

1.2.4.2 Vibrato

One of the most important characteristics of *daegeum* performance is vibrato, known as *nongeum* (also called *yoseong*). This is a form of *sigimsae* (embellishment or decoration), which infuses pitches with vitality and provides them with direction and contour.⁶⁵ According to Dr. Ju-Yong Ha:

Sigimsae is not only the pitch itself, but also how the pitch is performed in the context of a melody. The Korean understanding of pitch is more inclusive, encompassing decorative details and melodic gestures. The term “*eum*” means sound in general, and when it is applied to music, it refers to a “pitch” that may consist of several pitches in the Western musical sense. This might be considered a “pitch gesture” that moves from the original pitch through distortion and refraction.⁶⁶

For traditional string instruments, the vibrato technique is called *nonghyun*, which literally translates to “playing with a string,” and for wind instruments, it is known as *nongeum*.⁶⁷ While vibrato in Western music entails a subtle pitch fluctuation enhancing the sound, Korean *nongeum* or *nonghyun* encompasses a broader tonal spectrum. Unlike Western vibrato, which involves subtle pitch fluctuations to enrich the sound, Korean *nongeum* or *nonghyun* spans a wider tonal spectrum.⁶⁸ This form of vibrato in Korean music covers multiple notes, offering a broader range of tonal variation, and reflects regional differences in the Gyeonggi, Seodo, and Namdo areas, each adding unique melodic nuances.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Kang, *Advanced Techniques of Piri*, 24.

⁶⁶ Kang, *Advanced Techniques of Piri*, 24.

⁶⁷ Youngjin Yun, “The Juxtaposition of Korean and Western Practices in Yong Nan Park’s Works,” (dissertation, 2013), 8.

⁶⁸ MeeAh Lo, dissertation, *The Combination of Eastern and Western Musical Worlds: Korean Performance Techniques Applied to the Western Symphony Orchestra in Isang Yun’s Tänzerische Fantasie Für Grosses Orchester, Muak (1978)* (2014), 29, https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc700060/m2/1/high_res_d/dissertation.pdf.

⁶⁹ Kim et al., *Traditional Korean Instruments*, 142.

In *daegeum* performance, *nongeum* is executed by adjusting the arm's position and modifying the embouchure to alter the pitch via the blowing hole (*chwigu*). While *jeongak nongeum* is typically more restrained, *sanjo nongeum* displays a broader and more intricate expression. In *jeongak* instrumental music, the detailed notation of *nongeum* is less common, suggesting a more limited expressive range compared to the more elaborate *sanjo* music.⁷⁰

1.2.4.3 Pitch Bending

Pitch bends, known as *toeseong* (퇴성) for downward bends and *chuseong* (추성) for upward bends, are integral forms of traditional *sigimsae*. *Toeseong* involves reducing the pitch by narrowing the embouchure hole, while *chuseong* involves raising the pitch by widening it. Both techniques facilitate smooth transitions between pitches and can be executed using the embouchure hole alone or in combination with specific fingering changes.⁷¹ When successfully combined, *toeseong* and *chuseong* constitute a variant of *nongeum*, enhancing the expressive range of the performance.⁷²

Another *sigimsae* technique is *ggeokneunim* (꺾는 음), which translates to bending or breaking the notes, similar to the Western grace note. This technique finds its usage exclusively within the traditional folk music genres (*minsogak*) such as *pansori*, *sanjo*, and *sinawi*, particularly in the *gyemyeonjo* mode from the Joella province. However, it is not commonly employed in the traditional playing method for *jeongak daegeum*. In Western music, this pitch gesture is perceived as two distinct notes, whereas in Korean music performance, it is regarded as a single note due to the continuum of sound. While it may appear similar to *toeseong*, the

⁷⁰ Jeong-seung Kim, "Daegeum," chapter, in *Traditional Korean Instruments: A Practical Guide for Composers* (Seoul, South Korea: National Gugak Center, 2018), 155–56.

⁷¹ Kang, *Advanced Techniques of Piri*, 81–86.

⁷² Kang, *Advanced Techniques of Piri*, 158.

execution during the performance is notably distinct: the grace note receives emphasis before swiftly transitioning to the main note, followed by a subtle vibrato.⁷³

Performers also have the flexibility to integrate *yoseong*, *toeseong*, and *chuseong* simultaneously or consecutively. Below, I have included a table (Figure 1-9) that outlines the symbols for all the *sigimsae* techniques mentioned. Additionally, Figure 1-10 illustrates how these techniques appear in a traditional music score, providing visual examples of their application in performance.





Symbol	Meaning	Explanation
	Chuseong (추성)	Ascending portamento/glissando
	Toeseong (퇴성)	Descending portamento/glissando
	Yoseong (요성)	Shaking of notes (vibrato or trill)
	Ggeokneuneum (꺾는 음)	Grace note

Figure 1-9. Chart showing *toeseong*, *chuseong*, *yoseong*, and *ggeokneuneum*.

⁷³ Kang, *Advanced Techniques of Piri*, 76.

조곡악리						
南	仲	太	南	黃	仲	○
△		仲		仲太		i
漢		△	南	仲	漢	○
		林		太	△	i
		仲		△	備得	i
南		南	南	黃	南	○
		林	漢			○
		仲	△			i
		太	南		漢	○
		△			△	
△	△		太	△		i

Figure 1-10. Traditional jeongganbo notation showing toeseong, chuseong, yoseong, and ggeokneuneum markings.⁷⁴

1.2.4.4 Articulation

In traditional *daegeum* performances, only single tonguing is used, unlike in contemporary *daegeum* performances where various tonguing techniques—such as single, double, triple, and flutter tonguing—are used. Like modern flute players, *daegeum* musicians primarily use the "tu" articulation as the basic tonguing approach. However, they can create different musical expressions by incorporating variations such as "du" and "ru," which modify the amount of air resistance, consequently altering the musical expression.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Kim, "Daegeum," 160.

⁷⁵ Kim, "Daegeum," 16.

1.2.4.5 Contemporary Daegeum Performance

In recent years, there has been a surge in the number of *daegeum* players as a result of government initiatives aimed at promoting traditional culture. With traditional music now incorporated into many school curriculums and the formation of numerous traditional music ensembles, the popularity of the *daegeum* is on the rise.

Kim Kyeseon (1891-1943) was the first solo *daegeum* performer in history. Prior to Kim's solo performances, the *daegeum* was solely played within ensembles. Kim also recorded numerous *daegeum* pieces and reorganized the well-known piece called *Chungseong-gok*.⁷⁶

Lee Saeng Kang (b. 1936), recognized as Korea's 45th Important Intangible Cultural Asset holder of *daegeum sanjo* by the Korean government, is a prominent South Korean *daegeum* flutist known for his exceptional skill and mastery of traditional Korean wind instruments. He is celebrated not only for his proficiency with the *daegeum* but also for his mastery of a wide array of other wind instruments, including the *piri*, *tungso*, *danso*, *sogeum*, and *taepyeongso*. Lee gained widespread recognition after captivating audiences with his soulful *sanjo daegeum* performance at the Folk Art Festival in France in 1960, where his solo recital received acclaim from local media, distinguishing him as a standout performer in the traditional music scene. Lee Saeng Kang is a pioneer in fusion *daegeum* music, having experimented with Western instruments since the late 1960s. He seamlessly merges Korean and Western popular songs with jazz pieces using the *daegeum*. He performs alongside his brother, *janggu* player Lee Sung-jin, saxophonist Gil Ok Yun, and percussionist Ryu Bok-sung, blending the distinct sounds of the saxophone and *daegeum* with a variety of percussion instruments such as bongos, *janggu*,

⁷⁶ Park and Geem, "Korean Music and Educational Tool," 10.

jing, and *kkwaenggwari*. With an extensive discography of over 400 albums, he commemorated his illustrious 60-year musical journey at the Sejong Center for Performing Arts in Seoul in 2004.

Hong Yoo, a *daegeum* virtuoso, has transcended boundaries with his mastery of the *daegeum*, enriching both European and Asian music landscapes with a blend of tradition and modernity. Initially mentored by esteemed masters like Junseong Kim and Yongseok Seo, Yoo embarked on a journey of musical exploration, attending the Gugak National High School and Seoul National University's Department of Korean Music.⁷⁷ Following his undergraduate studies, Yoo pursued extensive foreign exchanges, earning his master's degree in the UK and showcasing the possibilities of Korean tradition and *daegeum* music internationally. In 2009, Yoo met Korean-German composer Il-ryun Chung in London, who urged him to pursue music in Berlin. Joining the AsianArt Ensemble in 2010, an international music group blending traditional East Asian instruments with Western classical string instrumentalists, Yoo collaborated with European composers and showcased his ability to captivate European audiences with the unique timbre of the *daegeum*. Over the past decade, Yoo has premiered over 100 contemporary music compositions for the *daegeum*. Most recently, he has been working on producing a solo *daegeum* album featuring contemporary compositions.⁷⁸

Reflecting on his bold decision to pursue a professional career as a bamboo flute performer in Europe, Yoo recalls:

Living in Europe as a professional bamboo flute performer was an absolute adventure. In retrospect, I don't know how I gathered the courage to do that. But back

⁷⁷ Jung-hee Ahn, "32 Years of Single Path as a Daegeum Player Resonates the Beauty of Korean Sounds to the World," *Power Korea*, 2019, <http://www.powerkoream.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=1106166>.

⁷⁸ Anna Park, "Korean Bamboo Flute Daegeum's Sound Connects East and West," *The Korea Times*, 2019, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/art/2024/04/398_267102.html.

then, I was very confident about my performance and had a gut feeling that the *daegeum* would appeal to European audiences.⁷⁹

He also mentioned:

Until now, most of the composers who used Korean traditional instruments were driven by the sound of Korean instruments. However, I could now meet composers who understood the essence of Korean traditional music and loved it.⁸⁰

The National Gugak Center in Seoul, South Korea, serves as the foremost institution for the study and preservation of Korean traditional music, encompassing both court music and folk music. Established in 1951, the Center aims to safeguard and advance traditional Korean music. By offering academic programs, private instruction, ensemble activities, research opportunities, and public performances, the center diligently upholds Korea's ancient musical heritage.⁸¹ In 2024, the National Gugak Center and the Korean Cultural Center collaborated to present "Gugak on Tour," a series of events spanning four cities in Belgium. Attendees had the chance to participate in lectures, performances, and workshops centered around the *daegeum*. These events offered detailed insights into Korean music and instruments, hands-on opportunities to play them, and live performances. Featuring Taehyeon Kim on *daegeum* and musicians from the National Gugak Center's Contemporary Gugak Orchestra, the concerts showcased a repertoire ranging from traditional Korean melodies to contemporary compositions, enhancing the cultural exchange experience.⁸²

⁷⁹ Park, "Daegeum Connects East and West."

⁸⁰ "From 1 to 100 Daegeum Player Yoo Hong," *Webzine Coppa*, 2019, <https://webzine.kotpa.org/one-sub?mod=document&pageid=1&uid=1202#close>.

⁸¹ National Gugak Center, accessed May 22, 2024, <https://www.gugak.go.kr/site/main/index001>.

⁸² "[Gugak on Tour] Korean Instrument, Daegeum," *Korea.net*, 2024, <https://www.korea.net/Events/Overseas/view?articleId=19394>.

The Contemporary Gugak Orchestra of the National Gugak Center, established in 2004, is committed to presenting contemporary compositions rooted in Korean traditional music. It comprises highly skilled musicians proficient in traditional Korean instruments such as the *daegeum*, *haegeum*, *geomungo*, and *janggu*, among others. The orchestra's repertoire encompasses a wide range of musical styles, blending traditional Korean melodies with modern compositions, experimental sounds, and innovative techniques. Through its performances, the orchestra aims to preserve and promote Korean cultural heritage while exploring new artistic expressions and pushing the boundaries of traditional music. On the other hand, the Court Music Orchestra of the National Gugak Center is a renowned ensemble devoted to performing traditional Korean music. The orchestra's repertoire includes a diverse array of traditional Korean music genres—such as court music, folk music, and ritual music—as well as contemporary compositions inspired by traditional motifs.⁸³

Black String, a boundary-breaking contemporary ensemble blending Korean traditional and improvisational jazz, comprises four members: a *geomungo* player (traditional Korean plucked zither), *daegeum* player, traditional percussion player and vocalist, and an electric guitarist. Since 2011, they have been successfully touring world-renowned festivals and venues. Their album, *Mask Dance* (2009), draws inspiration from the traditional Korean mask dance, *cheoyongmu*, and blends expressions within the mask dances with elements of jazz and traditional Korean music. One member noted, “In Seoul, diversity is more one-sided than we think... Before [I joined Black String], I was in a culture where I didn’t have much exposure to

⁸³ “Contemporary Gugak Orchestra,” National Gugak Center, accessed May 16, 2024, https://www.gugak.go.kr/site/program/concertparty/concert_jungak?menuid=001017004&lang=en.

Korean traditional music.” With their innovative sounds, Black String aims to foster more cultural awareness and introduce boundary-defying avant-garde creations worldwide.⁸⁴

Coreyah, a psychedelic Korean folk group formed in 2010, blends traditional Korean instruments, vocals, guitar, and percussion to create a unique style that bridges contemporary ethnic and popular genres with traditional Korean music. With influences ranging from Anglo-American rock to Balkan gypsy and beyond, Coreyah has garnered international acclaim. Their latest album, "Clap & Applause," released in celebration of their 10th anniversary, infuses Korean traditional rhythms with dance-inducing beats, featuring instruments like the *daegeum*, *geomungo*, and *janggu*.

1.3 Other Traditional Korean Flutes

1.3.1 Danso

The *danso* is a compact vertical bamboo flute with four finger holes and a rear thumb hole. It is crafted from bamboo or plastic, and both ends of the flute are open. The embouchure required to play the *danso* is completely different from blowing a flute—it requires a smaller and narrower lip shape. I found it akin to blowing into a glass bottle, with the lips placed over the hole and the air directed downward into the instrument. Compared to the *daegeum*, the *danso* is played with less vibrato due to its smaller mouthpiece that allows limited space for lip movement. The sound that is produced is distinctively pure and clear but less vibrant than the *daegeum*.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Diana Park, “Melodious Colors Beneath a Pool of Black,” *Seoul Selection*, 2017, <https://magazine.seoulselection.com/2017/03/24/melodious-colors-beneath-a-pool-of-black/>.

⁸⁵ Sonia Choy, dissertation, *The Fusion of Korean and Western Elements in Isang Yun's Konzert Für Flöte Und Kleines Orchester* (2010), https://getd.libs.uga.edu/pdfs/choy_sonia_201005_dma.pdf.



*Figure 1-11. Danso.*⁸⁶

1.3.2 Piri

The piri is a traditional double-reed bamboo instrument, similar to the Western oboe, featuring a large double reed called the *seo*. The larger size of the reed gives it a more mellow sound compared to the oboe.⁸⁷ Achieving a clear and non-piercing sound is crucial for performers. It features eight finger holes, including a thumb hole at the back.⁸⁸ Among the *daegeum*, *danso*, and *piri*, I personally found the *piri* the most challenging to produce sound from because players need to stretch their lips around the reed to play. Due to the nature of the instrument, players must blow with their lips outstretched on the reed. *Piri* master Jae-guk Jeong

⁸⁶ TheJipen, Danso, n.d., Dreamstime Stock Images, n.d., <https://www.dreamstime.com/royalty-free-stock-images-korean-traditional-instrument-called-danso-frontside-isolate-d-white-image40680809>.

⁸⁷ “Streams of Wind: Piri,” The Korea Society, 2018, <https://www.koreasociety.org/arts-culture/item/1096-streams-of-wind-piri..>

⁸⁸ *Piri* (Jeollanam-do, South Korea: Arts Council Korea), accessed 2024, 5, https://www.igbf.kr/DataFiles/App/PDF/piri_en_link.pdf.

explains, “Because the *piri* has many technical and functional aspects, you may need to practice for about ten years to master it and become confident in playing. For this reason, not many people stay with the *piri* for a long time. Even specialists are rarely able to play the *piri* when they reach 50 years of age.”⁸⁹ Despite these challenges, the *piri* is a beautiful and significant instrument, celebrated for its deep, resonant sound that brings a unique and poignant color to Korean traditional music.



*Figure 1-12. Piri.*⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Arts Council Korea, *Piri*.

⁹⁰ *Piri*, n.d., *Música Para Ver*, n.d., <https://musicaparaver.org/instruments/origin/south-korea/3609>.

CHAPTER TWO: CHINESE TRADITIONAL FLUTES

2.1 Background on Chinese Traditional Music

Chinese music has undergone a rich and diverse evolution, encompassing a broad spectrum of styles, instruments, and forms. It includes traditional instruments like the *erhu*, *guzheng*, and *dizi*, alongside modern ones such as the piano and guitar. The upcoming section provides an overview of the evolution of traditional Chinese music. It also examines the *dizi* flute and its performance practices to offer readers a comprehensive understanding of the instrument's role in shaping contemporary compositions inspired by Chinese bamboo flutes. Furthermore, Chapter 2.1.1 explores the Westernization of Chinese music and the transformative impact of Western influences on the contemporary music landscape. Subsequently, Chapter 5.4 in this dissertation delves deeper into the political influences shaping this evolution.

The earliest form of Chinese music, known as *yue*, dates back to before 2070 BC. During this period, music was often combined with theatrical elements, dance, costumes, and props. Instruments were primarily crafted from animal bones, feathers, and pottery.⁹¹

In the Xia Dynasty (traditionally dated 2070–1600 BC) and the Shang Dynasty (1600–1046 BC), *yue* evolved into a standalone art form. Music no longer solely relied on accompanying dance or martial arts. It played a significant role in ceremonial and religious settings, conducted by *wushu* (spirit mediums, shamans, priests, priestesses, or healers).⁹²

During the Zhou Dynasty (1050–771 BC), Chinese traditional music underwent significant growth. Music developed rapidly due to ceremonies held during festivals and special

⁹¹ Eric M. Meyer, "Chinese Music," History, Instruments, Types, Modern Music, November 23, 2023, <https://www.chinaeducationaltours.com/guide/culture-chinese-music.htm>.

⁹² Meyer, "Chinese Music."

occasions. The Zhou Dynasty established the earliest music education system and institutions. In addition, a formal system of court and ceremonial music, later known as *yayue* or "elegant music," was established, embracing the dual universal order of yin and yang. This period laid the foundation for Chinese music.⁹³

In subsequent dynasties, such as the Qin, Han, Sanguo, Wei, and Jin (221 BC–589 CE), Chinese music evolved due to influences from the Silk Road, resulting in changes in melody, rhythm, orchestration, and scales. Notable musical instruments, scales, and forms of musical notation were introduced. During the Han Dynasty (206 BC-220 CE), music underwent further development and diversification, with instruments such as the *guqin* and *xiao* becoming standardized and prominent. Additionally, music held a significant role in court life, serving as a source of entertainment for the emperor and his courtiers. Foreign music, particularly Buddhist music from India, gained significant popularity in China, facilitated by the Silk Road. Buddhist chanting and hymns became integral to Chinese religious practices, while instruments such as the *pipa*, originating from Central Asia, were incorporated into Chinese music.⁹⁴

The Sui and Tang Dynasties (581–907 CE) marked a period of economic, military, and cultural strength. Both high and low-class music thrived. Cultural exchange with foreign countries, including musical communications, further enriched Chinese music. The golden age of arts during the Tang Dynasty introduced diverse musical forms, including *yayue* (court music) and *chuigushou* (popular music).⁹⁵

⁹³ Meyer, "Chinese Music."

⁹⁴ Yanyu Lin, dissertation, *The Westernization of Chinese Traditional Music and an Investigation of Chinese Contemporary Piano Music* (2023), 6-7, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2815181853>.

⁹⁵ Antoni Pizà, "The Music of China," in *Listening to The World* (New York, NY: The City University of New York, 2023), <https://pressbooks.cuny.edu/apiza/chapter/chapter-5-the-music-of-china/>.

During the Song Dynasty (960–1234 CE), folk music became prominent as high-class people couldn't afford costly court music. The period saw the rise of opera, with *zaju* and *nanxi* being popular forms. However, the dynasty promoted domestic culture and discouraged foreign influences. Notable musical notations and scales were developed during this time.

During the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing Dynasties (1644-1911), traditional opera experienced rapid and diverse development across various regions. As distinct opera styles were performed in the capital (now Beijing), artists combined the essence of these styles to create Beijing opera. This art form, alongside Chinese medicine and traditional Chinese painting, stands as one of the three pillars of Chinese culture.⁹⁶

2.1.1. The Westernization of Chinese Traditional Music

While the Silk Road facilitated significant cultural exchanges with Central Asia during the Han Dynasty, the first well-documented introduction of Western European music to China occurred with the arrival of Italian missionary Matteo Ricci in Macau in 1582. This event is marked as a significant point when Western musical theory and instruments were directly introduced to Chinese society. Ricci's introduction of European hymns and instruments, such as the clavichord, marked a significant milestone in the incorporation of Western music in China.⁹⁷

The Westernization of traditional Chinese music started in the late nineteenth century, coinciding with the British Opium Wars (1839-1860). During this period of colonization, European missionaries played a crucial role in promoting Western culture and education in

⁹⁶ “Chinese Music,” Chinese Music: Development, Instruments, August 8, 2022, <https://www.travelchinaguide.com/intro/arts/chinese-music.htm>.

⁹⁷ Lin, *The Westernization of Chinese Traditional Music*, 17.

China. The First Conference of Christian Missionaries in China, organized by American Missionary C. W. Mateer in 1877, emphasized the introduction of Western culture and science to the Chinese. Subsequent attacks on China included the Tianjin Massacre (1870), the Ili Crisis (1879), the Sino-French War (1884-1885), and the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895). The defeats following the wars prompted intellectual elites to recognize the need for advanced military technology from the West, prompting military, technological, and economic reforms, and Chinese people also started to adopt Western art, music, literature, and culture. European missionaries not only introduced Christian beliefs and hymn singing methods but also brought European scores, instruments, theories, and styles to China. Music lessons, including piano courses, were offered in many church schools. Due to this widespread Westernization in music, the Chinese military also sang Western army songs, which emerged from a blend of church music, Japanese school anthems, and Western secular melodies, marking the emergence of modern Chinese music and Chinese secular choral compositions.⁹⁸

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Chinese music education underwent significant changes. Music gained recognition in the Chinese educational system, evolving from an elective subject in 1904 to a compulsory one for education majors in 1907. The Qing Government strongly endorsed school songs, and this marked the beginning of modern Chinese music education, influenced by Japanese and European models and transitioning from traditional oral teaching methods.⁹⁹ The School Song Movement in China emerged during the early 20th century as part of broader educational reforms. Campus songs taught in both elementary and

⁹⁸ Wei Liu, dissertation, *Chinese Chorus (Contributions to the Chinese Choir History)* (2011), 2-10, https://apps.lfze.hu/netfolder/PublicNet/Doktori%20dolgozatok/liu_wei/disszertacio.pdf.

⁹⁹ Wai-Chung Ho, "Westernization and Social Transformations in Chinese Music Education, 1895-1949," *History of Education* 32, no. 3 (May 2003): 293, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00467600304145>.

middle schools were sung by the public from the 1900s to the 1930s, serving as a conduit for the transition of church music into secular music. In essence, it marked the secularization of church music. Liang Qichao, a spokesperson for the reformist movement, advocated for the establishment of formal music education in schools.¹⁰⁰

By 1911, after the founding of Republican China, professional music education reached a new level. Beijing University and the Chinese Conservatory of Music were established, and despite initial challenges, these institutions laid the foundation for contemporary Chinese music education.¹⁰¹ Simultaneously, Chinese contemporary opera, influenced by Western musical forms and Chinese traditions, gained traction. Orchestras like the Ha'erbin Orchestra and Shanghai Orchestra marked the early introduction of Western symphonic music in China. By the early 20th century, brass bands, foreign instrument shops, Western music books, and performances by Western musicians became prevalent.¹⁰² Conflicts arose between different music schools, with the conservative music schools contending that only war-time music was suitable for the nation's current state and should be the sole mainstream music for that era, while the popular music school incorporated Western pop music elements from popular love songs. Conversely, musicians aligned with the academic schools advocated that the majority of war-time songs and popular love songs lacked significant academic musical merit.¹⁰³

After the Chinese Communist Party assumed control in 1949, society underwent comprehensive reforms guided by Marxist, Leninist, and Maoist principles. The Cultural Revolution, spanning from 1966 to 1976, aimed at shaping a national culture in line with

¹⁰⁰ Liu, *Chinese Chorus*, 18

¹⁰¹ Lin, *The Westernization of Chinese Traditional Music*, 31.

¹⁰² Liu, *Chinese Chorus*, 18

¹⁰³ Lin, *The Westernization of Chinese Traditional Music*, 36-39.

Chinese propaganda to foster a unified identity. This period had a profound and devastating impact on classical musicians. Many were targeted as part of the regime's efforts to eradicate "bourgeois" culture, facing persecution, censorship, and imprisonment. Classical music, viewed as elitist, faced severe suppression during this time, compelling musicians to adhere to stringent ideological mandates and censorship. Those who dared to promote Western-style music or voice anti-communist sentiments risked severe consequences, prompting many to flee or suffer tragic fates such as suicide or public execution. The period witnessed the destruction of musical institutions, the banning of Western influences, and the promotion of politically charged compositions. Despite these challenges, some musicians found ways to preserve their art in secret, while others suffered irreparable harm to their careers and lives.¹⁰⁴

Consequently, numerous artists sought inspiration and validation in traditional and folk genres, aligning with populist ideals during the Maoist era. There was a notable surge of interest in traditional instrumental music, regional musical styles, and Chinese music history research. Art forms of the time predominantly conveyed political and revolutionary messages. However, the endeavor to create a new musical genre faced challenges due to the prior Westernization of China's music education system in the early twentieth century. The government aimed to promote music reflecting Chinese culture and Communist Party ideals, leading musicians to transcribe traditional Chinese music into Western notation and compose propaganda music using Western theory.¹⁰⁵ This fusion resulted in the emergence of a new genre—often misconstrued as "traditional Chinese music"—termed "new traditional Chinese music," which dominated the

¹⁰⁴ Lin, *The Westernization of Chinese Traditional Music*, 47.

¹⁰⁵ Lin, *The Westernization of Chinese Traditional Music*, 41.

country's music landscape in the latter half of the twentieth century, blending traditional Chinese elements with Western notation, theory, and scales.¹⁰⁶

2.2 The Dizi Flute

The transverse Chinese membrane flute, *dizi*, is one of the most cherished and widely played traditional Chinese instruments, known for its unique timbre and sound. According to legend, the roots of the flute can be traced back to the mythical figure Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor, around 2698 BC. In this tale, Huang Di directed Ling Lun, a scholar, to venture into the western mountain area.¹⁰⁷ There, Ling Lun crafted a flute using bamboo pipes to mimic the enchanting calls of the *fenghuang*, an immortal phoenix. The appearance of the *fenghuang* was considered a rare and auspicious sign, symbolizing harmony during the reign of a new emperor.¹⁰⁸

The origins of the *dizi* flute trace back to 433 BC, during the Zhou dynasty (1046-256 BC), in Hubei, China. A total of 124 musical instruments were discovered in the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng, and among them were two transverse flutes, the *chi*.¹⁰⁹ These flutes were played transversely and differed from the *dizi* in construction, being shorter with a larger internal diameter.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Ho, "Westernization and Social Transformations," 88-90.

¹⁰⁷ Alan Thrasher, "The Transverse Flute in Traditional Chinese Music," *Asian Music* 10, no. 1 (1978): 92, <https://doi.org/10.2307/834126>.

¹⁰⁸ William Malm, "Chinese Music," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/art/Chinese-music>.

¹⁰⁹ "Marquis Yi's Instrumentarium," *Bibliolore: The RILM Blog*, April 5, 2013, <https://bibliolore.org/2013/04/05/marquis-yis-instrumentarium/>.

¹¹⁰ Chen-Gia Tsai, dissertation, *The Chinese Membrane Flute (Dizi): Physics and Perception of Its Tones* (2003), <https://www.scribd.com/document/251561769/The-Chinese-Membrane-Flute-Dizi-Physics-and-Perception-of-Its>.



Figure 2-1. Transverse flutes found in the tomb of Marquis Yi.¹¹¹

The *dizi* transverse flute, initially called *hengdi* and other names, likely emerged during the Han period. Initially used in military and court ensembles, by the 16th century, the modified *dizi*, featuring an additional hole for a vibrating membrane, became prominent in *Kunqu* opera and other entertainment genres.¹¹²

The term "*di*" serves as a generic term encompassing all types of Chinese flutes.¹¹³ The *dizi* is classified into two geographical categories: Northern *dizi* (*bangdi* 梆笛) and Southern *dizi* (*qudi* 曲笛). The Northern *dizi*, or *bangdi* flute, is shorter by around 20 cm in comparison to the Southern *dizi*, or *qudi*, flute. Until the twentieth century, the two categories of *dizi* flutes were restricted to their geographical locations, and as a result, two distinct playing styles developed. The Northern (*beipai* 北派) style emphasized the strength and brilliance of the tone, with more piercing high notes. Notes were more heavily articulated and ornamented. The Southern (*nanpai*

¹¹¹ Transverse Flutes, Lacquered Bamboo. Tomb of Marquis Yi, 1998, Tokyo National Museum, 1998.

¹¹² Alan R. Thrasher et al., "China, People's Republic of (Chin. Zhonghua Renmin Gonghe Guo)," *Oxford Music Online*, 2001, 61, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.43141>.

¹¹³ Tsai, *Dizi: Physics and Perception*, 22.

南派) style was slower and more lyrical, featuring a rounder tone color, influenced by the *Kunqu* opera style from the Kunshan area in Eastern China.¹¹⁴ Towards the end of the twentieth century, with the growing popularity of *dizi* performance, various new *dizi* designs emerged. The *xindi* (新笛), a bamboo flute without a membrane, was designed to be able to perform a complete Western chromatic scale. Another type of *dizi*, featuring two membranes, was created to create a more homogenous timbre. Contemporary performance techniques, including singing into the *dizi* and playing it with vibrating lips, also emerged.¹¹⁵

Dizi composers were constantly under the authority of the central government, and their careers relied heavily on state support. Composers had to strategically balance their artistic expression with the rigid agenda imposed by the state, which gave rise to new styles that reflected the political context of the time. In *Individuality and Political Discourse in Solo "Dizi" Compositions*, Lau states:

The development of modern *dizi* repertory can be roughly divided into three stages, each distinguished by compositional styles and the source material... In the first period (1949-1964), most of the solo *dizi* pieces are characterized by the use of the theme and variation procedure, and the music is extracted almost exclusively from various regional instrumental ensemble repertoire... In the second stage of its development (1965-1978; the period generally referred to as the Cultural Revolution), many *dizi* composers abandoned the use of regional music as source material and, instead, turned to revolutionary songs (*geming gequ*) as the basis for the compositions... In the third phase of *dizi* music development (from 1979 to 1989), after the fall of the Gang of Four and in the spirit of cultural liberalism, *dizi* composers experienced an unprecedented freedom of expression compared to earlier periods, and there was a tremendous growth in compositional styles and techniques.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Tsai, *Dizi: Physics and Perception*, 22.

¹¹⁵ Tsai, *Dizi: Physics and Perception*, 19.

¹¹⁶ Frederick Lau, "Individuality and Political Discourse in Solo 'Dizi' Compositions," *Asian Music* 27, no. 1 (1995): 133–52, <https://doi.org/10.2307/834499>.

2.2.1 Structure

The traditional *dizi* flute is a transverse flute made of bamboo and has six to ten equidistantly spaced finger holes. There are two or four closely spaced holes located near the instrument's foot, and these holes are never covered. The *dizi* has a thin membrane that covers a hole in the instrument's body, similar to the *daegeum* flute, positioned between the embouchure hole and the first finger hole. The *dizi's* membrane (*dimo*) is crafted from a square-shaped piece of skin that is thinly peeled from the inner surface of a reed or bamboo and attached to the hole (*mokong*) using water-soluble glue. The membrane vibrates gently when the flute is played, enhancing the upper harmonics of *dizi* tones, which produces its distinctive “bright” timbre.¹¹⁷ The *dizi* is typically wrapped with silk thread or nylon line to protect the bamboo from potential splitting.¹¹⁸

2.2.2 Sound and Range

The *dizi* typically has a range of about two and a half octaves. The range of the *dizi* varies depending on the type and size of the flute. The key of a *dizi* is determined by the pitch of its third finger hole. For instance, if the third finger hole is marked "D," then the *dizi* is in the key of "D". Similarly if the third finger hole is marked "G," the *dizi* is in the key of "G." The *qudi* (Southern *dizi*) is usually tuned to C, D, or E. Conversely, the higher-pitched *bangdi* (Northern *dizi*) is generally tuned to F, G, or A.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Thrasher, “Transverse Flute,” 96.

¹¹⁸ Chen-Gia Tsai, “The Timbre Space of the Chinese Membrane Flute (Dizi): Physical Basis and Psychoacoustical Effects,” *The Journal of the Acoustical Society of America* 116, no. 4_Supplement (October 1, 2004): 2620, <https://doi.org/10.1121/1.4785447>.

¹¹⁹ Chang-ning Chai, dissertation, *The Dizi (Chinese Bamboo Flute) Its Representative Repertoires in the Years from 1949 to 1985* (2014), 72, <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/10771>.

Most traditional repertoire is typically set in the keys of D or G, so beginner students are advised to start learning on a D-key *qudi* (Range: A₃-D₆) or a G-key *bangdi* (Range: D₄-G₆). As students progress, they can explore other types of dizis, particularly for playing alternative repertoire. The lower octave on the *dizi* tends to have a mellow and rich tone, while the middle octave is clear and bright. The upper octave, achieved by overblowing, can sound piercing and brilliant.¹²⁰

The *dizi* is unique among flutes due to its *dimo* (membrane). This membrane vibrates when air is blown across it, creating its characteristic buzzing sound that adds to the *dizi's* distinct timbre. The *dimo* also affects the resonance and projection of the *dizi*, contributing to its expressive range.¹²¹

In a membrane flute, changes in vibration intensity create a varied acoustic effect across different pitches, leading to a timbre that is not uniform throughout the entire tonal range. This characteristic—inherent in all membrane flutes like the Korean *daegeum*—is often valued by players who find that this timbral diversity adds a unique expressiveness to their music. However, contemporary *dizi* players typically disapprove of the timbral inconsistency associated with the *dizi*, preferring a more consistent and uniform sound across all pitches. This preference highlights a significant difference in aesthetic values between traditional *daegeum* and modern *dizi* performance practices.¹²²

¹²⁰ Sung Wah Tan, “Types of Dizi,” Chinese Music Lessons and Performances, October 20, 2015, .

¹²¹ Gino Chimenti, “Virtual Chinese Transverse Flute,” Suonopuro.it, n.d., https://www.suonopuro.net/images/S_NewDizi_Manual_EN.pdf, 2.

¹²² Chang-ning Chai, dissertation, *The Dizi (Chinese Bamboo Flute) Its Representative Repertoires in the Years from 1949 to 1985* (2014), 80, <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/10771>.



*Figure 2-2. Dizi in D, E, F, and A keys.*¹²³

2.2.3 Chinese Traditional Notation

Gongche notation, widely adopted in China until recently, is believed to have originated in the Tang dynasty. Each character or symbol within this notation system holds meaning in the Chinese language, suggesting its potential origin as a fingering system for early instruments. While it took a different form during the Sung dynasty, by the Ming dynasty, the notation system had evolved into the familiar form we recognize today. Nine diatonic pitch symbols cover the range of a ninth, and the upper and lower octaves are noted with small symbols. Figure 2-3 below illustrates the connection between mid-register *gongche* notation and Western staff notation.¹²⁴



*Figure 2-3. Gongche characters represented in Western staff notation.*¹²⁵

¹²³ Rick Wilson, *Dizi*, n.d., *Rick Wilson's Historical Flutes Page*, n.d., <http://www.oldflutes.com/world/chinese.htm>.

¹²⁴ Thrasher, "Transverse Flute," 107.

¹²⁵ Britannica, The Editors of Encyclopaedia. "Paixiao." In *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed May 22, 2024. <https://www.britannica.com/art/paixiao>.

Today, modern Chinese *dizi* players employ two distinct notations: *Jianpu*, a cipher notation system that uses Arabic numerals for traditional Chinese music, and the classical Western staff notation with five lines.¹²⁶

In Jianpu notation, the numbers 1-7 correspond to the notes of the scale, specifically the scale degree. The notation specifies the key at the top, with 1 indicating the root note (e.g., 1 = C for the key of C major). A dot is placed above the number to denote an octave above, and a dot below the number indicates an octave below. A single number signifies a single beat/quarter note, and lines beneath notes indicate a shortened length. One line below represents an eighth note, two lines below signify a sixteenth note, and so on. Dashes following a note lengthen it, with each dash representing an extension of one beat/quarter note. (For example, in the key of C: 1 - - - would represent four beats or a whole note.)¹²⁷

2.2.4 Performance Practice and Techniques

The *dizi* is played similarly to the Western transverse flute by positioning the lower lip just below the lower edge of the embouchure hole and directing a small stream of air across it. The performer's lower lip should only partially cover the hole, as in Western flute playing.

Performing on the *dizi* involves a notable degree of improvisation, with musicians methodically infusing embellishments into the fundamental structure of the written melody. Distinctive embellishments, intrinsic to the musical language of traditional *dizi* genres, have evolved as a crucial facet of *dizi* techniques. These genre-specific embellishments, distinct between southern and northern styles, transcend traditional *dizi* notation, finding their origins in

¹²⁶ Chai, *Dizi Representative Repertoires*, 80.

¹²⁷ “简谱 (JIǎNPǔ) - Chinese Numbered Notation,” ANU Chinese Classical Music Ensemble, accessed 2024, <https://anuccme.com/jianpu>.

oral traditions. Key embellishments prevalent in southern-style *dizi* music encompass appoggiatura, trill, repeated-note, and end-note decorations, intricately connected to the vocal stylings of *Kunqu* opera. In contrast, northern-style *dizi* music features embellishments such as double tonguing, flutter tonguing, and glissandi. In contrast to the southern style, the use of the tongue is integral to the northern style. The glissando effect is achieved by slowly covering or uncovering the finger holes to produce gradual pitch changes. Musicians often combine glissando with flutter tonguing, creating a 'fluttered glissando.'¹²⁸

Other techniques include the usage of harmonics, circular breathing, glissando/portamento (*huayin*), and percussive effects using the fingers (*duoyin* and *dayin*).¹²⁹

Good embouchure on the *dizi* involves three key elements: *fengmen* (throat or gate), *koufeng* (wind from the mouth), and *koujin* (strength of embouchure). *Fengmen*, the airflow over the embouchure hole, differs with *dizi* size and registers, while *koufeng*, controlled by the diaphragm, varies based on register and dynamics. *Koujin*, the strength of embouchure, is less strong for the lower register and stronger for the higher register.¹³⁰

2.2.4.1 Posture and Fingerings

Unlike the Western Boehm flute, which is limited to holding it to the right side, the *dizi* offers flexibility for both right and left-handed players. When playing, the fingers of the hands are positioned along the top of the *dizi*—when playing sliding notes, flattened fingers are preferred.¹³¹

¹²⁸ Tsai, *Dizi: Physics and Perception*, 29-30.

¹²⁹ Tsai, *Dizi: Physics and Perception*, 100-107.

¹³⁰ Chai, *Dizi Representative Repertoires*, 95-96.

¹³¹ Chai, *Dizi Representative Repertoires*, 95.

As mentioned earlier, the key of the *dizi* is determined by the position of its 3rd finger hole. Professional *dizi* instruments are consistently labeled with C, D, E, F, G, A, B on the third finger hole, indicating the *diao*, or key. The third finger hole serves as the tonic. While theoretically, a *dizi* can be played in any key, practical considerations make it more convenient for a *dizi* player to accurately produce pitches in only five specific keys.¹³²

2.2.4.2 Articulation

Mastering various tonguing techniques is essential for playing the *dizi*, particularly in northern Chinese music, which demands precise and rapid articulation. The primary tonguing variations include single, double, triple, and flutter tonguing. Each of these techniques serves a specific musical function and enhances the expressive range of the instrument.

Single tonguing is the most basic form used for clear, simple articulations. Double tonguing allows for faster note sequences, which is useful for lively passages. Triple tonguing combines these techniques for even quicker sequences, adding a rhythmic complexity that can energize a performance. Flutter tonguing is especially distinctive in northern Chinese music, where it conveys a sense of joy and dynamism. This technique involves rolling the 'r' sound while blowing into the flute, creating a rapid, vibrating effect. It is often featured in music intended for festive and celebratory occasions, adding a vibrant, animated quality that resonates with the spirited nature of such events.¹³³

¹³² Chai, *Dizi Representative Repertoires*, 75-77.

¹³³ Chai, *Dizi Representative Repertoires*, 87.

2.2.4.3 Vibrato

Similar to the Western flute, vibrato (*zhenyin*; 震音) on the *dizi* can be achieved by adjusting the airflow. This involves strong and slow vibrations of the stomach and diaphragm. Unlike vibrato, this technique is a forceful tremolo that conveys intense emotion, serving as a decorative element in melodies or a medium to express sadness, particularly in Chinese opera.¹³⁴ Additionally, vibrato on the *dizi* can also be achieved by gently tapping the edges of the fingering holes or by combining controlled breathing with subtle finger movements, a method well-suited for creating a calm, ambient sound. Another less common approach is to produce vibrato by shaking the instrument while playing.¹³⁵

2.2.5 Contemporary Dizi Performance

The emergence of the new *dizi* repertoire around the mid-twentieth century was heavily influenced by Western music. There has been a significant surge in interest in the *dizi*, with recognition of its capabilities as both a solo instrument and as part of an orchestral ensemble. It is now commonly featured in solo performances on stage, played in duets, and notably, even showcased in concertos.¹³⁶ In Frederick Lau's article for the journal *Asian Music*, he states,

After the fall of the Gang of Four and in the spirit of cultural liberalism, *dizi* composers experienced an unprecedented freedom of expression compared to earlier periods, and there was a tremendous growth in compositional styles and techniques. Interestingly, their efforts coincided with the emergence of a group of so-called New Wave composers whose works were based primarily on new aesthetics, tonal ideals, and compositional processes. In addition to the styles used earlier, *dizi* composers began to

¹³⁴ Chai, *Dizi Representative Repertoires*, 99.

¹³⁵ Yang Mu, *Chinese Musical Instruments An Introduction* (Canberra, Australia: Coralie Rockwell Foundation, 1993), 7, <https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/282824/1/B19233073.pdf>.

¹³⁶ Chai, *Dizi Representative Repertoires*, 69.

incorporate new musical ideas, innovative performing techniques, and experimental formal principles in their compositions.¹³⁷

New performance techniques for the *dizi* emerged over the past century. *Kachiang*, a technique that involves playing the *dizi* with vibrating lips, mimics the dynamics of brass instruments. Implementing this technique on woodwind instruments poses challenges due to the absence of a mouthpiece supporting the player's lips. The resulting reedy sound reflects that of the *bawu*, a Chinese transverse reed instrument.¹³⁸

Another technique involves whistling into the *dizi* to create dual pitches, hitting the finger holes without blowing, and multiphonics—extended techniques that are all found in contemporary Western flute repertoire. A modern technique used on the *dizi* that cannot be replicated on the Western flute involves innovatively blowing into the finger hole, rather than the embouchure hole, to create unique multiphonics.¹³⁹

The evolution of *dizi* music trends prompted changes in instrument design. As musical preferences shifted towards compositions requiring equal-tempered scales, makers adjusted the positioning of finger holes accordingly. In the 1930s, the *xindi* or *lüdi*, known as the "new flute" or "tempered flute," emerged. This chromatic *dizi* featured eleven finger holes but omitted the membrane hole, making it ideal for modern orchestras where the bright tones of traditional *dizi* might not blend well with other instruments. With its ability to play all notes found in Western music notation, the *xindi* symbolized the Westernization of Chinese music, boasting a design that produced mellow flute tones akin to those of the Western flute.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Lau, "Individuality in Solo Dizi," 142.

¹³⁸ Chai, *Dizi Representative Repertoires*, 20.

¹³⁹ Tsai, *Dizi: Physics and Perception*, 19-21.

¹⁴⁰ Tsai, *Dizi: Physics and Perception*, 19.

Prominent *dizi* performers in the twentieth century have significantly influenced the inclusion of *dizi* music in modern conservatory repertoire, often drawing from regional folk styles. Feng Zicun (1904-1987) in Yangyuan, Hebei, transitioned from a local folk musician to a *dizi* soloist in the Central Song and Dance Ensemble in Beijing in 1953. His vibrant and skillful adaptations of traditional folk pieces, such as *Xi xiang feng* (Happy Reunion) and *Wu bangzi* (Five Clappers), enriched the Chinese conservatory curriculum. Liu Guanyue (b. 1918) similarly contributed to the Northern *dizi* style, performing renowned pieces like *Yin zhong niao* (Birds in the Shade) and *He ping ge* (Doves of Peace) as a soloist in the Tianjin Song-and-Dance Ensemble. Lu Chunling (b. 1921) elevated the Jiangnan *dizi* tradition with his captivating performances and compositions.¹⁴¹

The recent solo *dizi* repertoire is often portrayed as an uninterrupted continuation of a tradition dating back to the pre-1949 era. Over the past fifty years, this collection of newly composed pieces has emerged as the central repertoire for the *dizi* despite its historical role in regional music and operas. However, there has been a noticeable shift in societal attitudes towards *dizi* musicians since 1949, presenting challenges as they navigate changing contexts and political demands while preserving a connection to the past. Despite the absence of a uniform pre-1949 solo *dizi* style, contemporary composers position themselves within an imagined lineage, shaping what is now considered traditional solo *dizi* music.¹⁴²

Most early solo *dizi* compositions from the 1950s adapted *dizi* parts from regional instrumental ensembles. Feng Zicun's and Lu Chunling's compositions influenced subsequent players who further developed a standardized solo *dizi* style. The Northern *dizi style*, marked by

¹⁴¹ Frederick Lau, "Forever Red: The Invention of Solo Dizi Music in Post-1949 China," *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 5, no. 1 (January 1996), 118, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09681229608567250>.

¹⁴² Lau, "Forever Red," 119.

rapid portamento, glissando, flutter tonguing, and disjunct melodies, heavily influenced Feng's compositions, exemplified by his use of theme and variations in pieces like *Xixiangfeng*. This established a model for rhythmic and virtuosic *dizi* playing. Conversely, Lu Chunling's lyrical *dizi* style stems from the Jiangnan *sizhu* tradition, which features heterophonic improvisations with the *dizi* as the lead instrument. Their compositions served as models for subsequent players who further developed a standardized solo *dizi* style by merging regional techniques. Compositions from the 1960s, such as *Mudi* (Shepherds' Flute) and *Huanlede jieri* (Joyous Festivals), exemplify this evolving style, incorporating innovative musical ideas from various sources, including national minorities, European classical music, and even jazz.¹⁴³

2.3 Other Traditional Chinese Flutes

2.3.1 Xiao

Before the Tang dynasty (618 to 907 AD), any single-tube flute was known as a *di* (see Section 2.2), while the term *xiao* (簫) began to denote a vertical end-blown flute. It wasn't until the Ming dynasty (1368 to 1644) that the term *xiao* became standardized for the specific instrument referred to today. Different variations of the *xiao* emerged over time—the narrower *qinxiao* and the wider, shorter southern version known as the *nanxiao* originated in regions like Fujian and Taiwan. The *xiao* later found its way to Japan during the 14th century, where it became known as the *shakuhachi* (see Section 3.2).

Traditionally, *xiaos* are crafted from purple bamboo, although materials like jade, porcelain, ivory, and wood are also used. Modern *xiaos* typically feature six or eight finger holes,

¹⁴³ Lau, “Forever Red,” 120.

and the sound is described as rich and mellow, with minimal wind noise.¹⁴⁴ Blown vertically, it typically is longer than the *dizi* and features its blowing hole at the top end. Unlike the *dizi*, the *xiao* lacks a membrane, resulting in a softer and gentler timbre. Techniques like double tonguing, flutter tonguing, and playing semitones are more challenging on the *xiao* compared to the *dizi*.¹⁴⁵

Performance techniques on the *xiao* share similarities with those on the *dizi*. However, executing rapid tonguing techniques like *huashe* (flutter tonguing) and *shuangtu* (double tonguing) is more challenging on the *xiao* compared to the *dizi*. Due to its soft sound, the *xiao* excels in performing gentle, slow, and lyrical melodies.¹⁴⁶



Figure 2-4. *Xiao*.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁴ Scott August, *The Xiao*, accessed 2024, <https://www.nfaonline.org/docs/default-source/committees-documents/global-flutes-committee/xiao-by-scott-august.pdf>.

¹⁴⁵ Alan R. Thrasher, *Chinese Musical Instruments* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), 9.

¹⁴⁶ Mu, *Chinese Musical Instruments*, 10.

¹⁴⁷ *Xiao*, n.d., *Northeastern University*, n.d., <https://web.northeastern.edu/music-chinese/xiao/>.

2.3.2 Paixiao

The *paixiao* (排簫), consisting of sixteen bamboo tubes secured together with bamboo strips, wooden strips, or ropes, resembles the Western panpipes. Also unearthed in the tomb of Marquis Yi of Zeng, it is considered the Chinese counterpart to the Western panpipes. To produce sound, the musician blows across the top end of the instrument. Ancient writers described the arrangement of the pipes as resembling the wings of mythical *fenghuang* (鳳凰) birds. Initially, single-winged *paixiao* were more common, while later models featured a double-wing shape, with pipes lengthening towards both ends. Following the Song dynasty (960–1279), the significance of the *paixiao* saw a significant decline.¹⁴⁸



*Figure 2-5. Paixiao.*¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Paixiao,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed May 22, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/art/paixiao>.

¹⁴⁹ *Paixiao*, n.d., *Northeastern University*, n.d., <https://web.northeastern.edu/music-chinese/pan-flute/>.

2.3.2 Xun

The *xun* (埙), a small, egg-shaped vascular flute made of baked clay, features a blowing hole on top and may or may not include fingering holes along its body. Archaeological discoveries dating back about 7,000 years have revealed various types of *xun*, ranging from models with just a blowing hole to others featuring one to three fingering holes. While some later iterations are crafted from jade or stone, the *xun* endured a decline but persisted in performances such as ritual ceremonies and court music. Since the early 1980s, amidst a resurgence of interest in traditional music and dance, professional Chinese musicians have revived and refined the instrument, utilizing it for solo and ensemble performances in concerts. One modernized version of the *xun* features ten fingering holes and spans a two-octave range.¹⁵⁰



Figure 2-6. *Xun*.¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Mu, *Chinese Musical Instruments*, 61.

¹⁵¹ *Xun*, n.d., *The Met Museum*, n.d., <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/503905>.

CHAPTER THREE: JAPANESE TRADITIONAL FLUTES

3.1 Background on Japanese Traditional Music

Japan is recognized as a major hub of classical music—from the numerous top symphonies in Tokyo to prominent soloists to influential educational methods like the Suzuki Method, Japanese performers and musicians have garnered international acclaim. However, unbeknownst to many, the traditional *gagaku* ensembles pioneered Japan's musical heritage, laying the foundation for the country's traditional music heritage.

This section provides an introduction to traditional Japanese music, followed by an in-depth exploration of the *shakuhachi* flute and its performance techniques. This comprehensive approach aims to equip both readers and performers with insights into works influenced by Japanese traditional music and instruments.

Gagaku (雅楽), or traditional Japanese imperial court music, was known for its elegance and grace and was reserved for the elite. Its roots, however, trace back to China around 612 AD.¹⁵² *Gagaku* music had two subdivisions: *komagaku* (高麗樂), music from Korea, and *tōgaku* (唐樂), music from the Tang Dynasty in China, and its roots trace back before the Nara period (710-794 AD).¹⁵³ *Gagaku* and other traditional instruments largely owe their roots to Chinese or Korean origins.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² Kelly Desjardins, dissertation, *Fence, Flavor, and Phantasm: Balancing Japanese Musical Elements and Western Influence Within an Historical and Cultural Context* (2018), 16, https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc1157602/m2/1/high_res_d/DESJARDINS-DISSERTATION-2018.pdf.

¹⁵³ Robert Garfias, *Music of a Thousand Autumns: The Tōgaku Style of Japanese Court Music* (Los Angeles, CA: Department of Music University of California, Los Angeles, 1978), 3.

¹⁵⁴ Henry Johnson, “Ounding Japan’: Traditional Musical Instruments, Cultural Nationalism and Educational Reform,” *Perfect Beat* 12, no. 1 (September 23, 2011): 11–32, <https://doi.org/10.1558/prbt.v12i1.11>, 19.

From the sixth to ninth centuries, Japan has grappled with distinguishing its indigenous identity amidst the influx of Chinese cultural influence. This interplay between native traditions and foreign influences permeated various facets of Japanese culture, notably music and literature. Additionally, Japan's cultural exchange with continental Asia, facilitated by movements through the Korean peninsula, left a mark on its artistic development.¹⁵⁵

During the eighth and ninth centuries, *gagaku* found its way beyond the imperial court, extending its presence to major Buddhist temples in the Nara region. By this time, most large temples boasted their own ensembles, known as *gakko* (楽戸).¹⁵⁶ *Gagaku* music primarily consisted of winds, strings, and percussion instruments. Over the next hundred years, acceptance of *gagaku* and *bugaku* (舞楽), or traditional Japanese court dance and music, in Japanese Buddhist rituals was significant, especially during a time when music for entertainment purposes was portrayed negatively, even forbidden for monks.¹⁵⁷

As Japan transitioned from a court-centered to a military-focused society in the 12th century, new theatrical musical genres began to emerge.¹⁵⁸ Among these, *Noh* (能) theatre emerged as the preferred entertainment for the emerging warrior class. Actors often wear masks appropriate to their roles, and musical accompaniment was provided by the ensemble, consisting of a transverse flutist (playing either the *nohkan* or the *shinobue*; see more in Section 3.3)¹⁵⁹ and

¹⁵⁵ Alison McQueen Tokita and David Hughes, "Context and Change in Japanese Music," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Japanese Music* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 5-6.

¹⁵⁶ Fabio Rambelli, "The Dharma of Music: Gagaku and Buddhist Salvation in Medieval Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 48, no. 1 (July 21, 2021): 46, <https://doi.org/10.18874/jjrs.48.1.2021.45-71>.

¹⁵⁷ Rambelli, "Dharma of Music," 52.

¹⁵⁸ Dharma Deva, "Underlying Socio-Cultural Aspects and Aesthetic Principles That Determine Musical Theory and Practice in the Musical Traditions of China and Japan," *Renaissance Artists and Writers Association*, 1999, 8, <https://www.rawa.asia/ethno/Aesthetics%20of%20Chinese%20&%20Japanese%20Music%20essay.pdf>.

¹⁵⁹ Kawori Iguchi, "Reading Music/Playing Music: The Musical Notations of the Kyoto Gion Festival and the Noh Flute," *Ethnomusicology Forum* 17, no. 2 (2008): 251, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20184621>.

three drummers, along with a chorus.¹⁶⁰ During the 14th and 15th centuries, *Noh* theatre gradually evolved into its present form, eventually becoming the sanctioned art form of the military government during the Edo period.¹⁶¹

The Meiji Restoration in 1868 marked a turning point in Japan, sparking profound changes in its socio-political and cultural landscape. This era of swift modernization brought about a metamorphosis in music, where traditional and Western elements converged. The Meiji era's enthusiastic embrace of Western influence created a divide between Buddhism and Shintoism, which led to the decline in *gagaku* performances in Buddhist temples. During this period, Yasuko Tsukahara states that music was categorized into:¹⁶²

(1) Traditional music passed down from the Edo period (1603–1867), exemplified by *gagaku*; (2) The Western music that entered the country and became established after it was opened to the outside world; and (3) Modern songs that were the first to be created in East Asia, such as *shōka* [school songs] and *gunka* [military songs].¹⁶³

The perception of Western superiority became deeply ingrained in Japanese society, a phenomenon often referred to as "Europeanism." As a result, traditional Japanese music lost its esteemed status, leading many musicians to either abandon their craft or face poverty. Consequently, Japanese traditional music faced a steep decline, nearly reaching the point of extinction.¹⁶⁴ It was not until after World War II that efforts were made to restructure the education system to instill a sense of cultural identity among students through music education,

¹⁶⁰ Ralph Abraham, "Shamanism and Noh," Ralph Abraham, 2012, 6, <http://www.ralph-abraham.org/articles/MS%23135.Noh/ms135.pdf>.

¹⁶¹ Deva, "Principles in Music of China and Japan," 8.

¹⁶² Garfias, *Thousand Autumns*, 32.

¹⁶³ Yasuko Tsukahara, "State Ceremony and Music in Meiji-Era Japan," *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 10, no. 2 (2013): 223, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409813000244>.

¹⁶⁴ Masafumi Ogawa, "Japanese Traditional Music and School Music Education," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 2, no. 1 (1994): 27, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40327067>.

promoting an unbiased understanding of various musical traditions.¹⁶⁵ Starting in the 1970s, a growing number of innovative music teachers began to reintroduce traditional Japanese music into the curriculum as Western music became much more popular among kids. In 1991, the Japanese Academic Society for Music Education held its first national symposium on "Japanese Traditional Music," prompting leading music educators in Japan to reconsider and address the existing challenges.¹⁶⁶

Consequently, the term *hōgaku* (national music) was adopted to characterize the genre of *gagaku* music, often termed 'traditional' music, from the Early Modern Period, or Edo Period (1603-1867), of Japan. In contrast, *yōgaku* signifies Western music. Additionally, there is *gendai ongaku*, which indicates contemporary music composed after World War II, while *gendai hōgaku* specifically refers to contemporary music created for traditional instruments like *shakuhachi*, *koto*, and *shamisen*. Central to this cultural exchange is the *shakuhachi*, a bamboo flute originally from China that evolved into a ritual instrument for Zen monks. In this chapter, I delve into the intricate historical background and evolution of the *shakuhachi*.

3.2 Shakuhachi

Emerging from its Chinese roots and making its way to Japan during the introduction of Buddhism in the early Tang Dynasty, the *shakuhachi* (尺八) stands as the quintessential Japanese vertical flute, with profound ties to both religious and musical realms.¹⁶⁷ While it is still not definite where the *shakuhachi* originated from, it is most commonly believed that the slender,

¹⁶⁵ Ogawa, "Japanese Music Education," 32.

¹⁶⁶ Ogawa, "Japanese Music Education," 33.

¹⁶⁷ Toru Seyama, "The Re-Contextualisation of the Shakuhachi (Syakuhati) and Its Music from Traditional/Classical into Modern/Popular," *The World of Music* 40, no. 2 (1998): 72, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41699197>.

six-holed *gagaku shakuhachi* was credited to Lü Cǎi during the Tang Dynasty.¹⁶⁸ This *gagaku shakuhachi* became an integral component of the instrumental ensemble featured in Japan's imperial court music, known as *gagaku*.¹⁶⁹ However, by the 10th century, the *shakuhachi* was excluded from the court orchestra due to its softer timbre¹⁷⁰, and during subsequent centuries, there was barely any documentation of the instrument. This absence creates a historical void for the early *shakuhachi*.¹⁷¹

The modern *shakuhachi* underwent significant changes during the Edo period in the 17th and 18th centuries. Notably thicker with a tapered bore, some say these modifications are attributed to its utilization as a defensive tool by the priests of the Fuke sect.¹⁷² These priests, known as *komusō* (straw mat monks) and later referred to as ‘priests of emptiness,’ donned white robes and covered their heads with large straw-woven baskets as they played the *shakuhachi* while begging. These ‘priests of emptiness’ were primarily *rōnin* (masterless, wandering *samurai*) who joined religious sects to uphold their social status. During a period when travel restrictions were stringent for most Japanese citizens, the *komusō* of the Fuke sect were granted government authorization to travel across the country in exchange for information.¹⁷³

The Fuke sect rose to prominence for its utilization of the *shakuhachi* as a tool for meditation, leading to the development of the solo repertoire known as *honkyoku*.¹⁷⁴ Within the

¹⁶⁸ Shen-ya Akedo, “The Temperaments of the Shakuhachi Pipes Owned by the Hōryū-Ji Temple and the Shōsō-in Repository,” *The Musicology Society of Japan*, accessed 2024, https://www.musicology-japan.org/publish/v59/Akedo_e.pdf.

¹⁶⁹ Ben Macke, “Shakuhachi: The History and Practice of Suizen,” *Japan House*, accessed 2024, <https://japanhouse.illinois.edu/education/insights/shakuhachi>.

¹⁷⁰ Macke, “Shakuhachi Practice of Suizen.”

¹⁷¹ Hugh de Ferranti et al., “Japan,” *Oxford Music Online*, 2001, 2, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.43335>.

¹⁷² Ferranti et al., “Japan,” 2.

¹⁷³ Macke, “Shakuhachi Practice of Suizen.”

¹⁷⁴ Macke, “Shakuhachi Practice of Suizen.”

daily routine of the monks, martial arts training, *shakuhachi* practice, and begging were integral aspects of their spiritual discipline. Begging while playing the *shakuhachi* during their religious travels was a crucial practice for these *komusō* monks. Beyond mere alms collection, the *shakuhachi* served as a profound spiritual tool for achieving enlightenment. Additionally, *komusō* engaged in healing practices, absorbing the troubles and illnesses of others through *suizen*, the spiritual practice of *shakuhachi* performance in *honkyoku* pieces. Regarded as vessels of emptiness, the *komusō* presented themselves as channels for the burdens of those they met.¹⁷⁵

Honkyoku pieces are known for their wide variety of colors and natural sounds produced by the *shakuhachi*, creating an environment conducive to meditation. A breathy tone may evoke the sound of wind, whereas a sharper, more articulate tone emulates the patter of rain.¹⁷⁶ The revolutionized construction of the *shakuhachi* by the *komusō* monks expanded the musical techniques and color palette achievable with the instrument. This *fuke-shakuhachi* serves as the direct precursor to the modern *shakuhachi*, which has only five tone holes.¹⁷⁷

During the Meiji Period, beginning in 1868, the emerging government pushed for swift modernization across all facets of Japanese life, including music. Instead of traditional Japanese music, schools during this time almost exclusively focused on teaching Western music.¹⁷⁸ During this period, the Japanese government initiated the destruction of all known temples associated with the Fuke Sect as part of an effort to eradicate Buddhism, prohibiting *komusō* monks from their practice.¹⁷⁹ However, later in the Meiji Period, the government authorized the *shakuhachi*

¹⁷⁵ Lauren Rubin, “The Shakuhachi and the Didjeridu: Two Case Studies of Historical Iconology, Performance Practice and Their Relation to Avian Respiration and Song,” (dissertation, 2009), 147.

¹⁷⁶ Macke, “Shakuhachi Practice of Suizen.”

¹⁷⁷ Kristan Dewhirst, dissertation, *Charles Wourinen’s Flute Variations II: An Analysis and Performance Guide* (2014), 35, https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc699941/m2/1/high_res_d/dissertation.pdf.

¹⁷⁸ Seyama, “Shakuhachi from Traditional to Modern,” 74.

¹⁷⁹ Andreas Gutzwiller, “The Shakuhachi of the Fuke-Sect: Instrument of Zen,” *The World of Music* 26, no. 3 (1984): 63, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43561007>.

for secular use, influenced by figures like Yoshida Itchô and Araki Kodô of the Kinko style, who advocated for its acceptance as a musical instrument.¹⁸⁰ As a result, the *shakuhachi* transitioned from being perceived solely as a religious tool for meditation by the *komusô* to being widely available as a musical instrument for ordinary people.¹⁸¹

The trajectory of the *shakuhachi's* role in Japanese society has been intriguing, and over time, new leaders of the *shakuhachi* applied it to a wide array of musical genres, including meditative solos, small *shakuhachi* ensembles, ensembles with Western instruments, and contemporary compositions by both Japanese and international composers.¹⁸²



Figure 3-1. A *komusô* playing the *shakuhachi*.¹⁸³

¹⁸⁰ Christopher Yohmei Blasdel and Yuko Kamisango, *The Shakuhachi: A Manual for Learning* (Tokyo: Ongaku No Tomo Sha, 1988), 123.

¹⁸¹ Seyama, “Shakuhachi from Traditional to Modern,” 74.

¹⁸² Seyama, “Shakuhachi from Traditional to Modern,” 75.

¹⁸³ J.M.W. Silver, *Komuso*, July 29, 2004, *The Project Gutenberg eBook, Sketches of Japanese Manners and Customs*, by J. M. W. Silver, July 29, 2004, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/13051/13051-h/13051-h.htm>.

3.2.1 Structure

The instrument's name is indicative of its length: *shaku* (尺) (or *chi* in Chinese) denotes a unit of length measurement, while *hachi*' (or *ba* in Chinese) signifies eight, representing eight units of the length measure, *sun*, where one *sun* is a tenth of a *shaku*. The established standard length is consequently one *shaku* and eight *sun*, equivalent to approximately 54.5 centimeters. Over the course of history, the actual length of the *shaku* unit has varied.¹⁸⁴

While the standard size of this instrument features a fundamental tone of D4, a diverse array of sizes is employed in contemporary usage, ranging from the highest in G (1.3 *shaku*; 1 *shaku* and 3 *sun*) to the lower sizes starting from A (2.4 *shaku*; two *shaku* and 4 *sun*) and extending down to 3.6 *shaku*.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴ Gunnar Jinmei Linder, *Deconstructing Tradition in Japanese Music: A Study of Shakuhachi, Historical Authenticity and Transmission of Tradition* (Stockholm, Sweden: Department of Oriental Languages, Stockholm University, 2012), 20, <https://su.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:488776/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

¹⁸⁵ Martha Fabrique, "Shakuhachi, Then and Now," The National Flute Association, 2021, 4, <https://www.nfaonline.org/docs/default-source/committees-documents/global-flutes-committee/shakuhachi--then-and-now.pdf>.



Figure 3-2. Different shakuhachi lengths (1.8, 2.0, 2.1, and 2.4 shaku).¹⁸⁶

The predominant factor influencing the sound quality of a *shakuhachi* instrument is often attributed to the quality of the bamboo. *Shakuhachi* makers demonstrate meticulous care in sourcing the finest materials. Obtaining the optimal bamboo, especially of the *madake* variety (*Phyllostachys bambusoides*), which is a large timber species found predominantly in fertile lowland valleys, is a challenging endeavor.¹⁸⁷ Bamboo held symbolic significance as a representation of advanced culture, believed to possess magical properties utilized in religious rituals and rites.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ *Shakuhachi Lengths*, n.d., *Lark in the Morning*, n.d., <https://larkininthemorning.com/products/advanced-student-shakuhachi-from-tai-hei-shakuhachi>.

¹⁸⁷ Fabrique, “Shakuhachi,” 4.

¹⁸⁸ Blasdel and Kamisango, *Shakuhachi: A Manual For Learning*, 2.

The bamboo undergoes a meticulous treatment process, starting with sun-drying followed by a storage period lasting three to six years. Subsequently, the bamboo is precisely measured and halved. Following the halving, four finger holes and a thumb hole, determined by a traditional measurement system, are drilled to ensure the correct length. The bores of the two halves are widened, and the *hozo*, serving as the connecting joint between the sections, is cut and securely glued into the top of the bottom segment. The mid-joint is carefully bound with string and sealed using *urushi* (lacquer) to prevent breakage under the pressure of the tightly-fitted ends.¹⁸⁹

The creation of the blowing edge, *utaguchi*, involves making an oblique cut on the outer edge of the tube. A small, shaped piece crafted from materials such as bone, water buffalo horn, or plastic is carefully inserted at the center of the cut to enhance durability.¹⁹⁰ Finally, *urushi* (lacquer) is applied to the bore, which provides durability and color.¹⁹¹ A well-lacquered bore allows for better sound and tuning.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁹ Blasdel and Kamisango, *Shakuhachi: A Manual For Learning*, 2.

¹⁹⁰ Blasdel and Kamisango, *Shakuhachi: A Manual For Learning*, 3-4.

¹⁹¹ Blasdel and Kamisango, *Shakuhachi: A Manual For Learning*, 24.

¹⁹² Blasdel and Kamisango, *Shakuhachi: A Manual For Learning*, 32.



Figure 3-3. Structural diagram of the *shakuhachi*.¹⁹³

3.2.2 Sound and Range

Depending on the speed of the air stream, the *shakuhachi's* tonal characteristics vary from a hollow, mellow sound (less air speed) to a tighter, nasal quality (more air speed). While its dynamic range is limited, it is possible to show a wide range of capabilities.¹⁹⁴ In regards to the sound of the *shakuhachi*, the great composer Toru Takemitsu said, “Now we can see how the master *shakuhachi* player, striving in performance to recreate the sound of wind in a decaying bamboo grove, reveals the Japanese sound ideal: sound, in its ultimate expressiveness, being constantly refined, approaches the nothingness of that wind in the bamboo grove.”¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ *How to Hold Shakuhachi Flute*, February 22, 2021, *Taiko Shop*, February 22, 2021, <https://taiko-shop.com/blogs/learn/tagged/shakuhachi>.

¹⁹⁴ Donald Paul Berger, “The Shakuhachi and the Kinko Ryū Notation,” *Asian Music* 1, no. 2 (1969): 48, <https://doi.org/10.2307/833910>.

¹⁹⁵ Tōru Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence: Selected Writings*, vol. 1 (Berkeley, CA: Fallen Leaf Press, 1995), 51.

The standard *shakuhachi* has five holes, and the pitches of these holes correspond to D4, F4, G4, A4, C4, and D5. These tones can be manipulated through a combination of partially covering the holes and head movements for the production of slides, half tones, quarter tones as well as subtle microtones. The instrument's standard pitch range spans approximately two and a half octaves. Achieving accurate pitches on the *shakuhachi* requires precise coordination of finger movements, lip control, and jaw adjustments.¹⁹⁶ Most traditional *shakuhachi* players of the Kinko-ryu lineage play the 1.8 *shaku* instrument, which is considered the standard length. However, practitioners of the Myoan and other traditional styles often favor longer *shakuhachi* with lower pitches, occasionally extending up to a length of 3 *shaku* or more.¹⁹⁷

The *shakuhachi*'s range is approximately 2.5 octaves, with the lower register (*ryo*, sometimes referred to as *otsu* 乙) and the upper register (*kan* 甲).¹⁹⁸ Figure 3-4 below shows the range of the *shakuhachi*, with the open note-heads denoting the "basic" pitches. Achieving these pitches involves covering or uncovering the five holes of the *shakuhachi* sequentially. Any other pitches, referred to as "altered" pitches, are produced through combinations of partially covered holes and adjustments to the chin position. Furthermore, overblowing the first octave creates the pitches of the second octave.¹⁹⁹ This technique requires strong abdominal support with a more compressed embouchure.

¹⁹⁶ Jeffrey Lependorf, "Contemporary Notation for the Shakuhachi: A Primer for Composers," *Perspectives of New Music* 27, no. 2 (1989): 234, <https://doi.org/10.2307/833414>.

¹⁹⁷ Blasdel and Kamisango, *Shakuhachi: A Manual For Learning*, 64.


¹⁹⁸ Blasdel and Kamisango, *Shakuhachi: A Manual For Learning*, 64.

¹⁹⁹ Lependorf, "Notation for Shakuhachi," 3.

"First Octave"

"Second Octave"

"Third Octave"

N.B. Sounds one octave lower: tenor clef () may be used to avoid confusion
 X "closed hole" fingering
 o "open hole" fingering
 () only *pp*
 □ difficult to control

*Figure 3-4. The range of a shakuhachi.*²⁰⁰

3.2.3 Japanese Traditional Notation

Kurosawa Kinko transformed *shakuhachi's* musical repertoire in the 18th century, composing fresh pieces for the instrument inspired by the older Fuke *shakuhachi* tradition to develop a new style of playing known as the *Kinko Ryū*. In 1896, Nakao Tozan established another school of playing, the Tozan Ryū, alongside Kinko, and these two schools have since become the primary schools of modern *shakuhachi* practice.²⁰¹ The *Kinko-ryū* and *Tozan-ryū* schools vary in different aspects, with the most noticeable distinction lying in their differently shaped *utaguchi* mouthpiece inserts. Additionally, their musical notation varies significantly. *Tozan-ryu* employs Western-influenced notation with clear rhythms and tempos, while *Kinko-ryu* notation, written in cursive *katakana* script, lacks bars or interpretive information, resembling Buddhist sutra writing.²⁰²

²⁰⁰ Blasdel and Kamisango, *Shakuhachi: A Manual For Learning*, 27.

²⁰¹ Fabrique, "Shakuhachi."

²⁰² Blasdel and Kamisango, *Shakuhachi: A Manual For Learning*, 27.

The traditional repertoire of Kinko-ryu consists of two main groups: *honkyoku* and *gaikyoku*.²⁰³ The *Honkyoku* (“original pieces” played by the Komusō monks) notation uses variations of *katakana* characters, one of Japan's syllabaries, to indicate pitch. There was great importance on indicating fingerings rather than pitch in *honkyoku* notation—different fingerings created different timbres even for the same pitch.²⁰⁴ The notation used for *honkyoku* varies among different schools, typically consisting of columns that are read from top to bottom and from right to left. Players from different schools may struggle to interpret *honkyoku* notation from another school, as *honkyoku* is transmitted through generations of lineages. The spread and variation of these pieces are incredibly complex, making it nearly impossible to fully verify their origins. While the *honkyoku* pieces are intended for precise transmission, subtle variations, and improvisational styles can alter them as they are passed down.²⁰⁵

Silence, known as *ma*, bridges these phrases, which is considered an intentional musical gesture (See Section 6.1 for more about *ma*).²⁰⁶ *Ma*, in music or dialogue, denotes more than just a pause—it serves as an integral part of the musical flow. *Ma* can be attributed to natural sounds, such as the irregular rhythm of rain or the calls of birds. In *shakuhachi* music, *ma* entails maintaining musical awareness through purposeful silence during rests, pauses, and breaths.²⁰⁷

Alongside pitch indications, the notation also may include rhythmic cues. Beats are represented by dashes or dots positioned to the left or right of *katakana* characters. Traditionally, full beats are indicated by dots on the right side of the character, while half beats are designated

²⁰³ Blasdel and Kamisango, *Shakuhachi: A Manual For Learning*, 27.

²⁰⁴ Riley Kelly Lee, “Fu Ho U Vs. Do Re Mi: The Technology of Notation Systems and Implications of Change in the Shakuhachi Tradition of Japan,” *Asian Music* 19, no. 2 (1988): 74, <https://doi.org/10.2307/833867>.

²⁰⁵ Seyama, “Shakuhachi from Traditional to Modern,” 78.

²⁰⁶ David Erath, “Honkyoku Music,” David Erath, accessed May 17, 2024, <http://www.daviderath.com/shakuhachi/honkyoku-music>.

²⁰⁷ Blasdel and Kamisango, *Shakuhachi: A Manual For Learning*, 9.

by dots on the left side. However, changes in tempo and ornamentation are rarely specified in the notation and are typically taught during lessons. Each musical phrase in *honkyoku* notation corresponds to a full breath, so the duration of notes within a phrase is proportionally divided according to the length of the breath.²⁰⁸



Figure 3-5. Traditional *honkyoku* notation.²⁰⁹

3.2.4 Performance Practices

Exploring traditional performance practices plays a crucial role and offers deeper insights into the traditions and techniques unique to the cultural context of the instrument. In this section, we delve into the performance practices specific to the *shakuhachi*. From posture and fingerings to nuanced articulations, each aspect of performance contributes to the distinct character and style of *shakuhachi* music. By understanding these practices, performers can effectively convey the beauty and essence of this revered instrument.

²⁰⁸ Donal Paul Berger, “Kinko Ryū Notation,” 56.

²⁰⁹ David Erath, “Honkyoku Music,” David Erath, accessed May 17, 2024, <http://www.daviderath.com/shakuhachi/honkyoku-music>.

3.2.4.1 Posture and Fingerings

The *shakuhachi* is held vertically, between the thumbs and middle fingers, at a 45-degree angle. The *shakuhachi* has four finger holes on its front side, each covered by the index and ring fingers of both hands. The middle fingers are solely responsible for holding the instrument, supported by the thumbs, with one thumb covering the hole at the back. Fingers are positioned at a slight angle for increased mobility and ease in partial covering.²¹⁰ The instrument rests against the lower chin, and the sound is produced as the performer blows onto the back end of the tube.²¹¹

3.2.4.2 Articulation

In playing the *shakuhachi*, the musician doesn't produce a tone by tonguing it, relying instead on a system of grace-note articulations. While tongued attacks may occasionally appear as a special effect in a limited number of traditional settings, they are not a predominant technique.²¹²

Rather than employing the tongue, articulation is achieved through finger movements. This technique, *atari*, or 'finger tonguing,' encompasses two methods: *osu* (押す) and *utsu* (打つ). *Osu* involves swiftly moving a closed finger up and down to attack and repeat a tone. *Utsu*, on the other hand, entails rapid finger taps on an already open hole.²¹³ Various lineages have distinct names for *atari*, with most modern instructors referring to it as "hit."²¹⁴ Each pitch has a distinct set of standard *atari* fingerings.

²¹⁰ Berger, "Kinko Ryū Notation," 47.

²¹¹ Lependorf, "Notation for Shakuhachi," 235.

²¹² Lependorf, "Notation for Shakuhachi," 235.

²¹³ Blasdel and Kamisango, *Shakuhachi: A Manual For Learning*, 62.

²¹⁴ Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Dr. Rachel Rudich, personal, April 20, 2024.

These consist of quickly opening and closing an already closed hole or vice versa (atari literally means "strike"). The number of the hole to be articulated should be placed above (or above and slightly to the left of) the desired note. Because only the effect-and not the exact pitch of these special grace notes will generally be perceived, I recommend that the assumed fingerings be used most of the time. Alternate fingerings, however, may be used for the sake of variety, particularly when reiterating the same pitch or to create a figure with a unique articulation.²¹⁵

Another form of articulation, often considered a special effect but still practical and impactful, is *muraiki*, an explosive breath attack. This approach is particularly effective in the lower octave when leading to a sustained pitch in the upper register and is typically denoted with a diamond marking.²¹⁶ *Komi-buki*, or 'staccato breath,' is another technique that involves the iteration of pitches. It differs from a standard repetition as there is a more seamless transition between reiterations. *Komi-buki* articulations work well across dynamic levels and should be notated as a slurred series of staccato noteheads.²¹⁷ *Kitte*, derived from a verb meaning "to cut," represents a final articulation where the performer abruptly cuts off the flow of air without nuance. This technique typically appears at the end of a sustained tone or is coupled with a sudden downward pitch-bend following a sustained tone. The *kitte* technique adds a distinctive and abrupt punctuation to the musical expression.²¹⁸

3.2.4.3 Vibrato

Unlike conventional methods of using the diaphragm to create vibrato, vibrato on the *shakuhachi*, or *yuri*, is achieved by a distinct head-shaking technique, either laterally or vertically. The shaking of the head causes the air stream to be distinctly interrupted, resulting in a

²¹⁵ Lependorf, "Notation for Shakuhachi," 238.

²¹⁶ Lependorf, "Notation for Shakuhachi," 235.

²¹⁷ Lependorf, "Notation for Shakuhachi," 236.

²¹⁸ Lependorf, "Notation for Shakuhachi," 236.

stronger vibrato than one produced by a Western flute. *Yuri* typically transitions from rapid to controlled vibrato, or vice versa, and is indicated on the score with the word ‘*yuri*.’²¹⁹

The composer may specify the application through the use of wavy lines above the music notation. Varied widths and speeds may be executed, offering a palette of expressive possibilities. While the use of vibrato is a prominent feature, the significance of playing without vibrato, particularly in traditional contexts, should not be disregarded.²²⁰ Although vibrato is a regular feature in traditional ensemble compositions, its usage is more restrained in *honkyoku* pieces.²²¹

To achieve this head movement vibrato, the performer must exert minimal pressure from the lips or chin against the instrument while gently moving the head up and down after starting the note. However, extreme pitch variations from this vertical movement are often undesired and thus sparingly used in traditional playing. Alternatively, performers can move the head from side to side, mimicking a "no" gesture. This technique, although challenging for beginners, offers greater forgiveness and musical flexibility once mastered, making it the preferred method for producing vibrato.²²²

3.2.4.4 Pitch bending

The *shakuhachi* offers remarkable pitch flexibility, including altering the pitch by tilting the head or adjusting finger positioning, a system known as *meri-kari*. *Meri* and *kari* techniques are fundamental to altering the pitch of notes on the flute. *Meri* involves directing the air stream

²¹⁹ Lependorf, “Notation for Shakuhachi,” 239.

²²⁰ Lependorf, “Notation for Shakuhachi,” 238.

²²¹ Kondō Jō and Joaquim Bernítez, *Flute and Shakuhachi* (S.I.: Harwood, 1994), 47.

²²² Amy Simon and Gerald Yun, “Capturing Japanese Aesthetic in Eric Mandat’s ‘Folk Songs’, Fourth Movement,” *International Clarinet Association*, 2018, <https://clarinet.org/capturing-japanese-aesthetic-in-eric-mandats-folk-songs-fourth-movement/>.

down into the flute to lower the pitch, which is achieved by lowering the chin while keeping the neck as straight as possible. Conversely, *kari* raises the pitch, achieved by rotating the skull upwards to widen the angle and distance between the embouchure and *utaguchi*. Both techniques play a vital role in flute performance, allowing for subtle pitch adjustments with precision and control.²²³

The *shakuhachi* can produce microtones in addition to the twelve semitones produced by the minor pentatonic scale that it is tuned to. The *kari* tones are the tones within the minor pentatonic scale that do not require half-holing. These notes have a brighter timbre to it. On the other hand, *meri* tones yield a darker quality. This interplay between *meri* and *kari*, sometimes seen as symbolizing yin and yang, creates a wide range of timbres. (See Section 6.2 for more about the influences of yin-yang principles on Japanese music.)²²⁴

3.2.5 Contemporary Shakuhachi Performance

During the Meiji period, European music had made swift inroads into Japan through military band performances and Protestant hymns. Western culture and music exerted a significant influence on the Japanese population during this era, with the adoption of Western practices being equated with modernity. This sentiment permeated traditional Japanese music as well, as seen in the Shin Nihon Ongaku movement of the 1920s, which aimed to blend Eastern and Western musical elements. Led by prominent figures like *koto* player Miyagi Michio and *shakuhachi* player Yoshida Seifu, this movement witnessed traditional Japanese instruments

²²³ “Meri and Kari,” Japan Shakuhachi, accessed May 17, 2024, <https://www.japanshakuhachi.com/meri-and-kari.html>.

²²⁴ Sakari Heikka, thesis, *Being Present with the Sound of Shakuhachi* (2023), 9-10, <https://diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1774526/FULLTEXT01.pdf>.

being integrated into European-style compositions. The term "Shin Nihon Ongaku" was coined by Yoshida Seifu during a grand performance held at the Yurakuza Theater in Tokyo in 1920, signifying a pivotal moment in the fusion of Eastern and Western musical traditions.²²⁵

By the 1930s, *Shin Nihon Ongaku* gradually fell out of use, making way for *Shin Hougaku*, or New Traditional Japanese Music, which primarily referred to musical developments in the 1930s. In the late 1950s and 1960s, *shakuhachi* performers frequently commissioned works for individual performances or had commissioned pieces from Japanese composers for radio broadcasts. This movement, known as *Gendai Hougaku* (Modern Traditional Japanese Music), emerged from the tradition of composing for traditional Japanese instruments.²²⁶

The *Shin Nihon Ongaku* and *Shin Hougaku* movements witnessed a fusion of Japanese and Western elements in compositions, alongside a growing interest among traditional musicians like Miyagi Michio, Yoshida Seifu, Nakao Tozan, and Fukuda Rando in creating new pieces for traditional instruments. This trend gained momentum during the *Gendai Hougaku* movement. While traditional musicians used to compose themselves, by the 1960s, they began delegating composition tasks to others. In the late 1950s and 1960s, Japanese composers with training in European art music turned to traditional Japanese instruments such as the *koto* and *shakuhachi*, developing a vibrant Japanese musical style.²²⁷

The enthusiasm of traditional players during the 1960s inspired contemporary composers to explore this new field. Toru Takemitsu's *November Steps* was premiered in 1967 by

²²⁵ Steven Casano, "From Fuke Shuu to Uduboo: The Transnational Flow of the Shakuhachi to the West," *The World of Music* 47, no. 3 (2005): 18, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41700005>.

²²⁶ Casano, "Fuke Shuu to Uduboo," 19.

²²⁷ Casano, "Fuke Shuu to Uduboo," 20.

Yokoyama Katsuya and Tsuruta Kinshi and performed in cities like Tokyo, New York, and Paris, contributing to the global recognition of Japanese music and the *shakuhachi's* sound.

In “The Re-contextualisation of the *Shakuhachi* and its Music from Traditional/Classical into Modern/Popular,” Toru Seyama states,

In today's Japanese music scene, the *shakuhachi* is used, roughly speaking, in the following cases: 1) in the solo performance of the classical *honkyoku*; 2) as part of the ensemble of traditional Japanese music; 3) as accompaniment to *minyo*, traditional Japanese folk songs; 4) accompaniment to *shigin*, the chanting of classical Chinese poems; 5) part of the ensemble accompanying *kayokyoku*, Japanese commercial-oriented popular music; 6) as a member of ensembles playing jazz, pop, and rock music; 7) in fusion or crossover performance with other instruments including both Western and non-Western music; and 8) in contemporary, experimental, and computer music.²²⁸

Since the 1980s, Hollywood film score composers have increasingly employed this technique. Some examples include *Rising Sun* (1993), *Jurassic Park* (1993) (to mimic a dinosaur cry), *Memoirs of a Geisha* (2005), and *The Karate Kid* (2010).²²⁹ While there were earlier instances of non-Japanese exposure to the *shakuhachi*, it wasn't until the 1960s that the transnational flow to the West and the active participation of non-Japanese in the *shakuhachi* tradition began to emerge. Key figures in this transnational flow included Aoki Reibo, Kodo Araki, and Yokoyama Katsuya, among others, who played pivotal roles through teaching, international workshops, performances, and recordings. Direct transmission from teacher to student played a crucial role in this flow, evident in various forms such as performances, immigration of Japanese to the West, short-term teaching at Western universities, and the growing number of non-Japanese studying and teaching the *shakuhachi* in both Japan and the

²²⁸ Seyama, “Shakuhachi from Traditional to Modern,” 77-78.

²²⁹ Valerie Nelson, “Masakazu Yoshizawa, 57; Played Japanese Flute in Films,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 16, 2007, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2007-nov-16-me-yoshizawa16-story.html>.

West. Moreover, the direct exposure and study of traditional Japanese music by non-Japanese individuals in the West have not only contributed to its dissemination and awareness but have also inspired some to travel to Japan for further studies, often facilitated by intercultural organizations.²³⁰

Two institutions that have been particularly influential in shaping the transnational trajectory of the *shakuhachi* tradition are the Japan Foundation (Kokusai Koryu Kikin) and the Japan Ministry of Education, Science, Sports, and Culture (Monbusho). Esteemed shakuhachi performers like Riley Lee, Anne Norman, David Wheeler, Christopher Blasdel, and Bruce Huebner have had the opportunity to delve into research at Japanese universities and receive guidance from *shakuhachi* masters such as Yamaguchi Goro, Kawase Junsuke, Tajima Tadashi, Ishikawa Toshimitsu, and Yokoyama Katsuya.²³¹

In the modern era, the *shakuhachi* has ventured into various musical genres, ranging from jazz and pop to rock. Musicians such as Zac Zinger, who seamlessly blends *shakuhachi* with jazz, Cornelius Boots, known for his work with contemporary bass *shakuhachi*, and Brian Ritchie, the bassist of Violent Femmes who coined the term "zen rock," have played pivotal roles in diversifying the instrument's repertoire. Their innovative approaches have stretched the boundaries of the *shakuhachi*, captivating audiences across different musical realms and introducing its unique sound to new listeners.

Yamaguchi Gorō (1933-1999), a leading figure in traditional Kinko-ryū *shakuhachi* performance, taught that mastering the *shakuhachi* isn't just about technique; it's also about personal growth. The discipline needed for *shakuhachi* fosters awareness and enlightenment

²³⁰ Casano, "Fuke Shuu to Uduboo," 25-26.

²³¹ Casano, "Fuke Shuu to Uduboo," 26.

suited to modern times. Today, the *shakuhachi's* ability to cultivate sensitivity and acute listening to sound is crucial. The art of listening—both internally and externally—to nature's diverse sounds is crucial in mastering the subtle nuances of *shakuhachi* playing.²³²

3.3 Other Traditional Japanese Flutes

3.3.1 Shinobue

The *shinobue* (篠笛), a traditional transverse Japanese bamboo flute, stands out for its versatility and unique characteristics. Although its range is limited, with unstable lower notes and piercing high notes, the middle register offers controllable dynamics and pleasing melodic passages. It can cut through the sound of *taiko* drum ensembles and complement *kabuki* (Japanese traditional theater with dancing and singing) theater singers. Moreover, skilled performers can manipulate its near-diatonic scale to blend well with Western ensembles. Traditional techniques like non-tongued note attacks and vibrato created by mouth movement contribute to its distinctive sound. The *shinobue* also excels in nuanced pitch variation and microtones, allowing for smooth portamento and glissandi. In traditional *shinobue* music, players often embellish melodies with ornamentation, adding to the expressive capability. As a result of its versatility and strength of sound, the *shinobue* is used in various ensembles, including both Japanese and non-Japanese ones.²³³

²³² Blasdel and Kamisango, *Shakuhachi: A Manual For Learning*, 6.

²³³ Meaghanne McBride, "Examining Traditional Japanese Flute Techniques In Compositions by Post-World War II Japanese Composers," *TCNJ Journal of Student Scholarship* 24 (2022), 3, <https://joss.tcnj.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/176/2022/04/2022-McBride-Music.pdf>.



*Figure 3-6. Japanese shinobue flute.*²³⁴

3.3.2 Ryūteki

The *ryūteki* (竜笛)—literally translating to "dragon flute"—holds a significant place in Japanese *gagaku* ensembles. Originating from the Chinese *ōteki* (横笛), it later adopted features from Tibetan flutes. Like the *shinobue*, the *ryūteki*'s lowest and highest notes are weak and piercing, respectively, with the middle range being the most versatile. Its larger finger holes facilitate semitone production and encourage the development of new fingerings. Unlike the *shinobue*, the *ryūteki* doesn't use vibrato but employs various breath techniques for accents and pitch changes, often emulating vocal styles.²³⁵



*Figure 3-7. Japanese ryūteki flute.*²³⁶

²³⁴ *Shinobue (Transverse Flute)*, DCM 0170, Library of Congress (Library of Congress, 2003), <https://www.loc.gov/item/2023865498/>.

²³⁵ McBride, "Japanese Flute Techniques," 4.

²³⁶ *Ryūteki* (龍笛 "Dragon Flute"), n.d., *The Met Collection API*, n.d., <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/502974>.

3.3.3 Nohkan

The *nohkan* (能管) is one of the most intricately crafted traditional Japanese flutes. It is made by smoking or burning bamboo, which gives the bamboo a longevity of three to four hundred years.²³⁷ It appears similar to the *ryūteki*, but their differences lie in timbre, usage, and technical capabilities. Some *nohkan* instruments feature a round pipe added between the mouthpiece and the first finger hole to enhance the sharpness of its sound. Due to its unique construction, controlling the pitch of the *nohkan* is challenging, making the pitch approximate in nature. The piercing timbre and imprecise pitch of the *nohkan* serve to express human instincts and emotions, particularly in *Noh* theater (traditional Japanese theater) performances. While its lowest notes lack volume and have a soft timbre, the middle register is loud and piercing, and these high pitches are frequently used in scenes of tension in *Noh* theater, such as when a ghost or spirit appears. *Nohkan* players accent phrases with strong breath attacks and finger strikes against the holes, incorporating the sound of the breath into the music.²³⁸

²³⁷ Donald Paul Berger, “The Nohkan: Its Construction and Music,” *Ethnomusicology* 9, no. 3 (September 1965): 221, <https://doi.org/10.2307/850235>.

²³⁸ McBride, “Japanese Flute Techniques,” 5.



*Figure 3-8. Japanese nohkan flute.*²³⁹

The *nohkan* measures 38 to 39 cm in length and has a mouth hole and seven finger holes. A delicate cherry bark string is wound around the bamboo bore, followed by layers of Japanese lacquer and vermilion coating. Inside, a small bamboo tube called *nodo* is inserted between the mouth hole and the first finger hole to reduce the inner diameter, though it remains hidden.²⁴⁰ Due to the insertion of the *nodo*, there are no universally standardized pitches for the *nohkan*, as each instrument varies slightly in length and construction. Achieving uniformity in ensemble performances becomes challenging due to these temperament discrepancies.²⁴¹

²³⁹ *Nohkan Flute*, n.d., *The Tokugawa Art Museum*, n.d.,

<https://artsandculture.google.com/asset/nohkan-flute-traditionally-attributed-to-shishida/nQH1CMYrH43hQw>.

²⁴⁰ Izumi Takakuwa, "Manufacturing Methods for Nohkan and Ryuteki as Clarified by Radiography," Independent Administrative Institution National Institutes for Cultural Heritage Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, accessed May 18, 2024, 1,

<https://www.tobunken.go.jp/joho/japanese/project/panel/nohkan/nohkan-e.pdf>.

²⁴¹ Mariko Anno, "Nōkan (Nō Flute) and Oral Transmission: Cohesion and Musicality through Mnemonics," *Asian Theatre Journal* 27, no. 1 (2010): 131, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40982908>.

Noh music encompasses vocal pieces, known as *yokyoku*, and instrumental accompaniment provided by an ensemble called *hayashi*. The instrumental ensemble typically includes a flute (*nohkan*), shoulder drum (*ko tsuzumi*), hip drum (*o tsuzumi*), and a stick-beaten drum (*taiko*) placed on a low stand. The *taiko* is primarily used during major dance sections, while the other instruments serve as accompaniment for singing or signaling formal sections of the play.²⁴²

²⁴² William P. Malm, “The Musical Characteristics and Practice of the Japanese Noh Drama in an East Asian Context,” in *Chinese and Japanese Music-Dramas* (University of Michigan Press, 1975), 100, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3998/mpub.19223.7>.

SECTION ONE: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Below is a chart that outlines and compares various traditional performance techniques commonly used in playing the *daegeum*, *dizi*, and *shakuhachi* flutes. These traditional flutes from Korea, China, and Japan respectively, each have unique techniques that define their sound and style. (For more information, please refer to Chapters 1-3).

Technique	Daegeum (Korea)	Dizi (China)	Shakuhachi (Japan)
Traditional Uses	Used in both court music to accompany royal rituals (jeongak daegeum) and as a solo instrument in folk music (sanjo daegeum).	Prominent in folk ensembles, operas, and solo performances. Bangdi (Northern-style): More articulation and ornamentation; Bright and piercing sounds Qudi (Southern-style): More lyrical, warmer sounds; Used in Kunqu opera	Commonly used in Zen Buddhist meditation practices (suizen), but also in secular contexts as a solo/ensemble instrument
Sound	Mellow, yet rich sound with a wide dynamic range; Buzzing membrane	Bright, brilliant sound; Distinctive buzzing quality from the membrane	Deep, resonant, and breathier sound with a wide range of microtones
Vibrato	Nongeum: Used as an embellishment; Wider tonal spectrum than Western vibrato that covers multiple notes; Employed more freely in folk performances	Zhenyin: Either produced by adjusting the airflow or through the tapping of the fingers	Yuri: Distinct head-shaking technique, either laterally or vertically. Vibrato was not used as frequently in honkyoku pieces

	Produced by widening/narrowing the arms to alter the pitch		
Articulation	Primarily single tonguing with variations in attacks	Complex articulation types including double, triple, and flutter tonguing	Atari (Finger tonguing): Quickly hitting the finger holes to articulate
Performance Techniques	Employs a variety of sigimsae (embellishments) like vibrato, glissando, and tremolo to enhance the melodic line	Use of improvisation, such as rapid ornamentations and grace notes to enhance the melody	Uses techniques like meri (lowering pitch) and kari (raising pitch) to adjust pitch subtly; Muraiki (breath noise)
Traditional Notation	Jeongganbo: A tablature system that notates pitches and rhythms in a grid	Gongche Notation (traditionally used): Uses Chinese characters to represent musical notes Jianpu Notation (for modern dizi): Cipher notation system that uses Arabic numerals to indicate pitches and symbols to represent rhythms	Traditional honkyoku pieces use the Japanese katakana alphabet, where each note corresponds to a fingering on the shakuhachi
Contemporary Performance	Collaborations with Western instruments; Used in the National Gugak Orchestra	More solo dizi compositions since 1949; Used in both solo and orchestral settings; New contemporary techniques	Popular in modern film scores, as well as cross-cultural collaborations, including jazz and rock genres

Figure 3-9. Comparison chart of the daegeum, dizi, and shakuhachi.

SECTION TWO

COMPOSITIONAL TRENDS: TRADITIONAL VS MODERN

CHAPTER FOUR: KOREAN COMPOSITIONAL TRENDS

To truly understand the trends and stylistic evolution in Korean music composition, it is crucial to delve into its rich historical foundations. By exploring the cultural tapestry of Korean folk music, we can unravel the intricate threads woven into the compositional styles of today's Korean composers. Understanding traditional music, alongside its historical and cultural contexts, is essential for performers striving to authentically capture the music's essence and spirit. Composer Donald Womack offered insights into Korean music from a Western standpoint, suggesting that composers who deeply understand Korean traditions, beyond just utilizing traditional instruments for timbral aspects, can inspire performers and composers to approach it with authenticity, respect, and responsibility.²⁴³

In my preface, I stress the importance of approaching works from other cultures with an intercultural lens. In Korea, music served to align human nature with the ordered cosmos, seeking a harmonious balance between yin and yang. Court music, representing the monarch's authority, was marked by solemnity and grandeur. In contrast, folk music expressed the raw emotions of the common people. Within Korea's modern music landscape, folk music stands as a cherished cultural heritage, preserved and celebrated for its historical value and significance.²⁴⁴ Understanding the intricacies of traditional folk music and the background of its evolution is vital for contemporary musicians seeking to engage with Korean musical traditions authentically and respectfully.

²⁴³ Kim et al., *Traditional Korean Instruments*, 304-305.

²⁴⁴ Byung-ki Hwang, "Some Notes on Korean Music and Aspects of Its Aesthetics," *The World of Music* 27, no. 2 (1985): 32-33, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43562696>.

Furthermore, Korea's historical experience of occupation and war has deeply influenced its cultural identity and musical expression. This history has instilled a sense of resilience and determination in Korean artists, shaping their creative output in the contemporary music scene. Much of Korean music is imbued with "*han*," a sociocultural concept that embodies a collective sense of unresolved resentment, pain, grief, and anger unique to Korea. *Han* is often depicted as inherent to the Korean psyche, representing a depth of sorrow that differs from Western experiences.²⁴⁵ This profound sense of pain, suffering, and resentment finds expression in Korean music. Korean scholar Suh Ji-Moon states:

Koreans have suffered many abuses at the hands of fate and the social structure, the dominant mood of their verse literature [is] regret and longing Naturally reflecting the circumstances of the nation, much of the literary output of Korea in colonial times dealt with the suffering and sorrows of the Korean people, and comprises a chronicle of the nation's survival.²⁴⁶

Western music and traditional East Asian music are distinct not only in terms of musical expression and structural principles but also in their philosophical and aesthetic foundations. Exploring the philosophical, cultural, and aesthetic roots of traditional East Asian music, alongside the practical aspects of bamboo flute playing discussed earlier, will shed light on the influences and traditions that shape this musical heritage, offering performers and analysts deeper insights into its significance and artistic expression.

The subsequent sections of this chapter will delve into the different elements that define traditional Korean music and shed light on its distinctive characteristics and enduring legacy.

²⁴⁵ Sandra So Hee Chi Kim, "Korean 'Han' and the Postcolonial Afterlives of 'The Beauty of Sorrow,'" *Korean Studies* 41 (2017): 254, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44508447>.

²⁴⁶ Heather Willoughby, "The Sound of Han: P'ansori, Timbre and a Korean Ethos of Pain and Suffering," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 32 (2000): 19, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3185241>.

4.1 Compositional Trends in Korea

In contemporary Korean music, there are typically two distinct musical cultures: *gugak*, which celebrates traditional Korean music rooted in centuries-old practices, and *yangak*, which encompasses Western musical styles and influences. These two musical traditions coexist and contribute to the diverse musical landscape of Korea, reflecting the country's rich cultural heritage and its openness to global influences. While *gugak* preserves and honors the unique musical heritage of Korea, *yangak* represents the integration of Western musical elements into Korean music.²⁴⁷ (I provide further background for these two intersecting musical heritages in Section 1.1 of this dissertation.)

Within *gugak* are two forms of music: *jeongak* (정악; traditional classical court music)²⁴⁸ and *minsogak* (민속악; traditional folk music).²⁴⁹ *Jeongak* was more proper due to the influence of Confucianism, while *minsogak* was highly stylized and included subcategories like *muak* (무악; shamanistic music), *pansori* (판소리; dramatic narrative song), *sanjo* (산조; instrumental songs), *minyo* (민요; folk songs), and *nongak* (농악, farmers' band music).²⁵⁰ (These subcategories will be further elaborated in Section 4.2.) Figure 4-1 below shows the different groups and subcategories of folk music.

²⁴⁷ Killick, Andrew P. "Musical Composition in Twentieth-Century Korea." *Korean Studies* 16 (1992): 44-47. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23720021>.

²⁴⁸ Sahun Jang, "Jeongak (Rightjoy)," in *Encyclopedia of Korean Culture*, accessed 2024, <https://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Article/E0050523>.

²⁴⁹ Jessica Ellis, thesis, *Pop Gugak and E-Sang: Negotiating Traditional and Pop Genre Categories in Expressions of Identity* (2023), 7, <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=11055&context=etd>.

²⁵⁰ Man-young Hahn, "The Origin of Korean Music," *The World of Music* 27, no. 2 (1985): 19-23, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43562695>.

Instrumental Music	Vocal Music
<i>Sanjo</i> (virtuosic solo music accompanied by percussion)	<i>Minyo</i> (folk songs)
<i>Sinawi</i> (improvisational ensemble music)	<i>Pansori</i> (musical storytelling by a singer and a drummer)
<i>Nongak</i> (farmers' band music)	<i>Japga</i> (commoners' songs)
<i>Pungmul/Samulnori</i> (percussive music)	<i>Danga</i> (short song sung before <i>pansori</i>)
<i>Muak</i> (Shamanistic ritual music)	<i>Muga</i> (Shamanistic ritual song)

Figure 4-1. Chart showing different Korean traditional folk music genres.

Traditional Korean music is distinguished by its unique treatment of melody, especially the significance of individual tones. This characteristic sets traditional Korean music apart from other Asian traditional music. In traditional Korean music, each tone possesses its own vitality, a concept called *nong hyun* (농현), which translates to "playing with string."²⁵¹

The core melodies of Korean music primarily revolve around two pentatonic scales: *pyeongjo* (평조) and *gyecheonjo* (계면조). However, the melodic lines in traditional Korean music often feature short ornamental notes, along with additional tones beyond the main scalar notes. Each mode comprises five notes arranged at intervals of major seconds and thirds, with *pyeongjo* resembling the Western major mode and *gyecheonjo* resembling the minor mode.²⁵²

Ornamentation and embellishments, or *sigimsae* (시김새), are considered a vital aspect of Korean folk music performances. This flexibility allows for personal interpretation and

²⁵¹ Kim, *Folk Music in 16 Arirang Variations*, 30.

²⁵² Kim, *Folk Music in 16 Arirang Variations*, 34.

variation during each performance. Improvisatory techniques have long been integral to Korean folk music, allowing musicians to infuse each performance with their unique expression.²⁵³

Korean traditional music, which lacks a harmonic framework, depended on ornamentation to imbue distinct nuances or timbres.²⁵⁴ As a result, the music may exhibit variation with each rendition. Different types of *sigimsae* include *nonghyeon* (vibrato), *chuseong* (sliding up to a higher pitch), and *toeseong* (sliding down to a lower pitch).²⁵⁵

Rhythm also holds prominent importance in traditional Korean music. Korean music predominantly features triple meter rhythms, such as 3/4 and 9/8. The repeated long-short rhythmic pattern, known as *jangdan* (장단), is present in all folk songs. *Jangdan* incorporates elements like meter, accent, tempo, and phrase and is typically played on a *janggu* (Korean traditional drum).²⁵⁶

In sharp contrast to the exuberance and liveliness of folk music, court music exudes an air of refined restraint, a characteristic perhaps cultivated by the enduring influence of Confucianism (see: Section 4.2.4). Often described as "motion within stillness," this gesture was accentuated by the gracefulness, elegance, and finesse in the musical style.²⁵⁷

In addition to these musical intricacies, traditional Korean music reflects a rich tapestry of philosophical and religious influences. While rhythm plays a prominent role, with *jangdan* patterns and instruments like the *janggu*, the music also echoes the spiritual beliefs and practices

²⁵³ "Introduction to Korean Traditional Music Styles," The Sejong Cultural Society, accessed 2024, <https://www.sejongculturalsociety.org/composition/current/music/intro.php>.

²⁵⁴ Hyo Jung Song, dissertation, *A Study and Performance Guide to Selected Nori Compositions for Piano by Young Jo Lee* (2016), 18,

https://etd.ohiolink.edu/acprod/odb_etd/ws/send_file/send?accession=ucin1468574905&disposition=inline.

²⁵⁵ Ellis, *Pop Gugak*, 31.

²⁵⁶ Ellis, *Pop Gugak*, 31.

²⁵⁷ Byong Won Lee, "Korean Court Music and Dance," *The World of Music* 23, no. 1 (1981): 38, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43562607>.

that have shaped Korean culture over the centuries. The next section explores the religious influences and their profound impact on the musical heritage of Korea.

4.2 Philosophical and Religious Influences

4.2.1 A Brief Overview of Religions in Korea

Throughout Korean history, music has been intricately intertwined with language and religion. Traditionally, Buddhism and Confucianism, alongside Christianity in more recent times, have shaped the spiritual heritage of Korean society. However, among these religions, shamanism stands as the oldest, with deep-rooted connections to Korean cultural and spiritual practices.²⁵⁸ This section delves into the pivotal role of folk culture in Korea, tracing its evolution amidst the influences of Buddhism, Confucianism, the influx of Western culture, and Christian missionaries. Despite facing near-extinction, traditional folk music experienced a remarkable resurgence, emerging as an Intangible Cultural Treasure to be safeguarded and cherished by future generations.

4.2.2 Influences of Buddhism

Buddhism was first introduced in Korea during the Three Kingdoms Period of Ancient Korea: Koguryo, Paekche, and Silla (18 BC-660 AD). After the Korean Peninsula was unified by the Silla kingdom in 668 AD Buddhism continued to flourish as the state religion until the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910). During this period, legislation prohibited all Buddhist activities

²⁵⁸ Hahn, "Origin of Korean Music," 19-23.

within city walls. It wasn't until the twentieth century that Buddhism experienced a revival, with 28% of the South Korean population identifying as Buddhist in the 1991 census.²⁵⁹

Buddhist performing arts encompass various ritual practices, dances, and musical ensembles. Ritual chant, called *pomp'ae* (범패), was central to temple services, featuring more melodic elements sung in modes, similar to the Western Gregorian chant.²⁶⁰

In the twentieth century, Buddhist chanting grew significantly, leading to academic research and preservation efforts, with notable publications and dissertations dedicated to studying these traditions. The designation of *pomp'ae* as an Intangible Cultural Asset further underscored the importance of preserving and documenting Buddhist musical heritage.²⁶¹

4.2.3 Influences of Daoism

Unlike the Buddhist and Confucian influences that actively shaped Korean music, Daoism was not considered a primary religious and cultural force. It arrived in Korea in 624 AD, but it didn't gain much ground. While Daoism briefly thrived during the Koryo dynasty (918–1392), particularly at the royal court, it declined during the Joseon dynasty (1392–1910) with the rise of Neo-Confucianism.²⁶² However, contemporary composers like Isang Yun have incorporated Daoist notions into their music, infusing their music with elements of tranquility and naturalism reminiscent of Daoist philosophy.

²⁵⁹ Paul D. Greene et al., “Buddhism and the Musical Cultures of Asia: A Critical Literature Survey,” *The World of Music* 44, no. 2 (2002): 149, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41699430>.

²⁶⁰ Man-young Han, “Beompae (梵唄),” in *Encyclopedia of Korean Culture*, accessed 2024, <https://encykorea.aks.ac.kr/Article/E0022601>.

²⁶¹ Greene et al., “Buddhism and Musical Cultures,” 149.

²⁶² Ja-Kyoung Kuh, dissertation, *The Use of Traditional Korean Compositional Techniques In Isang Yun's Opera “Die Witwe Des Schmetterlings” (the Butterfly Widow): Combining Eastern Musical Values and Concepts Within the Context of Western Practice* (2009), 37-38, https://repository.arizona.edu/bitstream/handle/10150/193734/azu_etd_10284_sip1_m.pdf.

In Chinese philosophy, Dao (道) signifies the "path" or the "way." Daoism represents a fundamental principle in Chinese ideology, embodying both universal and specific principles or orders. Daoism emphasizes the concept of change as central to its worldview, where the Dao is the only constant in life, while all other elements flow in and out of existence. Musicians inspired by Daoism perceive sound as an ongoing flow throughout the cosmos, encompassing not just audible natural sounds but also the impact of silence within the universe. For example, Isang Yun's music reflects this idea of change, where the main tone constantly evolves throughout the piece, mirroring the ephemeral nature of existence found within Daoist philosophy.²⁶³

The Daoist concept of Yin and Yang holds significant importance in Korean culture, as evident in the circular Yin and Yang symbol featured on South Korea's flag since 1883. According to Daoism, when Yin and Yang achieve equilibrium, universal harmony prevails.²⁶⁴ In music, Daoist ideas are conveyed through contrasting dynamics, harmonies, and various musical elements, which ultimately converge into a cohesive stream of sound.²⁶⁵

Additionally, Daoism advocates for spontaneity, suggesting that reaching the Dao requires unconscious, spontaneous action rather than conscious effort. This is mirrored in musical improvisation, where performers respond spontaneously to their mood at any given moment.

²⁶³ Eunjung Jung, dissertation, *A Full Realization of Isang Yun's Tuyaux Sonores and Its Analysis Based on Daoism* (2015), 28, <http://hdl.handle.net/1773/33216>.

²⁶⁴ Kuh, *Butterfly Widow*, 37-38.

²⁶⁵ Choy, *Fusion of Korean and Western*, 10.

4.2.4 Influences of Confucianism

The Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910) adopted Neo-Confucianism as the dominant ideology. In a Confucian state, governance hinges on the king's commitment to virtuous rule, with subjects adhering to Confucian principles in service to the monarchy.²⁶⁶ During the Joseon Dynasty, music held significant importance, paralleling propriety in its cultural value. Harmonious music was thought to elevate society, symbolizing effective governance, while discordant music signaled political instability.²⁶⁷

During King Sejong the Great's reign (1397-1450), a time marked by peace and prosperity, significant advancements were achieved across various domains, including politics, military, and science. Music also saw notable achievements during this period—King Sejong was known as the king who had profound musical abilities and taste.²⁶⁸ He advanced music during this time with noteworthy accomplishments: the revitalization of *aak* (악), traditional court music from China, the creation of new musical compositions, and the creation of *jeongganbo* (정간보), a novel musical notation system.²⁶⁹

Aak traces its origins to the Sung and Ming dynasties in China when instruments were gifted from the Chinese court to the Korean court during the 12th century.²⁷⁰ *Aak*, which translates to "elegant music," embodies the courtly musical traditions originating from China during the Zhou dynasty (1046-256 BC). In Confucian ideology, music and human virtue were

²⁶⁶ Ruth H. Mueller, dissertation, *Female Participation in South Korean Traditional Music: Late Chosŏn to the Present Day* (2013), 32-33, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/18451978.pdf>.

²⁶⁷ "Seong Hyeon, Author of Akhak Gwebeom (Manual of Musicology)," *KBS World*, 2012, https://world.kbs.co.kr/service/contents_view.htm?lang=e&menu_cate=history&id=&board_seq=60914&page=20&board_code=#none.

²⁶⁸ Gyewon Byeon, "Intertwining Influences on the Musical Achievements of 15th Century Korea," *The Review of Korean Studies* 25, no. 2 (2023): 223, <https://doi.org/10.25024/review.2022.25.2.215>.

²⁶⁹ Byeon, "15th Century Korea," 217.

²⁷⁰ Byeon, "15th Century Korea," 219.

seen as interconnected components. According to this worldview, progress in human virtue depended on music, and vice versa, emphasizing the integral role of music in fostering Confucian values.²⁷¹ As a result, *aak* music is more graceful and sublime—it is slower in tempo, more simple, more syllabic and structured in nature, and devoid of ornamentation. This elegant and tranquil music reflected the ideas of peace and symmetry prevalent in Confucian ideals and was a staple at all royal court ceremonies.²⁷²

The Joseon Dynasty, rooted in Neo-Confucian Thought, faced the challenge of reestablishing *aak*, which had waned during the tumultuous transition from the previous Goryeo Dynasty. The king—in his efforts to revitalize music—incorporated various elements from indigenous, Korean court music from the Three Kingdoms Period (*hyangak*; 향악) into his compositions. He believed that the musical elements found in *hyangak* were more effective in resonating with and uniting the people. King Sejong the Great’s ultimate goal was to make this new music accessible to all people in the dynasty, regardless of their social status, aiming for widespread enjoyment and appreciation throughout the kingdom.²⁷³ King Sejong dedicated himself to crafting excellent music and composed *Yeominrak* with the intention of spreading joy among the people. The lyrics of *Yeominrak*, signifying “having fun with the people,” are profoundly beautiful. King Sejong featured *Yeominrak* in national ceremonies and distributed rice and food after the ceremonies to those unable to afford it, showing the spirit of community engagement that *Yeominrak* embodied.²⁷⁴

²⁷¹ Byeon, “15th Century Korea,” 216.

²⁷² Hahn, “Origin of Korean Music,” 24-25.

²⁷³ Byeon, “15th Century Korea,” 237.

²⁷⁴ Hwa-young Son, “[Gugak Walk] Composer King Sejong’s *Yeominrak* (與民樂),” *Korea Times*, 2021, <http://sf.koreatimes.com/article/20210917/1380876>.

In addition, Seong Hyeon's²⁷⁵ (1439 -1504) *Akhak Gwebeom*, a comprehensive music encyclopedia, detailed traditional court music theories, systems, and forms, featuring lyrics in Hangul (Korean language) alongside illustrative explanations. This nine-volume treatise delves into various aspects of music, including theories, instrument arrangement, performance procedures, instrument crafting, techniques, dances with accompanying music, and related costumes and props. Seong Hyeon also introduced an innovative approach to musical composition by integrating existing musical scores with intricate techniques. This groundbreaking method has greatly facilitated the study of Korean language and literature, traditional dances, costumes, artistic performances, and props. Even today, its systematic and detailed content remains highly regarded for its reliability and authority.²⁷⁶

4.3 Cultural and Aesthetic Influences

4.3.1 Folk Music

As mentioned previously, rhythm was a vital part of traditional Korean music, especially percussive music. Donald Clark states in *Cultures and Customs of Korea*:

Korean children traditionally grew up hearing percussion patterns all around them, from chopsticks being beaten on the wine shop table to the sounds of their mothers "ironing" clothes by pounding them with flat wooden sticks, and the drumming of village musicians.²⁷⁷

Nongak (farmers' music) encompasses folk songs (*minyo*), which depict the emotions surrounding rural life. While most of the melody was often long forgotten, the rhythmic elements

²⁷⁵ Seong Hyeon was a lecturer of Confucian practices for the King and later served in various high-ranking government posts.

²⁷⁶ "Seong Hyeon Gwebeom."

²⁷⁷ Donald N. Clark, *Culture and Customs of Korea* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2000), 81.

of these songs persist in the collective memory of the nation.²⁷⁸ In essence, *nongak* was a percussive musical form, utilizing instruments like the *kkwaenggwari* (small gong), *jing* (larger gong), *janggu* (hourglass-shaped drum), and *buk* (barrel drum).²⁷⁹ *Nongak* provided upbeat rhythms and lively music for the farmers and laborers, helping the workload feel more bearable, while also serving as entertainment for the village.²⁸⁰ Among the common people, *nongak* evoked everyday emotions, such as sorrow and joy, and “expressed the mundane.”²⁸¹

Despite facing near extinction, *nongak* experienced revival efforts during the late twentieth century as part of a national initiative to reclaim cultural heritage. The Korean government supports the preservation of *nongak* by funding folk music groups, dance troupes, and skilled performers known as Living National Treasures, a term designated to individuals who are certified as Holders of Important Intangible Cultural Properties. These individuals are recognized for their significance in representing Korea's cultural heritage and are protected and preserved by the government and cultural institutions.²⁸² While some argue that government involvement may lead to control over approved art forms, cultural preservation efforts have salvaged significant aspects of Korean music heritage.²⁸³

4.3.2 Shamanic Music

Shamanism represents another important dimension within Korea's cultural music context. Shamanism is practiced by a *mudang* or *manshin* (무당; female shaman), which refers

²⁷⁸ Clark, *Customs of Korea*, 81-82.

²⁷⁹ Jennifer L. Bussell, thesis, *A Life of Sound: Korean Farming Music and Its Journey to Modernity* (1997), 5-6, <https://uspungmul.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/bussell1997.pdf>.

²⁸⁰ Bussell, *Life of Sound*, 10.

²⁸¹ Hwang, “Korean Music Aesthetics,” 34.

²⁸² Nathan Hesselink, “Samul Nori as Traditional: Preservation and Innovation in a South Korean Contemporary Percussion Genre,” *Ethnomusicology* 48, no. 3 (2004): 407, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30046287>.

²⁸³ Clark, *Customs of Korea*, 81-82.

to individuals endowed with extraordinary or supernatural abilities, capable of communicating with spirits believed to inhabit the world. Shamanism was prevalent among Korea's ancestors, even before Buddhism or Confucianism. These shamans perform exorcisms called *kuts* (굿), where they consult troubled clients to discern the nature of their issues. During these *kuts*, shamanistic music, or *sinawi* (시나위), was performed. Shamans sang improvisational folk songs and texts, which were accompanied by loud rhythms on percussive instruments to summon the spirits.²⁸⁴ Percussive sounds play a vital role in Korean shaman ritual performances, featuring instruments like the hourglass-shaped drum (*janggu*), gongs (*jing*), cymbals (*bara*), bells (*bangwool*), and small hand-gongs (*kkwaenggwari*). They aid in summoning spirits, cleansing the ritual space, providing rhythmic accompaniment for songs and rituals, and encouraging cathartic expressions such as dancing and singing.²⁸⁵

This folk music style has long been associated with the everyday lives of ordinary people and can be described as flamboyant or crude. The melody is characterized by exaggerated and sorrowful expressions, featuring melismatic ornamentation and a rapid tempo.²⁸⁶

Before the emergence of Neo-Confucianism in the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910), both shamanism and Buddhism were widely practiced across society, despite Buddhism holding the status of the state religion during the Koryo Dynasty (918-1392). However, with the advent of the Neo-Confucian Joseon Dynasty, shamans were marginalized to the lowest social class. Shamanism has managed to persist in Korean society, albeit discouraged by the government until

²⁸⁴ Clark, *Customs of Korea*, 81-82.

²⁸⁵ Simon Mills, "Music in Korean Shaman Ritual," in *Rediscovering Traditional Korean Performing Arts* (Seoul, South Korea: Korea Arts Management Service, 2012), 31, https://www.academia.edu/95564976/Rediscovering_Traditional_Korean_performing_Arts.

²⁸⁶ Hahn, "Origin of Korean Music," 9.

the 1980s. During the 1980s and 1990s, amid the government's quest to preserve traditional cultural forms at risk of disappearance, *mudangs* were recognized as Living Human Treasures.

One of the most renowned shamans is Kim Keum-Hwa (1931-2019), who was from a small North Korean village and relocated to South Korea during the Korean War. Despite facing government scrutiny, accusations of obstructing the nation's modernization, and threats from individuals who tried to harm her during the 1960s and 70, she remained steadfast and dedicated her life to the practice of shamanism. She earned international acclaim, even performing a *kut* (ritual) for Korean reunification in the 1990s, and was recognized as the official holder of National Intangible Cultural Asset No. 82-2.²⁸⁷

Today, people see shamans for various personal reasons—be it for relocating to a new house, purchasing a new car, enhancing one's business, understanding one's children, or addressing more serious matters. In cases of severe illness, for instance, a shaman might determine that an evil spirit or unsettled ancestor is causing disruption and recommend an exorcism.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁷ Lauren W. Deutsch, "Kim Keumhwa's Everyday Shamanism," web log, *Kyoto Journal* (blog), 2015, <https://www.kyotojournal.org/culture-arts/kim-keumhwas-everyday-shamanism/>.

²⁸⁸ Karen Frances Eng, "In 21st-Century Korea, Shamanism Is Not Only Thriving — but Evolving," web log, *Medium* (blog), 2018, <https://fellowsblog.ted.com/in-21st-century-korea-shamanism-is-not-only-thriving-but-evolving-fla8862a7bc8>.



*Figure 4-2. Shaman Kim Keum-Hwa.*²⁸⁹

4.4 Political Influences

The Japanese occupation of Korea from 1910 to 1945 stands as one of the most devastating periods in Korean history. During this era, the Korean people endured profound suppression of their cultural identity. The Japanese authorities imposed strict regulations, prohibiting the use of the Korean language, suppressing traditional music, and outlawing indigenous religious practices. Under this oppressive regime, Koreans were compelled to adopt Japanese names, and many were subjected to harsh treatment, effectively reducing them to a state of servitude.²⁹⁰

Music, a hallmark of Korean cultural heritage, faced severe restrictions during this period. The Korean government, under Japanese control, implemented policies that marginalized Korean music education. Traditional folk songs were eradicated in favor of Japanese and

²⁸⁹ Yeonsoo Chee and Keum-hwa Kim, Renown Korean Shamanism Practitioner Kim Keum-Hwa Discusses History, Tradition and the Future of Her Practice, other, *USC Pacific Asia Museum*, 2015.

²⁹⁰ David G. Hebert, “Tradition and Modernity in South Korean Music Education: A Critical Analysis,” *Contributions to Music Education* 27, no. 2 (2000): 101–102, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24127079>.

European compositions in schools. As a result, music education in Korea became heavily influenced by foreign cultures, with little emphasis placed on preserving indigenous musical traditions.²⁹¹

In 1962, the South Korean government responded to the urgent need for cultural preservation by enacting the Cultural Asset Preservation Law. This legislation aimed to safeguard both “tangible” and “intangible” cultural assets, including historic sites, traditional performing arts, and crafts. Being recognized as an intangible cultural asset constitutes a significant honor, granting considerable prestige and financial honors.²⁹²

The history of foreign occupation and division continues to impact South Korea's music education system today. Despite efforts to revive and preserve Korean musical traditions, some music teachers lack comprehensive knowledge of their cultural heritage. The scars of the past remain, casting a shadow over the prospects of fully reclaiming Korea's rich musical legacy.²⁹³

4.5 Influence on Contemporary Korean Composers

During the Japanese colonial era (1910-1945), Korean traditional music faced marginalization and barely survived. The depreciation of *gugak* posed challenges in resurrecting this genre, and by this point, the public preference for Western music over *gugak* had already prompted many musicians to pursue studies abroad in Western music.²⁹⁴ Following Korea's liberation in 1945, significant developments were initiated to reshape the landscape of Korean

²⁹¹ Hebert, “Korean Music Education,” 102-103.

²⁹² Hesselink, “Samul Nori,” 407.

²⁹³ Hebert, “Korean Music Education,” 103-104.

²⁹⁴ Keith Howard, “Ch’angjak Kugak: Blending the Wine and Stretching the Wineskins,” in *Creating Korean Music: Tradition, Innovation, and Discourse of Identity*, vol. 2, Perspectives on Korean Music (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2006), 105.

musicology. Korean scholars took the lead in studying Korean traditional music, leading to the establishment of the Korean Musicological Society in 1948.²⁹⁵

Following the Korean War (1950-1953), Korean musicology began to flourish in higher education institutions, establishing professional networks essential for its growth as an academic discipline. Prior to the 1960s, most Korean composers predominantly focused on Western music. However, in 1959, a department solely dedicated to Korean traditional music was founded at Seoul National University. Many of these composers, now highly respected in both *yangak* and *gugak*, graduated from these institutions.²⁹⁶ This progress led to the establishment of new departments specializing in Korean music, and in 1963, an advanced master's program in Korean traditional music was initiated at Seoul National University, producing a cohort of second-generation scholars in Korean musicology.²⁹⁷ With the establishment of Seoul National University's College of Traditional Music, the curriculum required students to perform three repertoires in their graduation recitals: court, folk, and contemporary music. As the Korean economy expanded and *gugak* musicology became more prominent, the formation of traditional music orchestras grew.²⁹⁸ Moreover, the government's establishment of the Bureau of Cultural Properties in 1962 aimed to preserve traditional cultural forms at risk of disappearance by

²⁹⁵ Keith Howard, "Korean Music before and after the West," in *The Cambridge History of World Music* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 329, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/cambridge-history-of-world-music/korean-music-before-and-after-the-west/A9AC3E909720CE93A05AFBA688A9C06E>.

²⁹⁶ Andrew P. Killick, "Musical Composition," 49.

²⁹⁷ Bang-song Song, "Present State of Research on Korean Traditional Music," *The World of Music* 27, no. 2 (1985): 63–77, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43562698>.

²⁹⁸ Howard, "Korean Music," 340.

labeling cultural expressions as cultural treasures, underscoring the importance of preserving Korea's rich cultural heritage for future generations.²⁹⁹

Korean contemporary music can be delineated into three distinct generations. The first generation, which emerged in the 1950s and 1960s, was characterized by composers who actively introduced Western musical concepts to Korea. Notable figures like Kim Sunnam (1917-1986) and Un-Young La (1922-1993), who received education in Japan, are emblematic of this era. The second generation, comprising composers who imported modern musical ideologies to Korea while infusing them with Korean cultural elements, includes luminaries such as Isang Yun (1917-1995), Byung-Dong Paik (b.1934), and Sukhi Kang (b.1934), who pursued studies in Germany.³⁰⁰

The 1970s witnessed a significant evolution in contemporary Korean music, characterized by the emergence of innovative styles that seamlessly blend traditional Korean and Western musical influences. During this period, several Korean composers and ensembles introduced novel approaches that integrated elements from both musical traditions.³⁰¹ Previously, there was a divide among Korean composers, with some leaning heavily toward *gugak* while others are more inclined toward *yangak*. Composers in the former group tend to focus on traditional instruments and styles, while those in the latter group incorporate Western elements into their compositions.³⁰²

²⁹⁹ Hilary Finchum-Sung, "Performing the 'Traditional' in the South Korean Musical World," *Folklore Forum* 38, no. 1 (2008): 61,

<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/iuswrrest/api/core/bitstreams/0d99f45e-cf1e-4142-9efe-5cd637195bbb/content>.

³⁰⁰ Miranda Brugman et al., "Seya Seya: Elegy For The Failed Rebellion, by Seo Yoon Kim," in *Peabody Institute Open Editions Spring 2019*, vol. 1, accessed 2024,

<https://pressbooks.pub/friedheim/chapter/background-on-the-work/>.

³⁰¹ Jin Kim, dissertation, *Exploring Aspects of Korean Traditional Music In Young Jo Lee's Piano Honza Nori* (2013), 3, https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc283809/m2/1/high_res_d/dissertation.pdf.

³⁰² Killick, "Musical Composition," 44.

As discussed in Section 1.1, Background on Korean Traditional Music, the emergence of the Korean traditional instruments orchestra represented a pivotal moment for contemporary composers. Government support provided a stable career path for traditional musicians and contemporary composers alike, and universities offered separate degrees in Korean music composition. In the quest for modernization and Westernization, Korean composers faced the challenge of preserving traditional music while innovating with contemporary pieces. Initially, composers leaned towards Western classical principles and experimented with blending traditional elements, drawing criticism for their compositions resembling Western music too closely. As they grappled with balancing instrumentation, stylistic shifts emerged, highlighting traditional rhythmic patterns and percussive sounds. The establishment of a committee by the National Gugak Center in 1964 aimed to modernize traditional instruments for contemporary compositions, leading to revisions in nearly all Korean traditional instruments over time. These concerts today feature popular dancers and actors, with programs promoting the fusion of traditional music with contemporary genres like pop and tango.³⁰³

As composers developed their individualistic compositional styles throughout the latter half of the 20th century, there was a growing trend among composers and ensembles to explore *changjak gugak* (newly-created *gugak*) in its modern form. *Changjak gugak* can be described as “Music written for traditional Korean instruments in Western staff notation using Western or Korean style ornaments, embellishments, tempo indications, dynamic marks, and moods.”³⁰⁴ By 1981, a coalition of composers known as the Third Generation, including Kang Chunil Lee (b. 1944), Byung-Eun Yoo (b. 1952), Tae-bong Chung (b. 1952), Younghan Heo (b.1946), and

³⁰³ Park, “Modern Orchestra of Korean Instruments,” 70–80.

³⁰⁴ Mueller, *Female Participation*, 238.

Seongho Hwang (b. 1955), had emerged, advocating for a fusion of Korean musical traditions with contemporary Western compositions. The influence of the Third Generation extended to numerous composers today, inspiring them to create works imbued with a distinctly Korean identity in terms of musical material and instrumentation.³⁰⁵ The 1990s marked a significant milestone in the evolution of fusion *gugak*, which incorporated traditional Korean instruments, such as the *daegeum* and *gayageum*, alongside drums, piano, and electric guitars to present Korean music with a contemporary twist. This era saw the emergence of new *minyo*, which blended Korean folk songs with acappella and jazz elements, along with the harmonization of traditional Korean melodies.³⁰⁶

Today, *changjak gugak* continues to evolve, not only incorporating diverse Western musical elements and structures but also drawing inspiration from African, East Asian, Indian, Russian, and South American music. This effort aims to globalize Korean music and position it as a leading fusion of diverse musical styles.³⁰⁷ For example, the revival of certain art forms, such as *samulnori*, has preserved certain elements of *nongak* (folk music). Since the late 1970s, *samulnori* (사물놀이), a four-instrument percussion ensemble, has evolved from the traditional percussion ensemble known as *p'ungmul nori* (풍물놀이). *P'ungmul nori* was typically performed outdoors to accompany village rituals, entertain, and support laborers in the field.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ Brugman et al., *Editions Spring 2019*.

³⁰⁶ Jungwon Kim, thesis, *Gender in Fusion Kugak: An Examination of Women's Fusion Kugak Groups and Their Music Practices* (2012), 30, https://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/11917/7/jkim_etd2012_1.pdf.

³⁰⁷ Kim, *Honza Nori*, 3.

³⁰⁸ Yoonjah Choi, dissertation, *Gendered Practices and Conceptions in Korean Drumming: On the Negotiation of "Femininity" and "Masculinity" by Korean Female Drummers* (2014), 21, https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1412&context=gc_etds.



Figure 4-3. *Samulnori performance at the Seoul 1988 Olympic Flame.*³⁰⁹

Since the inception of the *changjak gugak* culture, composers have integrated Western classical compositional techniques into traditional Korean music, viewing them as essential for its advancement. However, many composers faced criticism for “diluting” its authenticity by incorporating excessive Western elements, sparking the debate of "tradition" in these compositions.³¹⁰ While *changjak gugak* may not be truly “authentic,” *changjak gugak* plays a vital role in audience engagement and communication compared to traditional *gugak*. Musicians specializing in *gugak* state that besides its artistic merit, “The audience’s response is very different between *sanjo* and *changjak gugak*...as a performer, I feel great pleasure from [*sanjo*]. But I cannot force the general audience to feel the same pleasure...It is difficult for the audience

³⁰⁹ Katerina Lygkoni, "Korean Samulnori Artists Perform at the Ancient Temple of Olympia before Lighting the Seoul 1988 Olympic Flame, with an Audience of Around 15,000 people," Korea Blog, *Korean Culture and Information Service*, 31 Aug. 2016, koreanetblog.blogspot.com/2016/08/olympic-flashback.html.

³¹⁰ Kim, *Gender in Fusion*, 5.

to sympathize with the music.”³¹¹ On the other hand, *changjak gugak* reflects contemporary Korean culture and society, serving as a reflection of South Korea's cultural and social evolution in the late 20th century.³¹²

Understanding the philosophical, religious, political, and cultural backgrounds of music in Korea is crucial for fully appreciating and performing traditional Korean music. Through this comprehensive understanding, we can grasp the depth and significance of new compositions based on traditional Korean music and recognize its roots and the contexts from which it emerged. By exploring these various facets, performers enhance their interpretations and pay tribute to the rich history of Korean heritage. As a result, I believe that performers can foster a deeper connection with the music and its audience, ensuring its preservation and relevance in contemporary society.

³¹¹ Hae-sook Kim, “Gugak Changjak from a Performer’s Perspective,” in *Gugak Changjak, Changjak Gugak, The Change and Flux* (Seoul, South Korea: The National Gugak Center, 2012), 65.

³¹² Kim, *Gender in Fusion*, 75.

CHAPTER FIVE: CHINESE COMPOSITIONAL TRENDS

China's musical exchanges with Central Asia, referred to historically as the Western Regions (西域; *Xi Yu*), have a rich history that began prominently during the Tang Dynasty (618-907). This period marked substantial intercultural musical exchange facilitated by the Silk Road, a major trade route that connected China with Central Asia and beyond. The Tang court welcomed these foreign musicians, and their music became a significant influence on Chinese cultural life, enriching the local musical traditions with new styles and techniques. These interactions laid the groundwork for further cultural exchanges in subsequent dynasties. Notably, during the Ming Dynasty, the arrival of Jesuit priest Matteo Ricci in 1582 marked the beginning of direct musical influences from Europe. Ricci and other missionaries introduced European music and instruments to China, thereby expanding the Chinese understanding of Western musical concepts and practices.³¹³

Despite these efforts, the reception of European music in China was mixed. While some members of the Chinese elite appreciated the novelty and complexity of Western music, others were less enthusiastic. European attitudes toward Chinese music were often condescending; many missionaries and visitors from Europe failed to appreciate the sophistication of Chinese musical traditions. They frequently viewed Chinese music as inferior to Western music, reflecting broader Eurocentric prejudices of the time. Over time, despite these challenges, Western music gradually became integrated into Chinese society, gaining popularity among the cultural elite by the early twentieth century. The New Culture Movement of 1919 played a

³¹³ Hon-Lun Yang and Michael Saffle, *China and the West*, *Academia.Edu* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2017), 268-69, https://www.academia.edu/98064732/When_a_Great_Nation_Emerges_Chinese_Music_in_the_World.

significant role in fostering acceptance of Western music, supported by the establishment of music programs and conservatories. This movement, which aimed to modernize China, viewed Western music as part of a broader push toward modernity and reform. Support for Western music was further institutionalized with the establishment of music programs and conservatories, which provided formal training in Western musical traditions. Since the 1930s, Western music, referred to as "new music," has coexisted alongside traditional Chinese music, with its assimilation accelerating after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Today, China's musical landscape is rich and diverse, encompassing various genres such as traditional, folk, and Western classical music, showcasing a fusion of cultural influences.³¹⁴

In navigating the complexities of contemporary music written by Chinese composers, it is important to explore not only the compositional trends in China but also the interplay of religious, political, and cultural influences. By delving into these layers, performers can gain invaluable insights into the context and intent behind the music, allowing for more authentic and nuanced interpretations. It is difficult for performers to authentically convey the ancient sounds of traditional Chinese music, nor can audiences fully appreciate the significance of the performance without delving into the historical context of China and gaining a deep understanding of its art forms, philosophies, and ancient traditions. Gaining deeper insight into how music intertwines with other elements of Chinese culture, such as the significant influences of Confucian and Daoist philosophies on artistic expression, or understanding the effects of political events like the Cultural Revolution on the evolution of Chinese music, provides a richer perspective on the compositions and their underlying messages. By integrating this

³¹⁴ Yang and Saffle, *China and the West*, 1.

understanding into their performances, musicians can honor the intricate cultural heritage that has shaped musical expression, allowing us to transcend the mere technical elements and connect on a deeper level with the essence of the music.

5.1 Compositional Trends in China

Before looking at the cross-cultural exchange with the West, it is important to understand the foundational elements of Chinese traditional music. Chinese traditional music relies on the pentatonic scale, consisting of five notes (depicted in Figure 5-1 below): Gong (宫), Shang (商), Jue (角), Zhi (徵), Yu (羽). The predominant pentatonic scale in Chinese music is the gong hexatonic scale, including the notes C, D, E, G, A, and C, commonly featured in solo instrumental and vocal performances.

Scale Name	Gong (宫)	Shang (商)	Jue (角)	Zhi (徵)	Yu (羽)
Pitch	C	D	E	G	A
Syllable	Do	Re	Mi	Sol	La

Figure 5-1. The five notes of the fundamental pentatonic scale.

While it is widely recognized that traditional Chinese music often employs the pentatonic scale, this notion has sometimes led to a misconception that Chinese music is exclusively based on these five tones. Although the pentatonic scale is a fundamental aspect of Chinese music, providing a distinct and recognizable sound, Chinese musical tradition is much richer and more diverse. Beyond the pentatonic scale, Chinese music incorporates various modes akin to Western

major and minor modes. Among these, notable modes such as the *zhi* (徵), *yu* (羽), and *shang* (商) exhibit distinct qualities suited to different musical expressions. The *zhi* mode, favored in folk music, exudes a vibrant and lively demeanor. In contrast, the *yu* mode finds use in slower, reflective pieces, evoking sentiments of melancholy and yearning. Meanwhile, the *shang* mode lends itself to formal and ceremonial compositions, characterized by a solemn and dignified aura.³¹⁵ In essence, the utilization of scales and modes enriches Chinese music's diversity, facilitating the portrayal of a wide array of emotions and moods within its compositions.

Improvisation and composition hold significant roles in traditional Chinese music, fostering spontaneity and creativity within performances. Ensemble settings often encourage musicians to embellish melodies or devise new ones on the spot, adding a dynamic layer to the music. This practice is particularly emphasized in instruments like the *guqin* and *erhu*, where players are esteemed for their improvisational prowess.³¹⁶

Chinese folk music encompasses a rich tapestry of styles and instruments, spanning regional folk songs, dances, and operas among both ethnic minorities and the Han Chinese population. Additionally, storytelling through "story-singing" remains a cherished tradition in rural areas, preserving cultural heritage and serving as a link to China's past. Through generations, folk music has retained its cultural significance, reflecting the nation's history and traditions.³¹⁷

³¹⁵ Pizà, "Music of China."

³¹⁶ Pizà, "Music of China."

³¹⁷ Pizà, "Music of China."

5.2 Philosophical and Religious Influences

Chinese tradition has a long-standing history that can be traced back to primitive religions and nature worship. The origin of music in China can also be traced back to deep-rooted Chinese philosophical cultures. Ancient Chinese philosophy can be distinguished into four main periods: The early Qin Dynasty (220-206 BC), the Han and Tang Dynasties (202 BC-907 AD), the Song and Ming Dynasties (960-1644 AD), and the contemporary times (1636 AD-present). Music made its first appearance in Ancient China within the pages of *The Spring and Autumn of Lu Buwei* during the Warring States Period (476-221 BC).³¹⁸

Throughout Chinese history, music has been intricately linked with philosophy, blending various schools of thought such as Confucianism, Mohism, Daoism, Yin-Yang School, and Legalism during the pre-Qin period. The introduction of Confucianism during the Han Dynasty spurred its rapid growth and profoundly influenced Chinese music. Concurrently, Buddhism from India gained traction as a dominant philosophical school during the Tang Dynasty.³¹⁹ The combination of the principles of Confucianism, with its emphasis on social harmony and moral development, along with the focus of Daoism on nature and spontaneity and the contemplative aspects of Buddhism, significantly influenced the Song and Ming Dynasties. Today, Buddhism and Daoism continue to hold significance in Mainland China.³²⁰

³¹⁸ Wai Man Ng, thesis, *The Application of the Chinese Yin-Yang Concept And Chinese Music in Guided Imagery and Music* (2018), 23, https://www.academia.edu/109057899/The_application_of_the_Chinese_Yin_Yang_concept_and_Chinese_music_in_guided_imagery_and_music.

³¹⁹ Ng, *Chinese Yin-Yang*, 24.

³²⁰ Yifan Fan, "Philosophical Speculation in Traditional Chinese Music," *Trans/Form/Ação* 47, no. 4 (2024), 1-2, <https://doi.org/10.1590/0101-3173.2024.v47.n4.e0240069>.

5.2.1 Influences of Confucianism

The philosophy of music in Confucianism finds its roots in the teachings of Confucius, who emphasized the virtue of *ren* (仁; humaneness) and placed great value on moral and artistic education. Confucius made significant contributions to music education, and as a distinguished musician himself, he advocated for individuals to learn music to refine their thinking for a more harmonious society.³²¹ In Confucian thought, music serves three primary functions: it allows for the expression and transmission of passionate emotions, fostering inner emotional harmony and facilitating interpersonal communication; it guides human emotions through art forms, promoting virtue and contentment; and it promotes harmony through unity, merging emotions and bridging social divides. Confucian aesthetics prioritize simplicity and harmony in music, opposing complexity and ornamentations. Additionally, Confucians stress the importance of organizing melody and harmony around a central note to achieve unity.³²² Therefore, music is a tool for governance and society harmony, and Confucians strongly believed that the creation and consumption of music was an essential requisite of the Six Arts (六藝) in the Confucian curriculum.³²³

Cai Zhongde, a respected music scholar from Beijing's Central Conservatory of Music, states that beauty finds its essence in the delicate balance of *li* (禮; ritual), *yue* (樂; music and arts), *ren* (仁; benevolence), and *zhongyong* (中庸; the golden mean). Within Confucian philosophy, the fusion of *li* and *yue* mirrors the political ideals of the Zhou Dynasty. As

³²¹ Ng, *Chinese Yin-Yang*, 21.

³²² Fan, "Speculation in Chinese Music," 13-15.

³²³ Rafał Mazur, "Music as a Tool for Self-Realization in Chinese Culture: Based on the Practice of Playing the Guqin," *US-China Foreign Language* 13, no. 4 (April 28, 2015): 308, <https://doi.org/10.17265/1539-8080/2015.04.010>.

Confucian principles gained state prominence during the Han Dynasty, they embraced the harmonious equilibrium of *zhongyong*, asserting that music holds power to shape hearts and nurture the human spirit.³²⁴

5.2.2 Influences of Daoism

Daoist music aesthetics focus on the pursuit of natural beauty. According to Laozi (6th century BC), the father of Daoism, the *Dao* (道; “the way”) is the origin of everything, and its essence is found in nature. Daoism guides people to live in harmony with the natural order of the universe and follow the natural flow of life.³²⁵ Laozi believed that natural, pure music is precious and embodies Daoist principles. Unlike Confucian ritual music, which aims to regulate behavior, Daoist music seeks harmony by aligning with the will of heaven and following nature's course. The primary concept at the heart of Daoism is *wu wei* (“doing nothing”), which emphasizes spontaneity and effortless behavior. In terms of music, Laozi advocated for imagination and creativity, believing that the most exceptional music lies within one’s mind.³²⁶

Daoist philosophy has significantly influenced the development of Chinese traditional music, emphasizing naturalism and artistic conception.³²⁷ Within this perspective, the focus is on intuitively grasping the essence of things as a whole. This leads to an overarching trend in art towards capturing the essence of nature and life. In music, this is achieved through a blend of

³²⁴ Xiaole Li, dissertation, *Chen Yi's Piano Music: Chinese Aesthetics and Western Models* (2003), 38, <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/aaf3714d-499c-44ea-ac8d-04b376a14401/content>.

³²⁵ Li, *Chinese Aesthetics*, 39.

³²⁶ Ng, *Chinese Yin-Yang*, 21.

³²⁷ Fan, “Speculation in Chinese Music,” 7-9.

abstract and concrete elements and creating changes in timbre that are both strong and graceful.³²⁸

Daoist music encompasses both vocal and instrumental expressions, playing a vital role in the rituals of Daoism. Within these rituals, priests employ various vocal techniques, including chanting, recitation, and choral performances, to invoke sacred tones known as *yun* (韻). Meanwhile, instrumental music utilizes ritual tools, such as *faqi*, during *zhaijiao* rituals, which were believed to possess spiritual powers capable of summoning deities and dispelling malevolent forces.³²⁹

This musical tradition serves a dual purpose: it spreads the philosophical teachings of Daoism and facilitates spiritual purification while also providing entertainment and honoring divine beings during rituals. With its solemn and reverential nature, Daoist music reflects the unity of Daoist ideology and caters to the diverse needs of ritual contexts, fostering a spiritual connection between practitioners and the divine realm.³³⁰

Composer Tan Dun reflected on how the Daoist ritual performed at his grandmother's funeral brought back memories of the sounds and spiritual resonance from his childhood, which had been overshadowed by years of Western music education. Upon contemplating this experience, he expressed his desire to move beyond the conventional constraints that music should strictly adhere to tonal or atonal scales. Instead, he aimed to explore microtonality and incorporate more diverse sounds into his compositions.³³¹

³²⁸ Jiang Jing, "The Influence of Traditional Chinese Music on Professional Instrumental Composition," *Asian Music* 22, no. 2 (1991): 94, <https://doi.org/10.2307/834308>.

³²⁹ Koji Matsunobu, "Cultural Policy and the Transmission of Traditional Music in Japan," in *Traditional Musics in the Modern World: Transmission, Evolution, and Challenges* (Springer, Cham, 2018), 41, https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-91599-9_4.

³³⁰ Matsunobu, "Traditional Music in Japan," 41.

³³¹ Lau, "Great Nation Emerges," 274.

5.2.3 Influences of Buddhism

The introduction of Buddhism to China had a profound impact on the evolution of traditional Chinese music, intertwining with the influences of Confucianism and Daoism. Initially arriving during the Eastern Han period, Buddhism became deeply ingrained in Chinese society by the time of the Song Dynasty (960-1127). Chan Buddhism, also known as Zen in Japan, originated in China and later expanded to Japan. As a variant of Buddhism, Chan places a strong emphasis on spirituality. In the realm of music, Chan Buddhism teachings emphasize the intrinsic link between beauty and the human emotional core, as well as the connection between intuition and enlightenment in artistic expression.³³²

Utilizing the *guqin* (seven-stringed instrument), scholars emphasized meditation and poetry to reflect Chan Buddhism's spirit. The ethereal tones and expressive capabilities of the *guqin* served as a conduit for spiritual enlightenment, self-reflection, and inner tranquility, shaping traditional Chinese music's aesthetic principles. In the Chan School, a Chinese sect of Buddhism, the mind is deemed fundamental, perceiving all phenomena as illusory and empty, which influences the value of "emptiness" or "ethereality" in music. The *guqin* exemplifies this pursuit, expressing emptiness and quietness, evoking ethereal beauty through "nothingness." Additionally, Zen music emphasizes mindful perception, inviting listeners to experience the resounding silence akin to the universe's vastness. Moreover, Buddhism influenced religious music and dance, adapting local folk traditions to convey spiritual themes and deepen believers'

³³² Shelley Smith, dissertation, *Eastern and Western Aesthetics and Influences in the Twenty-First Century Flute Concerti of Chinese-Born American Composers* (2012), 13, <https://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/islandora/object/fsu:183309/datastream/PDF/view>.

understanding. It also played a pivotal role in preserving ancient music forms and promoting cultural expressions, enriching China's musical heritage beyond philosophical realms.³³³



*Figure 5-2. Guqin.*³³⁴

Following the Cultural Revolution, Buddhism faced criticism and suffered considerable damage. However, in the aftermath, there has been a resurgence of interest in Buddhist music, marked by efforts to preserve it. Moreover, composers have gradually enjoyed more creative freedom as restrictions eased. The economic reforms in China starting in 1978, coupled with the reopening of conservatories and music schools in the 1980s, sparked a period of revitalization for Chinese art songs.³³⁵

5.3 Cultural and Aesthetic Influences

With China being home to fifty-six distinct ethnic groups, its cultural landscape is incredibly varied. This diversity is reflected in the wide range of melodies found across the

³³³ Smith, *Eastern and Western Aesthetics*, 10.

³³⁴ “Guqin (古琴),” The Metropolitan Museum of Art, accessed May 19, 2024, <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/500624>.

³³⁵ Tian Qing and Tan Hwee San, “Recent Trends in Buddhist Music Research in China,” *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 3 (1994): 69, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3060806>.

different ethnic communities, with each possessing its own distinctive and elegant style of music, contributing to the vibrant tapestry of Chinese national music.³³⁶

Music held a prominent position in Chinese aesthetics as it was viewed as the most immediate expression of the universal life force, known as *qi* (气). Music was believed to originate from the fundamental essence of existence, where all things resonated within an eternal flow of sound.³³⁷ *Qi*, also known as *ch'i* or *chi*, is a fundamental concept in Chinese society and religions like Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. It represents the cyclical energy that sustains the presence of *dao* and is translated as 'vital energy' or energy.' *Qi*, composed of yin and yang, precedes material possessions and forms the basis of the universe in conjunction with *dao*.³³⁸

The concept of artistic conception has roots in ancient Chinese literature, notably during the Three Kingdoms Dynasties (220-280 AD). Initially, it was primarily associated with literary creation and was later incorporated into folk music. Chinese folk music has a unique perspective on art, as poetry and music often intertwine seamlessly. Traditional Chinese music aesthetics are characterized by two main principles: "harmony" and "lightness." "Harmony" reflects Confucian philosophy, emphasizing musical and interpersonal harmony, while "lightness" embodies the Daoist notion of simplicity. These principles underscore the ethical values of etiquette, harmony, and peace within traditional Chinese music.³³⁹ This emphasis on the concept of simplicity is evidenced by various historical texts. For instance, the *Dao de jing* highlights that great music

³³⁶ Kaixi Yu et al., "The Unique Aesthetic Research of Chinese National Music in Public Performance," *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210813.014>, 88.

³³⁷ Marjory Bong-Ray Liu, "Aesthetic Principles in Chinese Music," *The World of Music* 27, no. 1 (1985): 21, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43562676>.

³³⁸ Smith, *Eastern and Western Aesthetics*, 15.

³³⁹ Kaixi Yu et al., "The Unique Aesthetic Research of Chinese National Music," 88.

has fewer notes, while philosopher Zhuangzi contended that the highest form of music is soundless. This notion is further explored by Dr. Chou Wen-Chung in *Excerpts from Asian Concepts and Twentieth Century Composers*, where he suggests that Chinese music relies on vibrato, timbre, pitch, and articulation to make a single tone more interesting:

This concept, often shrouded in poetic and mystic metaphors, is fundamental to many Asian musical cultures. It is manifest in the great emphasis placed on the production and control of tones, which often involves an elaborate vocabulary of articulations, modifications in timbre, inflections in pitch, fluctuations in intensity, vibratos and tremolos.³⁴⁰

Furthermore, ancient Chinese texts like *The Spring and Autumn of Lu Buwei* from the Warring States Period (476-221 BC) shed light on the origins of music. In these writings, music's balanced proportions are credited to the interplay of yin and yang, reflecting fundamental principles of Chinese philosophy:

The origin of music can be traced as far as the remote ages... Yin and yang interact from below and above, and thus music contains harmonious proportions of yin and yang.³⁴¹

This ideology left a lasting impact on subsequent Chinese philosophy. The *I Ching* (Book of Changes), was a significant book that was a source of Confucian and Daoist philosophies during the Western Zhou Dynasty (1046-771 BC). This book depicts the world as a constant stream of changes and embraces the concept of *qi* (气). The dynamic flow of *qi* serves as the foundation of the yin-yang principle, which the *I Ching* conceptualizes and elaborates on the complementary nature of all things.³⁴² Yin and Yang symbolize interconnected yet opposing

³⁴⁰ Chou Wen-Chung, "Asian Concepts and Twentieth-Century Western Composers," *The Musical Quarterly* 57, no. 2 (1971): 211–29, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/741215>.

³⁴¹ Yaxiong Du, dissertation, *Ritual Music in a North China Village: The Continuing Confucian and Buddhist Heritage* (2002), 39, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/media/stream/pdf/831/1.0090739/1>.

³⁴² Ng, *Chinese Yin-Yang*, 24.

forces: *yin* (阴), embodying feminine qualities such as darkness, passivity, and weakness, and *yang* (阳), representing masculinity through brightness, activity, and strength.³⁴³

The yin-yang principle, central to this worldview, not only structured social hierarchy but also influenced perceptions of music.³⁴⁴ Under this framework, musical elements, such as range (high vs. low), intervals (small vs. large), dynamics (soft vs. loud), rhythms (simple vs. complex), timbres (hollow vs. dark), and sounds of instruments (winds vs. strings), can be categorized into Yin and Yang attributes. This principle is also applied to the formation of modern Chinese orchestras—it is believed that the orchestra achieves balance when there is an equal representation of male and female performers, although achieving this balance can prove challenging.³⁴⁵

This cosmological principle not only structured human hierarchy but also influenced perceptions in music. In accordance with the yin-yang theory, music was perceived as a representation of the natural world's sounds into a universal framework of opposites.³⁴⁶ Under this school of thought, musical elements, such as range (high vs. low), intervals (small vs. large), dynamics (soft vs. loud), rhythms (simple vs. complex), timbres (hollow vs. dark), sounds of instruments (winds vs. strings), etc. can be categorized into Yin and Yang attributes. Chinese composers integrate these Yin-Yang principles by incorporating opposing musical elements and instruments into their works. This principle is also applied to the formation of modern Chinese orchestras—it is believed that the orchestra achieves balance when there is an equal

³⁴³ David Harrison, "The Harvard Dictionary of Music (4th Edition)," *Reference Reviews* 18, no. 5 (July 1, 2004): 45, <https://doi.org/10.1108/09504120410543273>.

³⁴⁴ Harrison, "Harvard Dictionary of Music."

³⁴⁵ Ng, *Chinese Yin-Yang*, 29.

³⁴⁶ Harrison, "Harvard Dictionary of Music."

representation of male and female performers, although achieving this balance can prove challenging.³⁴⁷

Additionally, the *wuxing* theory, rooted in early Chinese religions, categorized phenomena into five elements—metal, water, wood, fire, and earth—each possessing dual qualities and interacting constructively or restrictively. This theory finds resonance in traditional music, with the five elements—metal (金), water (水), wood (木), fire (火), and earth (土)—linked to the pentatonic scale, a hallmark of Chinese musical tradition.³⁴⁸

Finally, numerology played a significant role in Chinese philosophy, influencing various aspects of life such as fortune-telling, feng shui techniques, telephone numbers, and selecting important dates. In music, numerology also holds relevance, with certain numbers believed to carry symbolic meanings and influences. Numbers like 2, 3, 6, and 8 are commonly associated with good fortune, whereas the number 4 is often regarded as unlucky. The significance of the number eight in Chinese culture is evident in various aspects, such as the eight primary mountain ranges, eight compass directions, eight agricultural seasons, etc.³⁴⁹ In Chinese music, the number five and multiples of two frequently emerge as significant motifs. Five holds particular importance in Chinese numerology, evident in historical and mythological contexts like the Five Elements. The Golden Ratio ($\varphi = \frac{1 + \sqrt{5}}{2} = 1.618$), initially conceptualized by Euclid (325-265 BC), holds significance across various disciplines such as music, art, mathematics, and the

³⁴⁷ Ng, *Chinese Yin-Yang*, 29.

³⁴⁸ Jessica Marie Donley, thesis, *Understanding How Western-Trained Music Therapists Incorporate Chinese Culture in Their Practice in China: An Ethnographic Study* (2017), 20, https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/asu/f/Donley,%20J_Fall%202017%20Thesis.pdf.

³⁴⁹ Leta Miller, “Beneath the Hybrid Surface: Baban as a Tool for Self-Definition in the Music of Chen Yi,” *American Music* 37, no. 3 (2019): 335, <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/739552/pdf>.

natural world. Moreover, the Fibonacci series, which correlates closely with the Golden Ratio, reinforces its importance. Composer David Mingyue Liang states:

The 3:2 ratio in music reflects the cyclic theory, and the first five tones derived from it symbolize not only the unity of heaven and earth, but also harmony as culturally defined in the intervallic relationship of the perfect fifth.³⁵⁰

This symbolism extends to musical elements like the pentatonic scale. Similarly, the duple meter enjoys prominence in Chinese music, reflecting the balance inherent in the principles of yin and yang.³⁵¹

5.4 Political Influences

During the mid-nineteenth to early-twentieth century, China faced significant challenges as the Qing dynasty grappled with preserving its heritage amidst the influence of Western missionaries and colonization. Internal economic pressures, compounded by events like the Opium War (1839-1842) and the Boxer Rebellion (1900), hastened the decline of the Qing Empire, ultimately leading to the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911. The new government ushered in new policies, including reforms in education, notably in music education.³⁵²

From the 1920s to the 1940s, Chinese institutions adopted Western music teaching methods and theory, leading to the emergence of a new genre of school music known as the "Songs of the Study Halls." These songs, featuring Western melodies with Chinese lyrics,

³⁵⁰ David Mingyue Liang, *Music of the Billion: An Introduction to Chinese Musical Culture* (New York, NY: Heinrichshofen, 1985), 178.

³⁵¹ Smith, *Eastern and Western Aesthetics*, 22.

³⁵² Wai-Tong Lau, "Twentieth-Century School Music Literature in China: A Departure from Tradition," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 27, no. 1 (2005): 34, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25597916>.

reflected a growing admiration for Western music among the Chinese populace, who viewed their traditional pentatonic music as backward in comparison.³⁵³ Many Chinese viewed Western music favorably, favoring its major diatonic tonality, believing that Western music symbolized progress and a brighter future.³⁵⁴ As the "Songs of the Study Halls" gained popularity, composers began to craft original melodies, blending Western and Chinese influences. This period marked a fusion of Western diatonic tunes with familiar Chinese pentatonic melodies, showcasing a complex interplay between tradition and modernization in Chinese music.³⁵⁵

In 1949, the establishment of the People's Republic of China signaled the conclusion of WWII and the civil war, ushering in a relatively stable and peaceful era conducive to the growth of music. The government actively fostered the development of music, leading to the establishment of numerous conservatories and art schools across China. In the early years of the People's Republic of China, compositions primarily relied on folk songs, with composers often incorporating local folk melodies to infuse regional characteristics into their relatively conservative and simplistic works. Furthermore, due to restrictions on international travel during this period, Chinese musicians were limited to attending schools in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Notable students were selected to study abroad and later returned to China to impart their knowledge, facilitating the international exchange of musical pedagogy. This proliferation of conservatories and the increasing prominence of musicians contributed to the development of music education.³⁵⁶

³⁵³ Lau, "Music Literature in China," 37.

³⁵⁴ Lau, "Music Literature in China," 41.

³⁵⁵ Lau, "Music Literature in China," 42.

³⁵⁶ Bo Wu, dissertation, *Chinese Folk Song Meets Western Compositional Technique—A Case Study of Zhou Long's The Partita for the Violin and the Piano* (2003), 4, https://repository.lsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=7215&context=gradschool_dissertations.

However, this all took a turn in August 1966, when Mao Zedong, the leader of China's Communist Party, initiated the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), which aimed to preserve Chinese communism and eradicate capitalist ideologies. Mao opposed Western capitalist values, particularly those promoting individualism and freedom, which he saw as threatening his vision of communism. The primary aim of the government was to eradicate the "Four Olds" — ancient ideas, customs, culture, and habits. Traditional Chinese music faced harsh criticism and suppression during this period. China underwent a decade of isolation from the global community to uphold socialist ideals and guard against the resurgence of capitalist influences, leading to strict censorship of all Western music and cultural expressions.³⁵⁷ Art was strictly utilized as a political instrument to advance the objectives of the Cultural Revolution, with song lyrics often drawn from Mao's poems or quotations. Melodies were marked by simplicity, energy, and a strict form, intentionally eschewing lyrical expressions and personal emotions.³⁵⁸

5.5 Influence on Contemporary Chinese Composers

From 1966 to 1977, the nation endured unparalleled turmoil, with the realm of music bearing its brunt. Both rural and urban musicians faced challenges—traditional music research came to a standstill, and musicians were forced to engage in agricultural and industrial labor. The resurgence of folk music only began following the demise of Mao Zedong and the removal of the Gang of Four in 1976, ushering in a period of heightened musical activity during the liberalized 1980s. Research into traditional and folk music resumed after the Cultural Revolution, with

³⁵⁷ Wei Jiao, dissertation, *Chinese and Western Elements in Contemporary Chinese Composer Zhou Long's Works for Solo Piano Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations, Wu Kui, and Pianogongs* (2014), 1, https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/uncg/f/Jiao_uncg_0154D_11040.pdf.

³⁵⁸ Jiao, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, 4.

training methods relying heavily on rote learning and oral transmission before the mid-twentieth century, devoid of standardized pedagogy. Missionary schools introduced Western music training, leaving a lasting impact on the education system.³⁵⁹

The decline of the Cultural Revolution and the adoption of China's open-door policy in the late 1970s resulted in a resurgence in modern Chinese music and cultural exchange. Foreign scholars introduced Western music to Chinese conservatories, sparking a wave of innovation. Referred to as the "New Wave," the initial group of Chinese musicians post-Cultural Revolution embraced avant-garde styles influenced by post-1949 Western music developments, fusing their unique styles with traditional Chinese folk influences.³⁶⁰ Composers across different generations showcased distinct musical ideologies, embodying two predominant styles. Across different generations, composers articulated distinct musical ideologies, with the elder cohort delving into traditional harmony exploration, while the younger generation gravitated towards contemporary techniques such as atonal and serial music, integrating them with their artistic visions.³⁶¹

In the 1980s, changes in Chinese society led to a deeper exploration of melody, with many composers no longer confined to directly adopting traditional or folk tunes to express national features. Instead, the focus was on uncovering the essence of these melodies and reinterpreting them using modern methods.³⁶² Serialism gained popularity as a novelty among some composers who explored its structural implications. Serialism offered a flexible way to

³⁵⁹ Ngan Nei Chan, dissertation, *Exploring Chinese Folk Musical Elements in Three Piano Works by Tan Dun, Bright Sheng, and Chen Yi* (2022), 59, <https://esploro.lib.uga.edu/esploro/outputs/doctoral/Exploring-Chinese-Folk-Musical-Elements-in/99494509295029>

³⁶⁰ Ngan, *Chinese Folk Elements*, 12.

³⁶¹ Jingbei Li, dissertation, *The Preludes in Chinese Style: Three Selected Piano Preludes from Ding Shan-de, Chen Ming-Zhi and Zhang Shuai to Exemplify the Varieties of Chinese Piano Preludes* (2019), 10-11, https://etd.ohiolink.edu/acprod/odb_etd/ws/send_file/send?accession=osu1574682375531785.

³⁶² Jing, "Traditional Chinese Music," 90.

integrate with traditional Chinese music, which resonates with certain aspects. Some composers see it as a means to freely associate with traditional Chinese elements, developing unique systems that intertwine with Chinese philosophical and cosmological concepts. Many Chinese composers found similarities between serialism's emphasis on individual notes and certain aspects of traditional Chinese music, taking it as a tool to integrate traditional Chinese elements more freely. As a result, New Wave composers, such as Zhou Long and Chen Yi, developed their unique compositional systems that blended serialism with Chinese philosophical, religious, and cosmological concepts.³⁶³

In the era of globalization, Chinese composers embarked on a journey of fusion, blending indigenous characteristics and aesthetics with Western influences. Tan Dun's opera *Nine Songs* (1989) is a prime example, in which he seamlessly weaves Chinese and English languages alongside a diverse array of Chinese and Western instruments. This period also saw a revival in the appreciation for Chinese folk music, with composers dedicating themselves to its composition and collection. Bright Sheng emphasized Bartók's significant influence on Chinese composers, highlighting his exploration and incorporation of Hungarian folk melodies. This resurgence served as a catalyst for Chinese composers to move beyond Western styles. Similarly, Chen Yi's extensive travels across various provinces of China during her studies at the Central Conservatory of Music exemplified this commitment, as she collected folk tunes amidst the upheaval of the Cultural Revolution. These efforts by Chinese composers played an instrumental role in the preservation and organization of Chinese folk music, ensuring its enduring legacy.³⁶⁴

³⁶³ Nancy Yunwha Rao, "Hearing Pentatonicism Through Serialism: Integrating Different Traditions in Chinese Contemporary Music," *Perspectives of New Music* 40, no. 2 (2002): 192, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25164495>.

³⁶⁴ Yuanzhu Chen, dissertation, *Two Sonatas for Flute and Piano by Jin Ta: An Analysis, Descriptions, and Composer Interviews* (2022), 6, https://etd.ohiolink.edu/acprod/odb_etd/ws/send_file/send?accession=osu1650541831206048.

CHAPTER SIX: JAPANESE COMPOSITIONAL TRENDS

The fusion of Japanese influences in contemporary music by Japanese and Western composers has captured global audiences, offering an innovative blend of traditional and modern elements. In order to fully grasp the nuances of the complexities in these works, it is necessary to examine the historical context and cultural significance of traditional Japanese music and the cultural, social, and political dynamics across time. This chapter explores the roots and essence of Japan's musical heritage and provides some background on the facets that have shaped compositional styles.

Throughout its history, Japanese traditional music has been very eclectic, continuously importing and assimilating influences from foreign music. Japan's strategic location facilitated the exchange of music from various Asian countries and Pacific islands over its two-thousand-year history. For example, Japanese court music, known as *gagaku*, traces its roots back to the seventh century, originating from China, Vietnam, and Korea. As a result, Japanese traditional music is a blend of diverse foreign influences.³⁶⁵ While the true roots of Japanese music remain unknown, during the Nara period (553-794), Japan experienced an influx of sacred and secular music, along with musical instruments and instructional methods, from China, Korea, and India.³⁶⁶ During the Heian period (794-1185), these instruments and musical traditions underwent a process of assimilation and adaptation and were prominently used in court music. Subsequently, in the Edo period (1615-1868), Japan experienced a period of isolationism

³⁶⁵ Ogawa, "Japanese Music Education," 26,

³⁶⁶ Masashi Kishimoto, dissertation, *Tracing the Development of Japanese Choral Tradition, and The Influence of Buddhism and Western Music* (2012), 4, <https://library.ndsu.edu/ir/bitstream/handle/10365/26861/Tracing%20the%20Development%20of%20Japanese%20Choral%20Tradition%2C%20and%20the%20Influence%20of%20Buddhism%20and%20Western%20Music.pdf>.

and resistance to change. Despite this, instrumental genres such as those featuring the *shamisen*, *koto*, and *shakuhachi* gained popularity. Concurrently, various forms of theater and entertainment flourished, such as the *noh* theatre.³⁶⁷

The evolution of traditional music in Japan has been marked by tension amid the forces of Westernization and modernization. The concept of traditional music, as understood today emerged primarily during the Meiji era, a period of significant Western influence in Japan. Many elements of what is now regarded as Japanese music, or *hogaku*, have only emerged as cultural artifacts within the last 150 years.³⁶⁸

6.1 Compositional Trends in Japan

Contemporary music with Japanese influences has been captivating audiences worldwide with its innovative fusion of traditional and modern elements. In order to fully grasp the nuances of the complexities in these works, it is necessary to examine the historical context and cultural significance of traditional Japanese music and the cultural, social, and political dynamics across time. This chapter will explore the roots and essence of Japan's musical heritage and provide some background on the facets that have shaped

There are distinct terms for different musical traditions in Japan: *ongaku* (Western classical music), *yōgaku* (Western music in general), and *hōgaku* (traditional music of Japan prior to the Meiji period). *Hōgaku* encompasses a wide range of musical forms including orchestral music, chamber music, opera, and various vocal styles. It can be categorized into several genres, including early music, religious music for Shinto and Buddhist rituals,

³⁶⁷ Stephanie Titus, dissertation, *Japanese Contemporary Piano Music: Cultural Influence And Identity* (2020), 54, https://etd.ohiolink.edu/acprod/odb_etd/ws/send_file/send?accession=bgsu1604259509513433.

³⁶⁸ Matsunobu, "Traditional Music in Japan," 41.

Gagaku (imperial court music), *nohgaku* (music for *noh* theater), kabuki music, *minyo* (folk music), and individual instrument music. Each genre boasts a rich array of unique styles and compositions.³⁶⁹

One of the most distinguishing features of Japanese music is the concept of space, known as *ma* (間), or blankness, emptiness, and space. *Ma* is a profound and unique notion deeply ingrained in the art form's essence. Unlike Western music's strict adherence to beats, *ma* invites listeners to immerse themselves in the spaces between notes, finding beauty and meaning in the silent intervals. These pauses hold as much significance as the sounds themselves.³⁷⁰ *Ma* is different from the Western notation of sound: it cannot be strictly defined or measured; rather, it is up to the lineage to create the right balance.³⁷¹³⁷² “*Ma* describes neither space nor time, but the tension in the silence and in the space surrounding sounds and objects.”³⁷³

6.2 Philosophical and Religious Influences

The rich history of Japanese religion and culture reveals a complex history, marked by the assimilation and evolution of diverse beliefs and practices. Historically, both Shinto and Buddhism have influenced traditional music by shaping the rituals, ceremonies, and festivals where the music is performed. This has contributed to the spiritual elements present in Japanese musical traditions that have persisted and evolved over centuries.

³⁶⁹ Titus, *Japanese Piano Music*, 59.

³⁷⁰ Haruyo Sakamoto, dissertation, *Toru Takemitsu: The Roots of His Creation* (2003), 37, <https://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/islandora/object/fsu:182690/datastream/PDF/view>.

³⁷¹ Elizabeth A. Robinson, dissertation, *Voice, Itinerant, and Air: A Performance and Analytical Guide to the Solo Flute Works of Toru Takemitsu* (2011), 8,

<https://cardinalsolar.bsu.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/2f5b0326-f61a-4b9c-9775-c1d1e0376488/content>.

³⁷² Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Dr. Rachel Rudich.

³⁷³ Luciana Galliano, *Yogaku: Japanese Music in the 20th Century* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2003), 14.

6.2.1 Influences of Buddhism

Buddhism made its way into Japan during the 6th century CE, arriving from the Korean peninsula and China. The form of Buddhism that spread through Northeast Asia and into Japan is generally known as Mahāyāna Buddhism. Since its introduction, Buddhism has evolved into numerous schools and traditions within Japan, each with its unique interpretations and practices. Beyond its spiritual doctrines, Buddhism significantly influenced Japan's cultural landscape, including its music. Buddhist practitioners brought their musical customs, which became integrated into Japanese traditions, enriching the local cultural heritage.³⁷⁴

Japanese culture, deeply influenced by Zen Buddhism, cherishes qualities such as serenity, simplicity, and a sensitivity to nature. These values are reflected in various aspects of Japanese art and music. Zen Buddhism, in particular, emphasizes the "margin of life" and the emptiness of the mind, encouraging a focus on mindfulness and presence.³⁷⁵

Buddhism's influence on Japanese music is profound and multifaceted, shaping various aspects of the musical landscape. One of the earliest and most significant influences of Buddhism on Japanese music is seen in *gagaku*, the ancient court music. *Gagaku* includes both instrumental and vocal performances and was heavily influenced by the musical traditions brought to Japan by Buddhist practitioners from China and Korea. This ceremonial music, performed at the imperial court, embodies a sense of elegance and timelessness, reflecting the spiritual and cultural exchanges between these regions.³⁷⁶ The significance of *gagaku* in Japanese Buddhism is highlighted by the complex attitudes toward music expressed in early Buddhist

³⁷⁴ Kishimoto, *Japanese Choral Tradition*, 10.

³⁷⁵ Sakamoto, *Toru Takemitsu*, 25.

³⁷⁶ Fabio Rambelli, "Gagaku in Medieval Japanese Religion," *Religions* 13, no. 7 (June 22, 2022): 582, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13070582>.

scriptures, which often criticize music for entertainment due to its association with sensual pleasure and the potential to lead to inappropriate behavior. Despite these prohibitions, there was a distinct acceptance and even praise for music in Buddhist rituals, particularly when it accompanies scripture chanting.³⁷⁷

Shōmyō, or Buddhist chanting, became an integral part of Japanese religious music. These chants, performed in temples, are characterized by their meditative and repetitive nature, designed to facilitate spiritual reflection and enlightenment. *Shōmyō* chants are often slow and deliberate, with a focus on the purity of tone and the contemplative silence between notes. This practice not only enriches the spiritual atmosphere of Buddhist rituals but also highlights the profound impact of Buddhism on Japanese vocal music traditions.³⁷⁸

Zen Buddhism's principles had a direct impact on Japanese music, where silence and stillness are not merely absences of sound but are integral parts of the musical expression. Buddhism is characterized by three fundamental attributes: impermanence, insubstantiality, and suffering. These themes are deeply interwoven into its teachings and significantly shape its influence on Japanese aesthetics and music.

As mentioned previously, the Japanese concept of *ma* in music creates a sense of balance and harmony, allowing listeners to absorb and reflect on the music more deeply and find beauty in emptiness. *Ma* represents the intentional use of silence and space within music, creating pauses that are as meaningful as the notes themselves. This concept encourages a deep,

³⁷⁷ Rambelli, "Dharma of Music," 54.

³⁷⁸ Rambelli, "Gagaku in Medieval Japanese Religion," 582.

meditative listening experience, where the interplay between sound and silence mirrors the Zen philosophy of mindfulness and presence.³⁷⁹

Wabi-sabi (侘寂), an aesthetic principle rooted in Zen, finds beauty in imperfection and impermanence. In music, this translates to a preference for natural, unpolished sounds and an acceptance of transient moments. Traditional Japanese music values organic and spontaneous expression, reflecting the *wabi-sabi* principle.³⁸⁰ For example, the *shakuhachi* often produces subtle, breathy sounds and microtonal variations that highlight the instrument's natural imperfections.

Another key influence of Buddhism is *mono no aware* (物の哀れ), the sensitivity to the ephemeral nature of life. Music that evokes a sense of fleeting beauty and melancholy is deeply connected to this concept, encouraging listeners to appreciate the present moment. For instance, many traditional Japanese compositions are designed to evoke specific moments in time, emphasizing the transient beauty of nature and the human experience.³⁸¹

6.2.1 Influences of Shinto

Shintoism, which emerged during the Yayoi Period (300 BC-300 AD) through influences from Chinese and Korean immigrants, adapted its agricultural and shamanistic practices to the Japanese setting. Centered around *kami*—spirits associated with natural phenomena like the sun goddess Amaterasu—Shintoism initially focused on nature worship but evolved to depict *kami* in more concrete forms. The Meiji Restoration in 1868 designated Shinto as Japan's official

³⁷⁹ Lauren Prusinski, “Wabi-Sabi, Mono No Aware, and Ma: Tracing Traditional Japanese Aesthetics through Japanese History,” *Studies on Asia* 4, no. 2 (2012): 29, https://castle.eiu.edu/studiesonasia/documents/seriesIV/2-Prusinski_001.pdf.

³⁸⁰ Prusinski, “Wabi-Sabi,” 29.

³⁸¹ Prusinski, “Wabi-Sabi”, 27.

religion, excluding Buddhist practices. After World War II, following Japan's defeat and the emperor's renunciation of his divine status, national devotion to Shinto decreased, giving rise to new religions influenced by Shinto and other Eastern beliefs.³⁸²

Kagura, the traditional Shinto music and dance, was performed during rituals and festivals to entertain and appease the *kami*. The melodies of *kagura* are simple, yet deeply evocative, reflecting the Shinto appreciation for natural beauty and subtlety. *Kagura* music typically features instruments such as the *kagurabue* (flute), *taiko* (drums), and the *koto* (zither). These instruments produce sounds that are believed to embody the spirit of nature itself, creating an atmosphere that is both sacred and serene. The dance movements are slow and deliberate, symbolizing the harmony and rhythm of the natural world.³⁸³

Noh theater, a classical form of Japanese drama, also reflects Shinto influence through its themes, music, and performance style. *Noh* plays often portray stories of *the kami*, spirits, and historical figures, blending Shinto mythology with Buddhist themes. The music in *Noh* is minimalistic and haunting, featuring instruments such as the *nohkan* (transverse flute), *otsuzumi* (large hand drum), and *kotsuzumi* (smaller hand drum). The rhythmic patterns and melodies in *Noh* music are designed to evoke a sense of otherworldliness and connection to the spiritual realm, aligning with Shinto beliefs.³⁸⁴

³⁸² Takuya Sakurai, "The Expressive Dimensions of Folk Performing Arts: A Gebserian Approach to Kagura," in *Intercultural Communication Studies*, vol. 25, 3 (Kingston, RI: International Association for Intercultural Communication Studies, 2016), 262-63, <https://www-s3-live.kent.edu/s3fs-root/s3fs-public/file/Takuya-SAKURAI.pdf>.

³⁸³ Sakurai, "Expressive Dimensions," 263-264.

³⁸⁴ Picken Stuart D B., *Essentials of Shinto: An Analytical Guide to Principal Teachings* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994), 178.

6.3 Cultural and Aesthetic Influences

Nature holds a special and unparalleled significance in the hearts and minds of the Japanese people, influencing all forms of Japanese art, literature, and lifestyle. In Japanese culture, the presence of nature is unmistakable, with sounds like rustling leaves, ocean waves, and bird calls cherished as music. Even insects' chirping on a summer day is celebrated in folk and children's songs, known as *mushi no ne* (insect tones). Traditional Japanese instruments like the *shamisen* and *biwa* emulate these natural sounds through a complex resonance called *sawari*, which may seem like noise in Western music but holds great significance in Japanese musical tradition.³⁸⁵ One of the most famous Japanese composers, Toru Takemitsu, wrote:

I love gardens. They do not reject people. There one can walk freely, pause to view the entire garden, or gaze at a single tree, plant, rock, and sand snow: changes, constant changes.³⁸⁶

His music embodies the essence of spaces, or *ma*, embracing pauses and allowing for moments of relaxation within the melody. It eschews strict structure, opting instead for rhythms that are gentle and unassuming, neither forceful nor rigid.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁸ Of the *shakuhachi*, he wrote:

Western people separate natural sounds and musical sounds, but in our case, a *shakuhachi* player will become satisfied if the sounds he produces from the instrument resemble that of the wind traveling across the bamboo forest.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁵ Sakamoto, *Toru Takemitsu*, 30.

³⁸⁶ Marianne Williams Tobias, "A Flock Descends into the Pentagonal Garden," Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, 2017, <https://www.indianapolissymphony.org/backstage/program-notes/takemitsu-a-flock-descends-into-the-pentagonal-garden/>.

³⁸⁷ Sakamoto, *Toru Takemitsu*, 37.

³⁸⁸ Sakamoto, *Toru Takemitsu*, 37.

³⁸⁹ Sakamoto, *Toru Takemitsu*, 32.

It was believed that the tone of the *shakuhachi* could bring one to Nirvana, the ultimate state of fulfillment.³⁹⁰

In the realm of Japanese music, nature was also deeply entwined with the passage of time. Japanese musicians believed that beats pulsate within the fabric of temporal existence, yet diverge from the rigid constraints found in Western musical traditions. Instead, they ebb and flow, stretching and compressing in a harmonious dance with the natural rhythms of the universe. As this rhythmic pulse unfolds, the music transcends the boundaries of conventional time perception, ushering listeners into a realm where time itself becomes fluid and elusive.³⁹¹

6.4 Political Influences

The political landscape of Japan has exerted a significant influence on its music, influencing not only compositional approaches but also the thematic content explored by musicians.

A pivotal period in this regard was the Meiji Restoration, characterized by a deliberate push towards Westernization of Japan's music scene. The reform of the educational administration during this time marked a pivotal moment in Japanese societal reform. Western music, or *yōgaku*, swiftly rose to prominence within the national educational framework following its introduction. Although traditional Japanese music, or *hōgaku*, was not entirely omitted from the curriculum, it frequently found itself relegated to the periphery or absent altogether in numerous educational institutions.³⁹²

³⁹⁰ Sakamoto, *Toru Takemitsu*, 32.

³⁹¹ Sakamoto, *Toru Takemitsu*, 34.

³⁹² Henry Johnson, "Sounding Japan": Traditional Musical Instruments, Cultural Nationalism and Educational Reform," *Perfect Beat* 12, no. 1 (September 23, 2011): 11–32, <https://doi.org/10.1558/prbt.v12i1.11>, 11.

This initiative aimed to replace traditional music with Western forms as part of broader efforts in national cultural reconstruction, resulting in a profound transformation of Japan's musical milieu.³⁹³ Furthermore, Japanese traditional music, including court music, was transcribed into Western staff notation. Notably, all songs were composed by Japanese artists in either major or minor keys, employing Western-style staff notation.³⁹⁴

The erosion of Japanese traditional music was even more evident after Japan's defeat in the Second World War and the subsequent US occupation.³⁹⁵ A musicologist, Fumio Koizumi, states:

There are Japanese professional musicians of Western music who do not know about Japanese traditional music at all. What is more shocking is the fact that most schoolteachers of music have scarcely been given a lecture on Japanese [traditional] music.³⁹⁶

Subsequently, Japanese traditional music was perceived through the lens of "otherness" within Japan itself, and traditional instruments like the *koto*, *shakuhachi*, and *shamisen* came to symbolize the exotic, both domestically and internationally.³⁹⁷

Since the Meiji era, the impact of Western music has led to a stark contrast between *yōgaku* and *hōgaku* within educational policies. *Hōgaku* had to be primarily disseminated through private channels or within tightly regulated systems, remaining largely out of reach for the majority of Japanese individuals. In 2002, a significant shift in cultural policy took place in Japanese state music education, mandating that all students receive some degree of training in

³⁹³ Yuri Ishii, Mari Shiobara, and Hiromi Ishii, "Globalisation and National Identity: A Reflection on the Japanese Music Curriculum," *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 3, no. 1 (March 2005): 71, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14767720500046328>.

³⁹⁴ Ishii, Shiobara, and Ishii, "Globalisation and National Identity," 73.

³⁹⁵ Ishii, Shiobara, and Ishii, "Globalisation and National Identity," 74.

³⁹⁶ Ishii, Shiobara, and Ishii, "Globalisation and National Identity," 76.

³⁹⁷ Henry Johnson, "Sounding Japan," 18.

hōgaku. This marked the first time in over a century of compulsory education that *hōgaku* had been advocated to such an extent in state-run schools.³⁹⁸

The recent resurgence of tradition has been marked by a profound intertwining with contemporary political agendas, particularly those rooted in cultural nationalism. This resurgence reflects a broader societal shift towards embracing and reinterpreting traditional Japanese music and culture as symbols of national identity and unity. Wade states in *Music of Japan*,

In Japanese tradition, an awareness of nature has shaped a good deal of aesthetic expression, often in the form of thematic intertextuality. Recurring again and again in art, poetry, and music from ancient times to the present are motifs of nature, among them wind, water, birds, trees, blossoms – and also the seasons, each with meaningful connotations. I think of some traditional gardens in Japan, designed and planted so that they will be transformed and distinctively beautiful in each season.³⁹⁹

6.5 Influence on Contemporary Japanese Composers

Contemporary Japanese composers have been influenced by a myriad of factors, ranging from historical cultural realities to the integration of Western practices. The environment of the mid-20th to early 21st century has brought forward distinct types of composers, each contributing to a rich tapestry of modern Japanese composition.

John Cage's visit to Japan in 1962 sparked a reevaluation among contemporary Japanese composers. His avant-garde compositions prompted a rediscovery of traditional Japanese musical expressions previously marginalized by Western influences. Inspired by Cage's exploration, composers like Takemitsu and Ichiyanagi began integrating Japanese traditional

³⁹⁸ Henry Johnson, "Sounding Japan," 13-14.

³⁹⁹ Bonnie C. Wade, *Music in Japan: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture* (Oxford, UK: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011), 163.

instruments into their Western-style compositions.⁴⁰⁰ Cage was said to have “calmly continued to emit everyday sounds using a rice cooker, a frying pan, and a seaweed container arranged on a table,” and the Japanese audience believed, “Cage is not a case of Zen-influence; he is Zen himself.”⁴⁰¹ On Cage, Takemitsu said,

In my own development, for a long period I struggled to avoid being "Japanese," to avoid "Japanese" qualities. It was largely through my contact with John Cage that I came to recognize the value of my own tradition. In his own way, John Cage was influenced by Zen through his encounters with the Zen master Daisetsu Suzuki.⁴⁰²

In 1967, the New York Philharmonic commissioned Takemitsu to create a new work. Seiji Ozawa played a recording of *Eclipse*, Takemitsu's first concert piece for traditional Japanese instruments, to Leonard Bernstein. Upon listening to it, Bernstein proposed the idea of incorporating these instruments into a composition for a Western orchestra. The goal was to compose a piece that seamlessly integrated Western orchestration with the sounds of the *biwa* and *shakuhachi*.⁴⁰³ This work, titled *November Steps*, initially presented Takemitsu with significant challenges and doubts regarding the feasibility of merging the two musical traditions:

At the first rehearsal, when Seiji Ozawa raised his baton and began to rehearse them, the Philharmonic members just burst into laughter. I was shocked, and found it so painful that we had to call a halt to the rehearsal. I was miserable and felt totally at a loss. I told Ozawa that perhaps we should cancel the whole performance, that this simply was not going to work. But Ozawa turned to me and said, "Wait a minute, the orchestra is behaving very well today. This is not bad at all." ... Then Ozawa called the orchestra together again and asked them to simply listen to the two solo *biwa* and *shakuhachi* parts. The orchestra became quieter and quieter and paid closer and closer attention as the two

⁴⁰⁰ Wade, *Music in Japan*, 76.

⁴⁰¹ Fuyuko Fukunaka, “World Music History and Interculturality: Toward Recontextualizing Post-War Japanese Avant-Garde Music,” *The World of Music* 6, no. 1 (2017): 64, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44841970>.

⁴⁰² Takemitsu, “Contemporary Music in Japan,” 199.

⁴⁰³ Takemitsu, *Confronting Silence*, 3.

Japanese performers played. By the end, the orchestra had become completely silent. No one was laughing any more. Instead, they all burst into applause.⁴⁰⁴

This turning point marked a shift in their reception, ultimately leading to the successful premiere of *November Steps*. The piece became a pioneering work, demonstrating that traditional Japanese instruments could be harmoniously blended with Western symphonic traditions.

The success of this work opened the door for further exploration and integration of Japanese and Western musical elements. It inspired a new generation of Japanese composers who saw the potential for blending distinct musical traditions into a cohesive whole. Contemporary composers such as Toshio Hosokawa and Dai Fujikura have continued this trajectory, creating works that fuse traditional Japanese sensibilities with modern Western techniques, further enriching the global music scene. These composers not only draw on the legacy of Takemitsu but also push the boundaries of musical innovation, ensuring the vibrancy and relevance of Japanese music in the contemporary classical landscape.

For example, Toshio Hosokawa is often seen as a spiritual successor to Toru Takemitsu. Born in 1955, he studied in Germany and has often emphasized that his work aims to express the sounds of nature through music, incorporating traditional Japanese aesthetics into a Western classical framework. Hosokawa's music frequently reflects the concept of *ma* and Zen meditation. His compositions, such as *Meditation*, dedicated to the victims of the 2011 Tsunami, and his operas, like *Matsukaze* are renowned for their deep lyrical qualities and the integration of Japanese instruments and themes.⁴⁰⁵

⁴⁰⁴ Takemitsu, "Contemporary Music in Japan," 202.

⁴⁰⁵ Sonograma Magazine, "Interview with Toshio Hosokawa," *Revista Sonograma Magazine*, 2011, <https://sonograma.org/2011/01/interview-with-toshio-hosokawa/>.

Dai Fujikura was born in 1977 in Osaka and studied at the Royal College of Music and King's College London. Unlike Hosokawa, Fujikura's style is marked by a more direct incorporation of electronic and modern soundscapes alongside acoustic instruments, reflecting his cross-cultural background. His compositions frequently showcase inventive applications of traditional Japanese instruments and advanced musical technology. For example, in pieces like *Mina*, which combines instruments with electronics, and *momiji*, which features the *shakuhachi* and *koto*, his creative and innovative approach is evident. Fujikura is also known for his contributions to music education, frequently conducting workshops and composing works accessible to young musicians.⁴⁰⁶

Their innovative approaches to integrating traditional Japanese musical elements with Western classical music have not only broadened the scope of contemporary music but also provided a model for the younger generation of composers, ensuring that the evolution of Japanese music remains vibrant in the contemporary classical world.

⁴⁰⁶ Planet Hugill, "A Portrait: Composer Dai Fujikura Introduces the Music at the Forthcoming Wigmore Hall Concert," Planet Hugill, February 10, 2018, <https://www.planethugill.com/2018/02/a-portrait-composer-dai-fujikura.html>.

SECTION TWO: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Below is a chart that compares the religious, philosophical, and political influences across Korea, China, and Japan. This comparison highlights key aspects of how these factors have impacted the music traditions of each country.

Category	Korea	China	Japan
Dominant Religions and Philosophical Ideals	Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Shamanism	Buddhism, Daoism, Confucianism	Shintoism, Buddhism
Impact on Music	<p>Confucianism: Influenced the development of formal court music, emphasizing elegance and tranquility to reflect ideal governance</p> <p>Buddhism: Influences include the extensive use of chants in rituals</p> <p>Shamanism: Prominent in folk music, used to connect the spiritual and earthly realms.</p>	<p>Confucianism: Shaped the ethical and structured aspects of court music; Helped guide human emotions, promoting virtue and contentment; Valued simplicity and harmony in music</p> <p>Daoism: Encouraged the incorporation of natural elements into music, promoting a style that is free and improvisational</p> <p>Buddhism: Contributed to the meditative aspects of music; Valued emptiness, inner tranquility, and mindful perception</p>	<p>Shintoism: Used in ritual dances and songs for kami worship; Influence on Noh theater</p> <p>Zen Buddhism: Serenity, simplicity, and a sensitivity to nature; Importance of silence and stillness (ma); Noise found in the natural world was considered music</p>

Key Political Events	Japanese occupation (1910-1945)	Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)	Meiji Restoration (1868-1889)
Impact on Music	Led to the suppression of Korean cultural identity and traditional music, with a post-liberation resurgence of traditional forms and the integration of Western musical styles	Severely restricted traditional and Western music, promoting revolutionary songs instead. Post-Mao economic reforms led to a significant revival of traditional music alongside an openness to global musical influences	Aimed to replace traditional music with Western forms as part of broader efforts in national cultural reconstruction; Led to an erosion of Japanese traditional music

Figure 6. Comparison chart of the religious, philosophical, and political influences across Korea, China, and Japan.

SECTION THREE

ANALYSIS OF WORKS BY CONTEMPORARY COMPOSERS

CHAPTER SEVEN: SANJO NO. 1

7.1 Paul Yeon Lee

Dr. Paul Yeon Lee, a South Korean-American composer, has earned widespread acclaim for his innovative string compositions, recognized as a "compelling voice of his generation."⁴⁰⁷ Lee masterfully blends lyricism with rich textural depth, creating pieces that are both mystical and coloristically captivating. His works, such as *Scattered Wind* for *daegeum* and piano, *Sanjo No. 2* for solo *piri*, and *Concertino* for *piri* and chamber orchestra—dedicated to and premiered by Dr. Gamin Kang, the official holder of Korea's Important Intangible Cultural Asset No. 46—demonstrate his dedication to merging traditional Korean instruments with contemporary compositional methods. This fusion is particularly significant on the international stage, where such innovations are rare, positioning Lee as a crucial link between Korean musical traditions and the global contemporary music scene.

In my conversations with him and through listening to his music, I've come to understand Lee's deep commitment to his craft. He composes with a profound passion, prioritizing resonance with his own artistic vision, which speaks volumes about his intent and dedication. His work not only reflects his deep appreciation for his cultural heritage but also contributes to the preservation and evolution of Korean music, seamlessly weaving traditional Korean melodic and rhythmic motifs with modern compositional techniques and instruments.

Notably, he demonstrates a willingness to push boundaries by composing contemporary music for traditional instruments, often in conjunction with modern orchestral or chamber

⁴⁰⁷ "Bio," Paul Yeon Lee, accessed May 19, 2024, <https://www.paulyeonlee.com/bio.html>.

ensembles. This blending of genres and instrumentation is relatively uncommon, highlighting Lee's pioneering role in expanding the repertoire of such compositions. In his works, Lee skillfully navigates the intersection of tradition and modernity, exploring new sonic possibilities while paying homage to Korea's rich musical heritage. In his *Concertino* for *piri* and chamber orchestra, Paul Yeon Lee masterfully evokes the poignant essence of *han*⁴⁰⁸ through the seamless fusion of traditional elements inherent in the *piri*, juxtaposed with the modern instrumentation of the Korean Symphony Orchestra. This harmonization, with Korean musicians playing both traditional and modern instruments, serves as a reflection of the collective Korean sentiment of *han*, embodying both the deep-seated sorrow and the collective resilience for resolution. Throughout the *Concertino*, the mournful timbre of the *piri* intertwines with the lush harmonies of the strings and the expressive melodies of the woodwind solos, culminating in a symphonic tapestry of sound that artfully captures the essence of *han*. By seamlessly incorporating traditional instruments like the *daegeum* and *piri* into contemporary settings, he creates a unique sonic landscape that resonates with audiences both in Korea and on the global stage.

Overall, Lee's contributions to expanding the repertoire of contemporary music for traditional instruments are significant, not only in terms of their artistic merit but also for their role in promoting cross-cultural dialogue and bridging the gap between tradition and innovation. Through this analysis, I aim to highlight Paul Yeon Lee and encourage more musicians to perform his unique and special compositions.

⁴⁰⁸ *Han*, an intrinsic Korean sociocultural notion, encapsulates a distinctive collective sentiment characterized by unresolved resentment, pain, grief, and anger.

7.1.1 Biography and Compositions

Paul Yeon Lee (이수연) has received numerous accolades, including the Charles Ives Scholarship and Walter Hinrichsen Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

He has also participated in various festivals and workshops worldwide, including events at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, La Folle Journée de Nantes, and the SONiC FESTiVAL in New York. Additionally, Lee has been a fellow at prestigious institutions such as the MacDowell Colony and the Atlantic Center for the Arts and has contributed to conferences and festivals at universities and conservatories.

Lee has served as a composer-in-residence with the Korean Symphony Orchestra and received commissions from prestigious organizations like the American Composers Orchestra and Redwood Symphony. He has served as a resident composer at Flushing Town Hall and as a resident musician in the Con Edison Composition Program in New York City. His compositions have been performed worldwide by renowned soloists and ensembles, including the premiere of "Echo of a Dream" by the American Composers Orchestra at SONiC FESTiVAL in New York. Additionally, Lee's arrangements, such as his transcription of Francis Poulenc's "L'histoire de Babar" for piano four hands and narrator, have been performed internationally by acclaimed pianists Pascal Rogé and Ami Rogé.

In 2015, Lee composed the main theme song for the Korean American Drama Series *The Romance Artist*, starring Dae Na and Esther Nam. In 2017, he premiered two works with the Korean Symphony Orchestra in Korea and presented multiple performances of *The Shadow of Arirang* at La Folle Journée de Nantes. He most recently worked on two major commissions for

the Korean Symphony Orchestra, including the *Concertino for Piri and Chamber Orchestra* (premiered in 2017 by Dr. Gamin Kang at the Seoul Arts Center) and *Concerto for Daegeum and Orchestra*.

Originally from South Korea, his family relocated to the Bay Area at the age of 12. Initially pursuing undergraduate studies in Computer Science, he later switched to Composition, “following [his] heart”.⁴⁰⁹ Lee holds a Bachelor’s degree from San José State University and a Master’s and Doctorate from the University of Michigan, where he studied under esteemed composers like Leslie Bassett, Bright Sheng, William Bolcom, Pablo Furman, and Allen Strange. He currently teaches at SUNY Westchester Community College and serves as a music consultant for the American Museum of Natural History.

7.1.2 Compositional Style and Influences

In a personal interview I conducted with Dr. Lee in 2024, he said, “I’ll be honest. I disliked Korean traditional music at first. It was so boring, and I was a rebel. I was exposed to Western music more at the time. A lot of people had told me [that I] should write fusion music with Korean instruments. But I didn’t want to do that just to please others. Why should I? I refuse to conform to the stereotype that just because I am Korean, I should write Korean music. I’ve known friends who wrote music to please teachers and win competitions, but I believe that if the work you’ve written does not resonate with you first, you’ll be a very sad person. Your music has to please you first.”⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁹ Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Dr. Paul Yeon Lee, personal, April 18, 2024.

⁴¹⁰ Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Dr. Paul Yeon Lee.

Despite his initial aversion at first, he mentioned that the switch to loving Korean traditional music happened while listening to the famous Korean folk song, *Arirang*. “I listened to it a million times and I realized that it’s full of sadness and longing. Then, I started doing research to find the meaning of the lyrics. I asked myself, ‘Why is it all sad? Why is it so slow?’ In order to understand this, you have to understand Korean history. Koreans have suffered a lot. I cannot claim I know how my ancestors felt, but I felt a sorrowful pain that you cannot describe with words. It was then that I realized a sense of obligation and duty to create music that merges Korean and Western influences. And at that point, nobody had forced or pressured me.”

He also told me about the definition of the Korean character *han* (한), derived from the Chinese Character of the same name (恨), describing it as “a word with deep meaning.” He said, “It’s beyond pain, beyond sorrow. It’s a pain that’s really deep inside your heart that you can’t find or describe it. It’s due to the years of many, many years of pain the Koreans went through.”⁴¹¹

Heather Willoughby, ethnomusicologist and Professor of Music at Ewha Women’s University in Korea, describes *han* as:

In some instances *han* is regarded as a national ethos; a concept said to be unique to Koreans, and incomprehensible to Westerners. As an ethos, it is used to describe anything from the basis of social movements to explaining psychosis in shamans. *Han* can also be characterized as an aesthetic - a cultural root of expressed beauty and meaning in visual arts, dance and music; or similarly, as a sentiment- an ideology, emotion and feeling- that can also be represented in or motivation for the art..., even focusing only on one definition, it remains difficult to offer any definitive answers to what *han* actually is.⁴¹²

⁴¹¹ Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Dr. Paul Yeon Lee.

⁴¹² Willoughby, “Sound of Han,” 18.

In discussing his artistic influences, Lee conveyed a profound admiration for composers such as Mahler, Chopin, Beethoven, and Brahms, mentioning Brahms's Violin Concerto as a personal favorite. Additionally, he expressed a deep appreciation for the works of Austrian painter Gustav Klimt, recognizing the interconnectedness of visual art and music in shaping his creative vision. Klimt's use of color and intricate symbolism resonates deeply with Lee, and he finds his oeuvres as a source of creative nourishment.⁴¹³ Lee emphasized the importance of experiencing diverse art forms beyond music alone, highlighting Klimt's blending of colors, intricate and elaborate decorative details, as well as the symbolic elements and motifs, which convey deeper meanings related to life, love, and the human experience. Just like Klimt's art, I found that Lee's compositions exhibit an artistic fusion of instrumentation, blending Korean traditional instruments with Western counterparts while incorporating traditional Korean motifs to symbolize the emotions and anguish of Korean expression. He underscored the timeless connection between visual art and music, each enriching the other in a harmonious interplay of expression and inspiration.

Lee was also very inspired by his teachers, Leslie Bassett, Bright Sheng, William Bolcom, Pablo Furman, and Allen Strange, whose mentorship played a pivotal role in shaping his artistic inspirations and guiding his compositional journey.

7.2 Sanjo No. 1 (1996)

“In order to grasp the essence of *Sanjo No. 1*, you have to understand *pansori*. It's like delving into blues to understand jazz music. You have to understand the history of pain and

⁴¹³ Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Dr. Paul Yeon Lee.

suffering endured by Koreans.”⁴¹⁴ Dr. Lee emphasized the crucial role of performers immersing themselves in traditional *pansori* through active listening and observing recordings. He stressed that this immersion not only cultivates a deeper appreciation for the Korean traditional art form but also enhances their understanding of its stylistic nuances and emotional depth, thereby enriching their interpretation of *Sanjo No. 1*.

The term *pansori* originates from the Korean words "*pan*," signifying "a gathering place," and "*sori*," meaning "song." Originating in southwest Korea during the seventeenth century, it evolved from the narrative songs performed by shamans. *Pansori* singers undergo extensive training to excel in producing diverse vocal sounds and timbres. In 1964, *pansori* was officially recognized as a National Intangible Cultural Property.⁴¹⁵ Vocalists frequently incorporate traditional hand fans to accentuate the narrative, employing vigorous waves, gentle sweeps, or simply resting it in her lap while delivering the text. Traditional *pansori* performances, also known as "cycles," can last up to 10 hours.⁴¹⁶

Sanjo No. 1 seamlessly integrates elements of *pansori* and the tonal characteristics and performance techniques of the *daegeum* flute with Western compositional methods. *Sanjo*, a traditional Korean musical form, literally translates to “scattered melodies” and is characterized by improvisation and rhythmic complexity. It typically features solo performances on a traditional Korean instrument accompanied by a *janggu* (hourglass-shaped drum). *Gayageum* player Hwang Byeong-gi shared with Na Hyo-shin, a Korean composer based in San Francisco:

⁴¹⁴ Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Dr. Paul Yeon Lee, personal, April 18, 2024.

⁴¹⁵ “Pansori Epic Chant,” UNESCO: Intangible Cultural Heritage, accessed May 19, 2024, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/pansori-epic-chant-00070>.

⁴¹⁶ Andrew Evans, “Travel to South Korea for Pansori, Storytelling Through Music,” web log, *Discover Silversea* (blog), 2023, <https://discover.silversea.com/destinations/asia/korean-pansori-storytelling-songs/>.

“When the court musicians heard *sanjo* for the first time, they didn’t think it was music, but thought it was more like scattered melodies. That’s where the name *sanjo* came from.”⁴¹⁷

The dynamic and improvisatory nature of *sanjo* allows for expressive freedom and creativity within the framework of the piece. *Sanjo* performances often showcase the skill and mastery of the performer, highlighting their ability to navigate intricate melodic and rhythmic patterns while maintaining a captivating and engaging musical narrative.

The term "scattered melodies" refers to the structure of Lee’s piece, where various melodic fragments are introduced and developed throughout the performance. For instance, the beginning of the piece paints slow, scattered notes on a canvas, while the second half converges the scattered ideas to improvise upon a melodic theme.

While *Sanjo No. 1*, does not feature a *janggu* accompaniment, it allows for an atmosphere of spontaneity and experimentation. In this era of globalization, traditional forms like *sanjo* undergo a continuous evolution and reinterpretation as they cross geographical borders. Written for the solo modern flute, *Sanjo No. 1* exemplifies the fusion of innovation and tradition in a contemporary context.

7.2.1 Analysis

This performance analysis examines Lee's method of integrating traditional Korean elements into his composition and explores how he employed extended techniques to emulate the sounds of the *daegeum*. Additionally, I provide performance recommendations for contemporary

⁴¹⁷ Jocelyn Clark, “Scattered Thoughts on Scattered Melodies: Sanjo in the 21st Century,” in *Sanjo* (National Center for Korean Traditional Performing Arts, 2009), 73, <https://stefanhakenberg.com/art/JCClarkArticle.PDF>.

flutists, drawing on insights from flutist Kate Bowling, who worked closely with Dr. Lee and whom I had the opportunity to interview.

This analysis loosely follows David S. Lefkowitz and Kristin Taavola's segmentation framework, organizing the analysis into different parameters, or "domains," which include properties like pitch, timbre, rhythm, and articulation. Given that *Sanjo No. 1* predominantly emphasizes timbre, articulation, pitch, and rhythm properties, my analysis is concentrated on these specific domains.⁴¹⁸

For the sake of organization, I have divided *Sanjo No. 1* into two distinct sections: Section A, which includes measures 1 to 11, and Section B, which spans measures 12 through 23, marking the conclusion of the piece.

⁴¹⁸ David S. Lefkowitz and Kristin Taavola, "Segmentation in Music: Generalizing a Piece-Sensitive Approach," *Journal of Music Theory* 44, no. 1 (April 1, 2000): 176, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3090673>.

SANJO

NO. 1

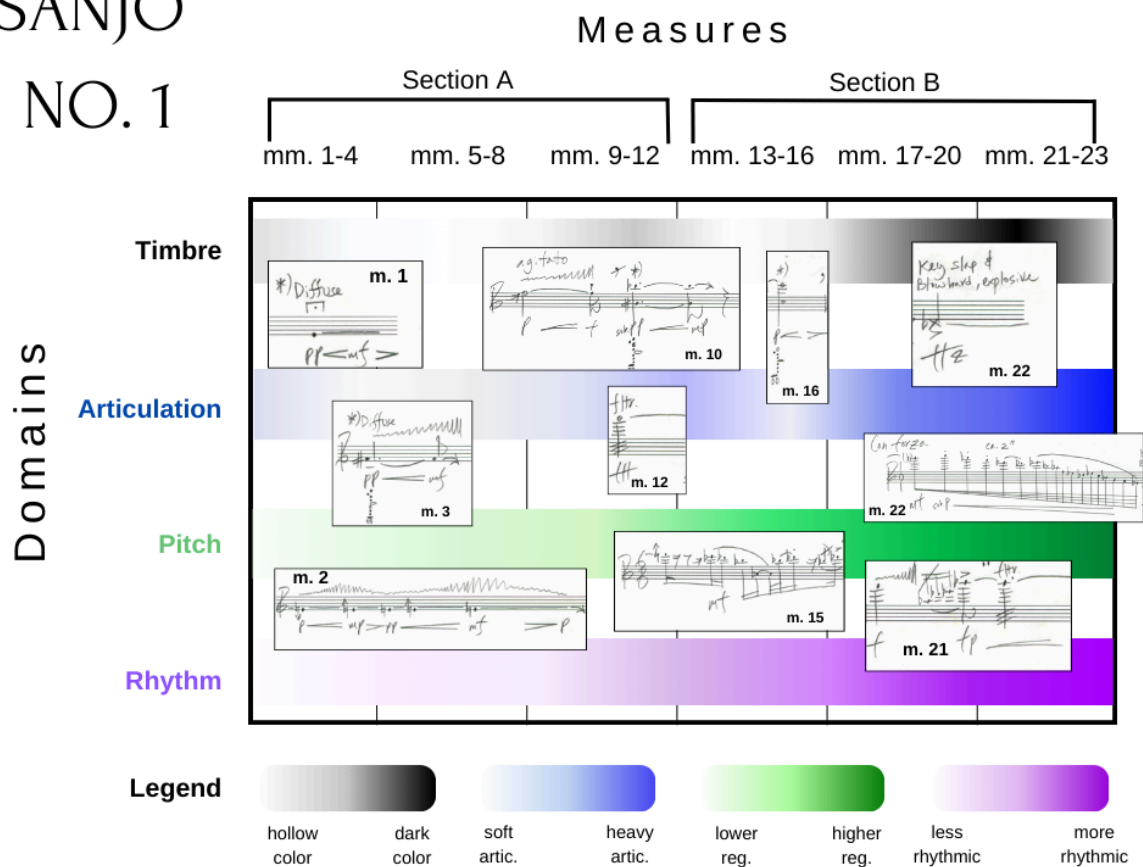


Figure 7. Comprehensive map of domains in *Sanjo No. 1*.

This map (Figure 7) provides a comprehensive overview of *Sanjo No. 1*, analyzed across four domains: timbre, articulation, pitch, and rhythm. The legend at the bottom illustrates how gradient colors represent various qualities in each domain, with darker colors indicating darker timbres, heavier articulations, higher registers, and more intense rhythms, and lighter colors indicating the opposite. This graph visually illustrates the contrast between Sections A and B of *Sanjo No. 1*. Section A predominantly features lighter timbres, softer articulations, lower pitch

registers, and less rhythmic intensity. In contrast, Section B shifts to darker timbres, heavier articulations, higher pitch registers, and more complex rhythms.

For example, the timbre in Section A, particularly in measures 1-3, is marked by "diffuse" indications, suggesting a hollow, airy quality typical of the *daegeum*. In Section B, the timbre becomes progressively darker, as indicated by the darker gradient in measures 16 and 22. This shift reflects a transition to a more intense and fuller sound. This visual representation makes it evident that Section A of *Sanjo No. 1* predominantly occupies the lighter end of each domain, while Section B shifts towards the darker end.

Articulation in these measures is also soft, complementing the diffused timbre. Measure 2, for example, contains sustained notes at a lower pitch, further reinforcing this characteristic. Articulation in Section B is heavier and more forceful. Measure 22 features a key slap and explosive articulation, highlighting the dynamic and powerful quality of this section.

Rhythmically, Section A is less intense, with sustained notes and slower rhythms. This can be seen in measures 1-3, where the sustained nature of the notes indicates less rhythmic activity and a more relaxed and flowing rhythmic structure. Rhythmically, Section B is more complex and intense. Measures 21-23 demonstrate a more rhythmic and dynamic progression, contrasting sharply with the relaxed rhythms of Section A.

In terms of pitch, the pitch register in Section A remains relatively low, contributing to the overall lightness of the section. Additionally, the pitch register rises in Section B, contributing to the section's heightened intensity.

The four domains—timbre, articulation, pitch, and rhythm—are interwoven, each influencing the others to create a cohesive musical narrative. Each element enhances the others,

contributing to the overall narrative and emotional depth of the composition. The subsequent sections of the analysis will delve deeper into each domain, exploring how these elements contribute to the overall structure and expressive quality of *Sanjo No. 1*. By examining these components in detail, we can gain a richer understanding of the piece's artistic and cultural significance.

7.2.1.1 Timbral Domain

This section will focus on the timbral domain of the piece, which encompasses elements such as texture, instrumentation, register, timbral articulations, and expressive markings. Within this domain, I will also attribute expressive markings like vibrato for its contribution to the overall sonic palette of the piece.

The beginning of the piece unfolds like brushstrokes on a canvas, with long, scattered notes that sketch different ideas, reflective of the piece's title. Then, in the latter half, these scattered motifs weave together to form a masterpiece of sound and emotion to capture the essence of Korean traditional music and the sonic qualities of the *daegeum* flute.

Vibrato and Pitch Bends

The first line of *Sanjo No. 1* opens with a grace note leading to a sustained low E (Figure 7-1), embellished with timbral elements like pitch bends, quarter tones, and precise vibrato instructions. This line ends on the same low E and is notated as "diffuse." The composer provides an alternate fingering, allowing the performer to manipulate the timbre of the note, creating a more hollow and airy quality. I believe that this seeks to replicate the woody and reedy

timbre characteristics of the *daegeum*, and performers should strive to avoid producing the typical metallic sound associated with modern flutes.

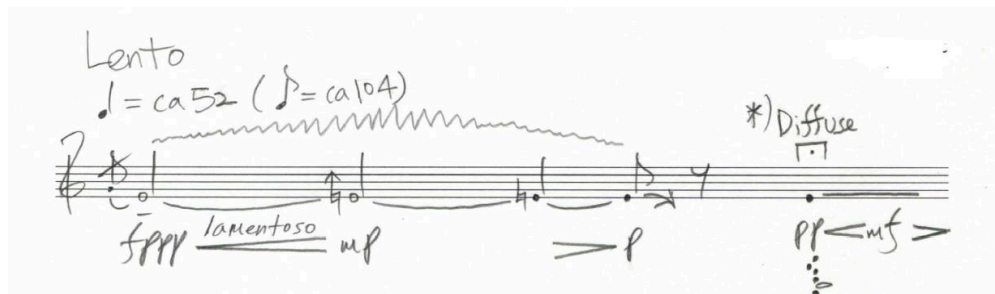


Figure 7-1. Opening line of *Sanjo No. 1*.

In contrast to Western music, where a single note typically holds significance within the context of other pitches or harmonies, in traditional Korean music, a sustained note is an independent entity of its own and should be brought to life with *sigimsae*. Isang Yun emphasizes the importance of the transformations of a singular note in Korean music:

While in European music the concept of form plays a decisive part, and notes become significant only when a whole group of them are related horizontally as melody or vertically as harmony, the thousand-year-old tradition of Eastern Asiatic music places the single note, the constructive element, in the foreground. In European music only a series of notes comes to life, so that the individual tone can be relatively abstract, but with us the single tone is alive in its own right. Our notes can be compared to brush strokes as opposed to pencil lines. From beginning to end each note is subject to transformations; it is decked out with embellishments, grace notes, fluctuations, glissandi, and dynamic changes; above all, the natural vibration of each note is consciously employed by a means of expression.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁹ Francisco F. Feliciano, *Four Asian Contemporary Composers: The Influence of Tradition in Their Works* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 1983), 41.

Based on the information provided, my interpretation is that each unique stroke of scattered, sustained notes throughout Lee's piece is not arbitrary; they all hold important significance. Typically lasting twelve to fifteen seconds, each singular note undergoes many shifts within the timbral domain: vibrato fluctuations, considerations in the register, expressive markings, and most importantly to Korean traditional music, the incorporation of ornamentations, or *sigimsae*.

Sigimsae (시김새, ornamentations/ornamentation technique) plays an important role in Korean traditional music, bringing vitality to pitches with direction and contour. It is used in traditional wind and string instrument performances, as well as vocal genres. As discussed in Chapter 1.2.4, *sigimsae* encompasses various playing techniques that embellish the tone. Successful incorporation of *sigimsae* serves as an indicator of technical proficiency, and each performer's unique interpretation adds depth to the dramatic sentiments expressed in the music.⁴²⁰ Regarding *sigimsae*, is important to note that:

When a player named A and a player named B play the same music, one can also say that their *sigimsae* is different when explaining the difference between them.⁴²¹

Within the initial measure alone (Figure 7-1), there are several occurrences of *sigimsae*, including the grace note at the outset, quarter tones, vibrato indications (*nongeum*), and the portamento down (*toeseong*), which all embody characteristic features of the *daegeum* flute.

I will concentrate on the vibrato (*nongeum*) *sigimsae* within the timbral domain, an expressive technique employed by Lee to modify the timbre of individual notes and showcase an

⁴²⁰ Ju-Yong Ha, "'Lifting Up the Sound:' Ujo Seongeum and Performance Practice in Pansori Tradition," *Oriental Music* 38 (2015): 225, https://s-space.snu.ac.kr/bitstream/10371/98920/1/vol38_199.pdf.

⁴²¹ Daeung Baek and Jinseok Choi, "Understanding of Traditional Korean Music 1," story, in *Music and Korea II* (Busan: The Society of Korean Music, 1996), 102–33, 110.

essential playing technique of the *daegeum*. In Dr. Gamin Kang's *Advanced Techniques of Piri*, she explains:

As one of the sigimsae(s), *nongeum*, literally meaning vibrating or swaying note, is also called *yoseong* in Korean traditional performance practice... *Nongeum* can be translated as vibrato or glissando in Western European music. However, the term is more inclusive in an actual performance with a great range of expressions and at best is explained as pitch movement and gestures. For the convenience and better understanding of the term, I will use the Western term, "vibrato," in describing the details of the technique.⁴²²

Unlike the controlled and consistent vibrato commonly found in classical flute performance, the *nongeum* technique on the *daegeum* shows variability, conveying deep emotions and altering the timbre. Lee incorporates various *nongeum* markings throughout his composition, delineating the desired depth and width of the vibrato for the performer. In traditional Korean performance practices, *nongeum* is utilized in both court and folk music, with its application varying based on the lineage of *sanjo*. It may be strategically applied to specific notes to characterize a particular mode and create tension seeking resolution towards more stable notes, such as the *cheong* (center note). Contemporary compositions employ a diverse range of *nongeum*, contributing to unique sounds and expressive capabilities.⁴²³

I believe that it is important for the performer to accurately follow the vibrato depictions that Lee indicates, as varying depth markings convey distinct expressions. Personally, I interpret the deeper vibrato markings as portrayals of crying, symbolizing the enduring pain and resentment stemming from years of oppression. Figure 7-2 below shows another application of Lee's vibrato markings that are scattered throughout the piece. All of these embellishments serve

⁴²² Kang, *Advanced Techniques of Piri*, 74.

⁴²³ Kang, *Advanced Techniques of Piri*, 74-75.

to authentically capture the spirit of the Korean traditional music that is commonly heard in *daegeum* performances.

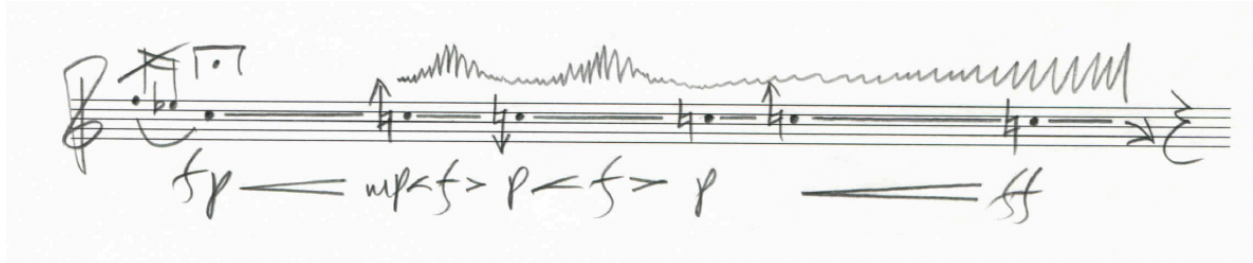


Figure 7-2. *Sanjo No. 1, Vibrato markings, quarter tones, and pitch bends (m. 9).*

In her book *Advanced Techniques of Piri*, Dr. Gamin Kang categorizes various types of *nongeums* utilized in both traditional and contemporary performances, accompanied by corresponding symbols. These symbols delineate factors such as width, intensity, and volume, as illustrated in Figure 7-3.

Types of Nongeum(s)	Symbol Notation
Thick, Deep and Slow	~~~~~
Thin and Relatively Faster	~~~~~
Vibrato after Bending Technique is Used	~~~~~
Begins with Thick vib. to Thin Vib.	~~~~~
Begins with Thin vib. to Thick	~~~~~
Upward Vibrato	~~~~~
Downward Vibrato	~~~~~
Vibrato Using Breathing	~~~~~
Vibrato Created by Lip Controls	~~~~~
Vibrato in the Style of Sanjo	~~~~~
Short and Intense Vibrato	~~~~~

Figure 7-3. Dr. Gamin Kang's chart illustrating various *nongeum* types.⁴²⁴

Furthermore, *Sanjo No. 1* features numerous occurrences of pitch bends, a form of *sigimsae* (refer to Section 1.2.4.3 for more about pitch bends). While in traditional Western music, this might be categorized more as a pitch variation rather than a component of the timbral domain, I will consider pitch bends within the timbral domain. They serve as embellishments and contribute to creating a broader spectrum of timbral variations in traditional music.

These pitch bends are called *toeseong* (descending glissandi) and *chuseong* (ascending glissandi). As discussed in Chapter 1, *toeseong* involves dropping the pitch height by narrowing the embouchure hole as in the *nongeum* method, while *chuseong* raises the pitch height by widening the embouchure hole.

Going back to the first measure (Figure 7-4 below), Lee depicts *toeseong* and *chuseong* using symbols that represent quarter tones, along with a downward arrow bend at the conclusion. This can be achieved on the modern flute by both partially covering the keys and rolling the flute in or out following the directional cues indicated by the arrows.

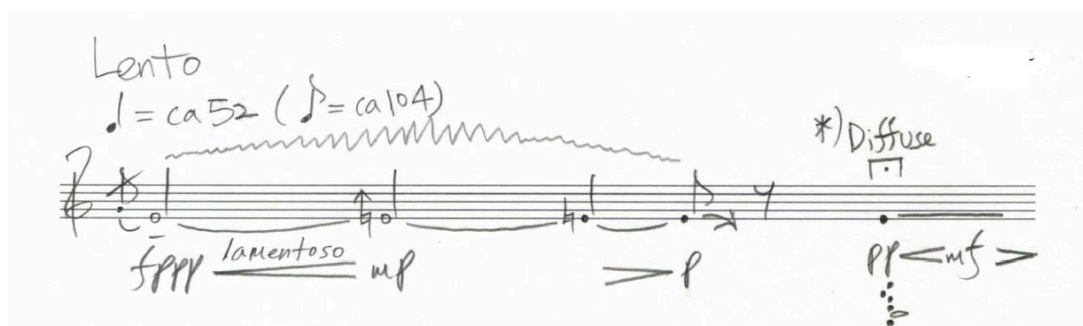


Figure 7-4. *Sanjo No. 1*, *Toeseong* and *chuseong* (m. 1).

⁴²⁴ Kang, *Advanced Techniques of Piri*, 74-75.

Extended Techniques

Lee uses various extended techniques throughout his composition to replicate the sounds of the *daegeum* flute and create a more dynamic timbral soundscape. An example of an extended technique Lee uses is flutter tonguing, a modern flute extended technique achieved by rolling the tongue, as shown in measure 11 (Figure 7-5). I believe that Lee uses it to emulate the unique 'buzzing' quality of the *daegeum's* middle and high registers due to its membrane (*cheong*). Traditionally, the *sanjo daegeum*, with its shorter pipe length and expansive embouchure structure, produces a sharper and more robust *cheong* sound compared to the *jeongak daegeum*.⁴²⁵

Given the piece's resemblance to the characteristics of the *sanjo daegeum*, I recommend executing the flutter tonguing with a fast airflow to achieve the desired brighter, buzzing timbre. Flutter tonguing remains unfamiliar to many Korean traditional musicians due to its perceived difficulty and awkwardness when applied to Korean wind instruments.⁴²⁶ However, nowadays, some contemporary *daegeum* performances may incorporate flutter tonguing.

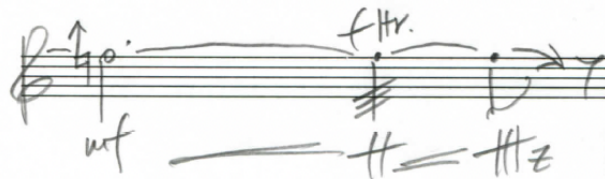


Figure 7-5. *Sanjo No. 1, Flutter tonguing (m. 11).*

⁴²⁵ Kim, "Daegeum," 168.

⁴²⁶ Kang, *Advanced Techniques of Piri*, 136.

Additionally, *Sanjo No. 1* features instances of multiphonics (Figure 7-6), an extended technique where two or more sounds are produced simultaneously. In contemporary *daegeum* performance, multiphonics are achievable through fingering techniques such as half-hole fingering and cross-fingering (uncovering the holes out of sequence).⁴²⁷ In this piece, Lee provides specific fingerings to generate the multiphonics, which he stated he borrowed from Robert Dick’s book on multiphonics, *The Other Flute: A Performance Manual on Contemporary Techniques*.⁴²⁸ Lee’s integration of multiphonics demonstrates his intentions to blend contemporary Korean and Western compositional techniques.



Figure 7-6. *Sanjo No. 1, Multiphonic (m. 15).*

I had the privilege of interviewing flutist Kate Bowling, who premiered this piece and performed at numerous conventions over the span of a decade. She advised flutists who are new to extended techniques to practice warm-up books written by her former teacher, Robert Dick,

⁴²⁷ Young-joo Park and Zong-woo Geem, “Korean Traditional Music Instrument and Educational Mobile Tool,” *International Information Institute* (Tokyo) 20 (June 2017): 3889–99.

⁴²⁸ Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Dr. Paul Yeon Lee, personal.

such as *Tone Development through Extended Techniques* and *The Other Flute*. She also offered specific tips for mastering these techniques in *Sanjo No. 1*. For lower note flutter tonguing, exemplified in measure 3, she recommended using an "OH" embouchure shape, while for higher note flutter tonguing, she suggested employing an "EEH" embouchure shape. Additionally, for downward pitch bends, she advised adopting an "OOH" embouchure shape. Regarding multiphonics, she proposed singing the lower pitch first to internalize it and then imagining singing the lower note while shaping the lips for the higher pitch.⁴²⁹ This emphasizes the importance of keeping the throat relaxed to produce the lower pitch accurately.

She also provided an alternate fingering suggestion for the multiphonic in measure 19 (Figure 7-7). She recommended half-holing the R2 (middle finger on the right hand) for more ease in producing the multiphonic.⁴³⁰

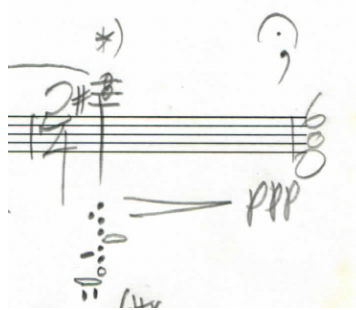


Figure 7-7. *Sanjo No. 1*, Minor third multiphonic (m. 19).

7.2.1.2 Articulation, Pitch, and Rhythm Domains

This section will focus on the articulation, pitch, and rhythm domains of the piece, which encompasses elements such as attack types, dynamics, and expressive markings within the articulation domain, intervals, registers, and pitch contours in the pitch domain, and tempo and

⁴²⁹ Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Kate Bowling, personal, May 2, 2024.

⁴³⁰ Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Kate Bowling.

meter in the rhythm domain.⁴³¹ Throughout *Sanjo No. 1*, there are many instances of fluctuating dynamics, enhancing the dramatic impact and offering cues for articulation and expression.

Articulation

Articulation in traditional Korean music, particularly in *daegeum* performance, is a defining feature that significantly influences the music's timbre and expressive quality. The use of grace note *sigimsae* ornamentations is especially prominent. *Sigimsae* refers to the various techniques of ornamentation and embellishment that give Korean traditional music its distinctive sound, characterized by intricate and nuanced pitch variations and dynamic shifts.

In *daegeum* performance, these ornamentations are not merely decorative but integral to conveying the emotional and cultural depth of the music. For instance, measure 3 in Figure 7-8 below exemplifies this approach with its contrasting articulation markings. The measure begins with a "diffused" pianissimo marking, which aims to capture the hollow, breathy quality of the *daegeum*, as mentioned previously in Section 7.2.1.1. This soft, airy sound is achieved by lightly touching the instrument's keys and blowing gently, evoking the instrument's natural resonance and the ambient colors it produces.



⁴³¹ Keith Howard, "Different Spheres: Perceptions of Traditional Music and Western Music in Korea," *The World of Music* 39, no. 2 (1997): 61, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41699147>.

Figure 7-8. Sanjo No. 1, Sigimsae on the note 'E' (m. 3).

Following this, a sharp forte grace note disrupts the calm, creating a sudden burst of sound that highlights the dynamic range and expressive potential of the *daegeum*. This forte grace note, heavily articulated, stands in stark contrast to the preceding softness, showcasing the instrument's ability to convey intense emotion and dramatic shifts. The grace note *sigimsae*, in particular, involves a quick, accented note that precedes the main note, adding a flourish that is both technical and expressive.

In Western music, grace notes are typically played quickly before the main note, maintaining the overall rhythmic flow of the piece. In contrast, Korean traditional music treats grace notes as integral to musical expression, embodying the emotional and cultural depth of the piece, including the concepts of *han* (한/恨; "profound sorrow) and *heung* (흥/興; "joyful excitement"). The contrasting articulations in Figure 7-8 above require precise breath control from the performer, as the breathy, diffuse sounds demand a steady, controlled exhalation, while the sharp grace notes call for a quick, forceful burst of air. This breath control is crucial in creating the varying textures and dynamics that define Korean traditional music and gives it a richer and more expressive performance.

This interplay between soft and loud, diffuse and sharp, and the emotions of *han* and *heung* mirrors the Yin-Yang philosophy, a central theme in much of traditional Korean art and culture. This dynamic balance is also reflective of the *sanjo* genre, where the abundant use of grace notes and ornamentations is essential to its scattered melodies.

Dynamics

In discussing articulation, I will also cover dynamics, following the classification system outlined by Lefkowitz and Taavola.⁴³²

Take measure 8 (Figure 7-9) below as an example, where a multitude of extreme dynamic markings are notated. Dynamics are included within the articulation domain, as defined by Lefkowitz and Taavola.⁴³³ These markings not only specify the type of articulation needed—whether it demands heavy or light tonguing—but are also accompanied by the *sigimsae* mentioned in the previous section. All of this beautifully embodies the essence of *daegeum* performance and *gugak*. *Gugak* resonates with the soul and emotions of the Korean people. It is imbued with the profound emotions of *han* (한/恨) and *heung* (흥/興), meaning the collective grief of shared oppression and the collective joy derived from communal performances, respectively. In its essence, *gugak* serves as a language for the common people that symbolizes the unity and vitality of community life.⁴³⁴



Figure 7-9. *Sanjo No. 1, Extreme dynamic markings (m. 8).*

⁴³² Howard, “Different Spheres,” 61.

⁴³³ Lefkowitz and Taavola, “Segmentation in Music,” 176.

⁴³⁴ Howard, “Different Spheres,” 61.

Dr. Lee pointed out a particularly challenging section of the piece, specifically the high C₇ note, which must be played with a pianississimo dynamic in measure 12 (Figure 7-10). He remarked, "There's a high note C in the latter part of the piece. Some flutists argue it's unattainable to play it at pianississimo. I understand it's nearly impossible, and 99% of players may struggle with it. However, when you encounter exceedingly soft and seamless execution, it reveals the skill of the performer."⁴³⁵

This technical difficulty mirrors the concept of *han*—pushing one's physical and emotional limits draws parallels to the deep struggles experienced by the Korean people. The execution of this high note not only tests the flutist's technical prowess but also allows them to express profound emotional expression. The note's delicate yet penetrating timbre evokes a sense of lament, resonating deeply with the Korean cultural sentiment of *han*, a collective sense of enduring pain, sorrow, and hope rooted in historical and personal experiences. Korean intellectual Lee O-young elaborates on this, stating, "[Koreans] cry, in hunger they cry, and in grievance they cry... Even when they are merry, they cry because they are happy. One cannot speak of Korea without mentioning crying and tears."⁴³⁶ This high C₇, when played with the intended pianississimo dynamic, becomes a metaphor for the subtle yet intense emotional struggles. The ability to convey such profound emotion through a single note demonstrates the intertwining of technical skill and emotional depth, mirroring the quiet strength and resilience required to face life's adversities.

⁴³⁵Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Dr. Paul Yeon Lee.

⁴³⁶ Willoughby, "Sound of Han," 19.

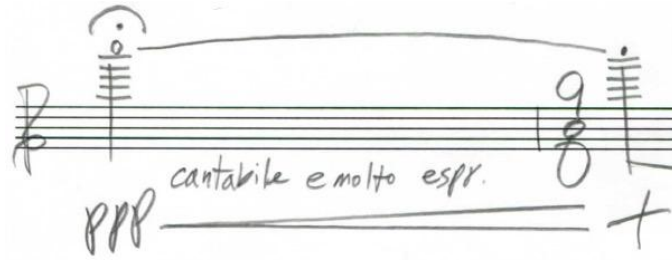


Figure 7-10. *Sanjo No. 1, high C₇ (m. 13).*

For the high C₇, Kate Bowling recommended the following fingering: LH 123 pinky; RH 1 2 (rim only) 3 (rim only) gizmo key. This helps soften the dynamics and maintain a lower pitch.⁴³⁷ I have illustrated this in Figure 7-11 below.

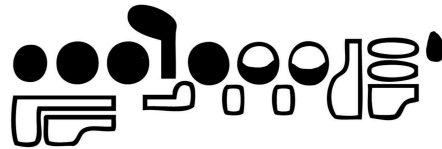


Figure 7-11. *C₇ alternate fingering.*

Sanjo No. 1 concludes with a gentle piano diminuendo (Figure 7-12), gradually fading into *niente* (nothing), echoing the Daoist notion of a cyclical return to nothingness, symbolizing harmony with nature. This theme holds significant meaning within Korean culture, where Daoism has long left its mark on diverse facets of life, such as philosophy, art, and customary rituals. Although Lee was not a practitioner of Daoism, this concept mirrors the profound

⁴³⁷ Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Kate Bowling.

is reinforced through frequency of use as well as through conventions of ornamentation and approach. The modes also carry emotional associations that ultimately help to reinforce the potency of the narrative. *Gyemyŏnjo* radiates a feeling of pathos, *ujo* creates an atmosphere of magnificence and vigor, and *p'yŏngjo* embodies a sense of serenity.⁴⁴⁰

Returning to the opening measure of *Sanjo No. 1*, there is a descending pitch bend at the end, or *toeseong*, as previously discussed. These “melodic sighs” are employed in *gyemyeonjo* (minor) modes and conjure feelings of “dusk or twilight,” imbuing the piece with profound emotional resonance and its melancholic essence.⁴⁴¹ I interpret these downward pitch gestures, as exemplified in Figure 7-13, carrying a deep emotional weight and giving the music a sorrowful quality. The emotional impact of *toeseong*, or these melodic sighs, lies in its ability to mimic the human voice, evoking a sense of lamentation or longing. The sigh-like quality of the descending pitch bends can be perceived as a musical representation of a deep, sorrowful breath, resonating with the listener's own experiences of sadness or contemplation. In the specific context of *Sanjo No. 1*, the *toeseong* at the end of the opening measure sets the tone for the entire piece. It introduces the melancholic theme that will be developed and elaborated upon throughout the composition.

⁴⁴⁰ Virginia Gorlinski, “P’ansori,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/art/pansori>.

⁴⁴¹ Ha, “Lifting up the Sound,” 225.

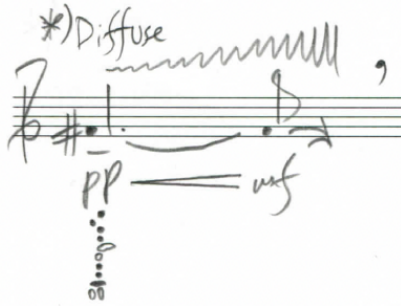


Figure 7-13. *Sanjo No. 1*, 'Diffuse' marking (m. 3).

Additionally, there are instances of "raising the tail," or *chuseong*, as seen in Figure 7-14 below. Unlike the melodic sighs, this vocal technique found in *ujo* (major) involves lifting up the sound, with the upward pitch gesture symbolizing a dignified authority and more energy. The higher pitch at the end enhances the dramatic essence of the narrative.⁴⁴² I view this as adding a sense of resolution and empowerment to the piece, effectively closing the musical phrase with a pronounced sense of finality and strength.

In Sanjo No. 1, the first half of the piece is marked by frequent "sighs," whereas the latter half features more occurrences of "tail raises." In my interpretation, this juxtaposition hints at a shift from a more somber mood in the first half to a more dynamic and spirited atmosphere in the second. Initially, the descending pitch gestures set a tone of introspection. As the piece progresses, the introduction of "tail raises" marks a significant transformation. The upward pitch gestures bring a new energy and sense of authority to the music, symbolizing renewed determination and resilience amongst the Korean people.

⁴⁴² Ha, "Lifting up the Sound," 226.



Figure 7-14. *Sanjo No. 1, Chuseong (m. 20).*

Dr. Lee emphasized an important and intentional harmony in the piece, particularly highlighting the minor third multiphonic in measure 19. He explained, "Towards the conclusion, I introduced a multiphonic of a minor third. This minor third holds a special meaning for me—it symbolizes love, but not the joyful aspect of love, as relationships are not always pleasant."⁴⁴³ By incorporating this interval, I find that he infuses the composition with a complex emotional layer, capturing the nuanced essence of love, including its challenges and complexities. The minor third multiphonic, often associated with melancholy and introspection, makes it a fitting symbol for the darker, more emotional aspects within his piece. By including these intentional moments in *Sanjo No. 1*, he creates a piece that is technically challenging and emotionally compelling. If this minor third multiphonic were in another piece, its emotional and cultural context might differ. In Western classical music, for instance, a minor third might simply be a harmonic choice without the same deep cultural connotations. However, in *Sanjo No. 1*, the chord carries a specific emotional weight tied to the Korean tradition of conveying complex emotions through subtle musical gestures.

⁴⁴³ Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Dr. Paul Yeon Lee.

Rhythm

Finally, Korean traditional music boasts distinct characteristics, notably the *jangdan* rhythmic system. In contrast to Western music's divisive rhythms, Korean music embraces an irregular and additive rhythmic structure, merging duple and triple patterns seamlessly.⁴⁴⁴

Jangdan signifies specific character traits within the music and also serves as a conduit for human emotions. Within traditional Korean folk music, *jangdan* patterns are classified into two distinct types: those employed in *jeongak* (formal music) and those utilized in *minsogak* (traditional folk music). The choice of *jangdan* dictates the musical rhythm and character. For instance, *semachi jangdan*, with its compound triple meter, infuses an invigorating tempo, used for rallying agricultural workers. In contrast, *jungmori jangdan*, with its compound quadruple meter, usually has a slower tempo, often reserved for more lyrical passages filled with more somber emotions.⁴⁴⁵ Typically, in *sanjo*, the music begins with a slower-paced 24-beat *jinyangjo jangdan* pattern, gradually transitioning to swifter and briefer patterns like the 12-beat *jungmori*, *jungjungmori*, and *jajinmori*, culminating in a brisk 4-beat *hwimori* pattern.⁴⁴⁶

Lee adopts a comparable rhythmic structure to the standard *sanjo jangdan* structure mentioned above. In the first half of *Sanjo No. 1*, Lee deliberately omits meter markings, allowing for a sense of rhythmic freedom. However, in the second half, the piece undergoes frequent meter changes, often alternating between 6/8 and 9/8 time signatures (Figure 7-15), a

⁴⁴⁴ Youngjin Yun, dissertation, *The Juxtaposition of Korean and Western Practices in Yong Nan Park's Works* (2013), 3, <https://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/islandora/object/fsu:185194/datastream/PDF/download/citation.pdf>.

⁴⁴⁵ Pyeongkang Park, dissertation, *A Study of Traditional Korean Rhythm and Its Potential For Western Art Music* (2023), 14-15, <https://esploro.libs.uga.edu/esploro/outputs/doctoral/A-STUDY-OF-TRADITIONAL-KOREAN-RHYTHM/9949559228202959>.

⁴⁴⁶ Kim et al., *Traditional Korean Instruments*, 17-18.

hallmark feature of *jangdan*.⁴⁴⁷ The rhythmic variability throughout the composition depicts the fluid and improvisational nature of traditional Korean music, acting as channels for various characters and expressions. The initial section, marked by a slower tempo, embodies deeper, more poignant emotions, while the rhythmic variability and intensity escalate in the latter half, conveying heightened drama, energy, and tension, offering a compelling balance to the piece.



Figure 7-15. *Sanjo No. 1, Frequent meter changes (m. 15).*

7.2.2 Performance Considerations

As Dr. Lee said, in order to understand the emotional depth of this piece, it is crucial to immerse oneself in the performances of various Korean traditional singers singing *pansori*. During my study of this piece, I found it immensely beneficial to not only listen to recordings but also watch videos of traditional performances. Observing the singer's nuanced facial expressions, accompanied by graceful fan movements and vibrant traditional attire, added layers of understanding and revealed the rich history behind *pansori*. Through attentive listening, I could capture the singer's emotions and the dramatic essence of the performance, even without fully comprehending the lyrics. *Pansori* is undeniably a spiritual journey, and its significance in

⁴⁴⁷ Park, *Traditional Korean Rhythm*, 14-15.

Korean culture is profound. In order to deliver an emotional and authentic performance of *Sanjo No. 1*, it is important that the performer captures the emotional depth of *pansori*.

When I was younger, I visited traditional folk villages in South Korea, where I saw numerous performances of traditional singing, dancing, and drumming. However, it wasn't until I experienced a live *pansori* performance that I truly grasped the depth of impressive artistry and dedication involved. I remember being mesmerized by the vocalist's command of her voice as she effortlessly transitioned from growls to soulful cries, trills, powerful belts, and soaring melodic lines. Experiencing this unique vocal style was a revelation to me during my visit to South Korea.

Moreover, I consider it essential for modern flutists to explore traditional *daegeum* performance recordings, especially the *sanjo daegeum*. As outlined in the initial chapter, the *daegeum* possesses distinct characteristics that enrich its sound, particularly the *cheong* (membrane). To my ears, the *daegeum* resembles a form of musical narration similar to *pansori*, but devoid of language, conveyed solely through the breath. The improvisational nature of the *sigimsae* ensures that each performance is distinct, evoking a diverse array of emotions depending on the variations utilized. Supported by the rhythmic pulse of the *janggu*, which serves as the music's heartbeat, *sanjo daegeum* performances are profoundly expressive, allowing the listener to truly sense the performer's emotions. Listening to traditional *daegeum* performances will allow the performer to truly understand how to replicate the deep, wooden, and reedy colors of the bamboo flute.

Finally, while understanding the performance practices is crucial, I also believe it is equally important to have a deeper understanding of Korean history when striving to deliver a

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONFLUENCE

8.1 Zhou Long

Dr. Zhou Long stands as a prominent figure among contemporary Asian composers. Since embarking on his musical journey at Columbia University in 1983, he has been dedicated to bridging the gap between traditional Chinese music and Western classical traditions. His 2011 Pulitzer Prize win for his operatic work, *Madame White Butterfly* (premiered on Feb. 26, 2010), by the Opera Boston at the Cutler Majestic Theatre), catapulted him to international acclaim, highlighting his adept fusion of Chinese artistic heritage with Western musical idioms and solidifying his status as one of China's most distinctive composers.⁴⁴⁹ The Pulitzer Prize citation states:

Unlike many composers of today working between cultures, Zhou Long has found a plausible, rigorous, and legitimate way of consolidating compositional methods and techniques that allow him to express brilliantly both his experiences as a composer of Western music and his considerable knowledge of his native China. In [his music], Zhou Long displays a stunning (quasi-tactile) orchestral imagination that dramatically demonstrates his skill of embedding elements of the two cultures in a consistent, seamless, and original musical language.⁴⁵⁰

Zhou's distinctive compositional style is evident in his works, such as *Confluence* for Solo Flute (2015) and *Su (Tracing Back)* for Flute and Harp (1984), revered as exemplars of his exquisite synthesis of Chinese cultural motifs and Western compositional techniques.

Viewing himself not solely as a Chinese or American composer but rather as a blend of both traditions, Zhou Long incorporates influences from both worlds to craft unique and

⁴⁴⁹ "Zhou Long," Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, accessed May 19, 2024, <https://lpomusic.com/musician/zhou-long/>.

⁴⁵⁰ Ariel Petrova, "Zhou Long's Madame White Snake," Berkshire Fine Arts, 2011, https://www.berkshirefinearts.com/04-20-2011_zhou-long-s-madame-white-snake.htm.

innovative compositions within Western musical contexts. Upon immigrating to the United States, Zhou Long expressed his aspiration to fuse Chinese timbres and folk themes with Western concepts of harmony, aiming to create a harmonious synthesis of cultural elements in his music.⁴⁵¹ This chapter delves deeper into Zhou's artistry as a composer, shedding light on the traditional Chinese elements and philosophies interwoven within his compositions. Moreover, the analysis will encompass an exploration of Zhou's compositional techniques in *Confluence* (2015) and how he uses the modern flute to evoke the sounds and aesthetics of traditional Chinese music.

8.1.1 Biography and Compositions

Zhou Long hails from Beijing, China, where he was born into an artistic family on July 8, 1953, four years after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. His father, an artist, was a faculty member at the Central Academy of Drama, while his mother, He Gaoyong, a soprano and voice professor at the Central Conservatory of Music, significantly shaped his musical development.⁴⁵² His musical journey commenced at the early age of five with piano lessons. However, the onset of the Cultural Revolution brought forth stringent artistic constraints, compelling him to postpone his piano studies and relocate to a state-operated farm, where he found himself "cultivat[ing] wheat, beans, and corn... and driv[ing] a tractor."⁴⁵³ These formative experiences left an indelible mark on him, continuing to shape his compositions to this day.

⁴⁵¹ "Zhou Long."

⁴⁵² Jiao, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, 6.

⁴⁵³ Frank J. Oteri, Chen Yi, and Zhou Long, He Said, She Said: Zhou Long and Chen Yi, other, *NewMusic USA*, August 1, 2006.

As the Cultural Revolution drew to a close, Zhou Long seized the opportunity to reignite his musical pursuits. Resuming his studies in composition, music theory, conducting, and traditional Chinese music, he embarked on a journey of musical exploration. In 1977, merely a year after the Cultural Revolution's conclusion, Zhou Long's talent earned him a coveted spot among the one hundred students selected from a pool of eighteen thousand applicants to attend the newly reopened Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing. Under the tutelage of Su Xia, he honed his craft in composition, marking the beginning of a transformative period in his musical development.⁴⁵⁴ Zhou was a member of the renowned "Class of 1978," marking the first class permitted to pursue Western classical music education following the Cultural Revolution, a group of composers that also included Chen Yi, Tan Dun, and Bright Sheng.⁴⁵⁵

After graduating in 1983, he was appointed the composer-in-residence with the National Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra of China. During this time, he married his wife Chen Yi, who is also a renowned Chinese composer and violinist. They first crossed paths as college classmates and later pursued studies together under Chou Wen-Chung.⁴⁵⁶ Zhou Long embarked on a journey to the United States in 1985, supported by a fellowship to pursue studies at Columbia University, where he studied under Chou Wen-Chung, Mario Davidovsky, and George Edwards, ultimately earning a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in 1993. Following over a decade as the music director of Music from China in New York City, he was honored with ASCAP's esteemed Adventurous Programming Award in 1999.⁴⁵⁷ In an interview, Zhou Long reflected on his initial experiences in America, expressing, "It was a profound culture shock; everything felt

⁴⁵⁴ Osteri, Long, and Yi, "He Said, She Said."

⁴⁵⁵ "Conservatory's Zhou Long Wins Pulitzer Prize for Opera," *UMKC Today*, 2011, <https://info.umkc.edu/news/conservatorys-zhou-long-wins-pulitzer-prize-for-opera/>.

⁴⁵⁶ Jiao, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, 9.

⁴⁵⁷ "About Dr. Zhou Long," Delos, 2009, <https://delosmusic.com/about-dr-zhou-long/>.

so unfamiliar—not just the music. And, of course, I was deeply homesick." During this period, Zhou also experienced the loss of his mother and turned to Buddhism and ancient Chinese philosophy. He began to explore these themes in his compositions from 1987 to 1994, a phase now referred to as Zhou's Buddhist Period.⁴⁵⁸

In 2002, Zhou Long held the prestigious role of composer-in-residence for Music Alive!, collaborating with the Silk Road Project Festival of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra alongside Yo-Yo Ma. Currently, he serves as Distinguished Professor of Composition at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music, where he serves as a faculty member with his wife, Dr. Chen Yi. During his illustrious career, Zhou Long has also served as composer-in-residence at the Cleveland Institute of Music from 2004 to 2005, while sharing his expertise through master classes and lectures at esteemed institutions such as Brooklyn College, Columbia University, UC Berkeley, and the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, among others.⁴⁵⁹ They maintain a frequent travel schedule between China and the United States to facilitate cross-cultural exchanges in music and education. Both were honored with Visiting Professor positions at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing in May 2006 and at the Xinghai Conservatory of Music in Guangzhou province in June 2006. Additionally, they were appointed Visiting Professors at Shenyang, Xian, and Tianjin Conservatories of Music. In 2011, Dr. Zhou and his wife received the Fifth “Thousand Plan” Award in Tianjin, part of the Chinese government's initiative to attract global experts across various fields.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁸ Edward Green, “The Impact of Buddhist Thought on the Music of Zhou Long: A Consideration of Dhyana,” *Contemporary Music Review* 26, no.5 (2007): 547-567.

⁴⁵⁹ “Zhou Long.”

⁴⁶⁰ Jiao, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, 15.

Zhou has garnered numerous accolades throughout his career, including first prizes in prestigious competitions such as Ensemblia in Mönchengladbach (1990) for *Ding (Samadhi)*, d'Avray in France (1991) for *Dhyana*, Barlow (1994) for *Tian Ling*, and Masterprize (1998) for *Two Poems from Tang*. In addition to earlier national competition victories in China, he has been honored with the Adventurous Programming Award from ASCAP (1999) for Music from China, a Grammy Award (1999) for the Teldec CD featuring his *Words of the Sun* and compositions by other artists, and the Academy Award in Music for lifetime achievement from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2003). He has received fellowships from esteemed institutions such as the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Guggenheim and Rockefeller foundations, and the National Endowment for the Arts, along with various grants. Zhou Long has been commissioned by numerous ensembles, orchestras, and organizations in China, Germany, Ireland, Japan, the UK, and the USA.⁴⁶¹

8.2.2 Compositional Style and Influences

After the Cultural Revolution ended, a wave of young Chinese composers, including Zhou Long, Chen Yi, Tan Dun, and Bright Sheng, pursued studies in the United States. Among their influential mentors was Chou Wen-Chung, whose teaching philosophy underscored the fusion of Chinese and Western cultures, leaving a lasting imprint on his disciples. Chou Wen-Chung's impact transcended mere cultural exchange; he believed in the intersection of Chinese and Western cultures. Easterners are fascinated by the intricacies of individual sounds,

⁴⁶¹ “About Dr. Zhou Long.”

and Chou Wen-Chung emphasizes the significance of individual tones as independent musical entities, stating:

A pervasive Chinese concept: that each single tone is a musical entity in itself, that musical meaning lies intrinsically in the tones themselves, and that one must investigate sound to know tones and investigate tones to know music... It is manifested in the great emphasis placed on the production and control of tones, which often involves an elaborate vocabulary of articulations, modifications in timbre, inflections in pitch, fluctuations in intensity, vibratos and tremolos.⁴⁶²

Zhou Long, the first Chinese student brought to the United States by Professor Chou Wen-Chung, acknowledged his mentor's profound influence. Under Chou's tutelage, Zhou was urged to infuse his compositions with the essence of China. While Zhou initially leaned towards a more traditional style during his early years in China, his move to the United States in the 1980s spurred a transformative evolution in his creative approach, and he began experimenting with the integration of Chinese instruments, such as the *guqin*, *zheng*, and *pipa* into Western orchestration.⁴⁶³ He remarks, "After arriving in the United States, I embraced Chinese instruments and music even more closely than before."⁴⁶⁴

Zhou's artistic journey embodies a harmonious blend of innovation and tradition. Prior to his immersion in Western music circles, his compositions already exhibited a modernist flair, as noted by Joseph R. Dalton of Composers Recordings, Inc. Yet, his time in New York further catalyzed his exploration of avant-garde Western styles while also nurturing a deeper connection to Asian religious and philosophical themes.⁴⁶⁵ From 1987 to 1994, he delved into a series of

⁴⁶² Jimmy W. Finnie, dissertation, *The Keyboard Percussion Trios of Toru Takemitsu and Toshi Iofflyanagi, a Lecture Recital, Together With Three Recitals of Selected Works of Cahn, Maslanka, Miki, Miyoshi, Ptaszynska, Schultz, Wesley-Smith, and Others* (1995), 17, https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc278139/m2/1/high_res_d/1002726097-finnie.pdf.

⁴⁶³ Wu, *Partita*, 22-23.

⁴⁶⁴ Jiao, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, 12.

⁴⁶⁵ San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, *2002 November Program*, 2002, https://sfcmp.org/site/assets/files/4697/02_november_sfcmp_program_notes.pdf.

compositions inspired by Buddhist philosophy and ancient Chinese ideals, which he referred to as his "Buddhist Period."⁴⁶⁶ For instance, works like *Ding* (1990) and *Tian Ling* (1992) reflect his contemplation of Buddhist meditation practices and the human spirit's interaction with nature, respectively.⁴⁶⁷

Zhou draws inspiration from the beauty of nature, leveraging multimedia and technology while remaining anchored in the serene aesthetics of the natural world.⁴⁶⁸ He was profoundly influenced by Buddhism's philosophical stance on existence and non-existence. This perspective, exemplified by the teachings of Chan Buddhist monk Xiyun, emphasized both the emptiness of the mind and its compatibility with ordinary mental functions. Among the different schools of Chinese Buddhism, Chan Buddhism—the precursor to Japanese Zen—had the most profound impact on the composer, particularly emphasizing the practice of focused meditation. He believed that Buddhism encourages people to cultivate compassionate awareness of the details of individual experiences, moments, and individuals. It challenges us to adopt a fundamentally different perspective of emptiness, which reveals the illusory nature of the boundaries between objects, moments, and people.⁴⁶⁹

Beyond spiritual influences, Zhou integrates elements of Chinese folk and classical music into his compositions. He seamlessly incorporates Chinese instruments alongside Western orchestral counterparts, with some scores offering dual versions for performances with or without Chinese instruments. Zhou's sextet, *The Ineffable* (2001), epitomizes his East-West synthesis, seamlessly integrating instruments like the *zheng* and *pipa* with violin, cello, flute, and

⁴⁶⁶ Jiao, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, 11.

⁴⁶⁷ San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, *2002 November Program*.

⁴⁶⁸ San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, *2002 November Program*.

⁴⁶⁹ Green, "Consideration of Dhyana," 548–49.

percussion to highlight their shared musical essence.⁴⁷⁰ His piece *Chan*, or *Dhyana*, scored for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano, delves into the theme of meditation in Zen Buddhism. Additionally, his repertoire includes compositions inspired by the philosophical tenets of ancient Daoism, such as *He* for String Quartet (2002), *Wuxing* for sextet (2002), and *Wuji* (2006).⁴⁷¹ His composition, *The Five Elements* or *Wuxing* (2002), for flute/piccolo, clarinet, percussion, piano, violin and cello, is based on the Ancient Chinese philosophical concept known as the *wuxing* system. This system, rooted in Chinese cosmology and philosophy, categorizes the fundamental elements of wood, fire, earth, metal, and water.⁴⁷² Through his musical motifs, structures, and interactions among the instruments, Zhou skillfully translates the essence of these elemental forces into sound.⁴⁷³ Zhou states, “Even though I have American citizenship now, the American critics still call me a ‘Chinese composer.’ For me, this title feels more intimate to me, and in fact, I did not change. The Chinese tradition has been deeply rooted in me, and it will never change.”⁴⁷⁴

8.2 Confluence for Solo Flute (2015)

Confluence for Solo Flute was commissioned by the Flute New Music Consortium in 2015. Zhou Long himself introduced the world premiere of the piece during a concert organized by FNMC that year, describing *Confluence* as a symbol of “two streams flowing and joining together” and that it “brings ancient *guqin* and bamboo flute music traditions into a Western

⁴⁷⁰ San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, *2002 November Program*.

⁴⁷¹ Jiao, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, 16.

⁴⁷² San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, *2002 November Program*.

⁴⁷³ Green, “Consideration of Dhyana,” 548.

⁴⁷⁴ Jiao, *Mongolian Folk-Tune Variations*, 15.

modern flute composition.”⁴⁷⁵ In an interview with flutist Hannah Porter Oceaña, who co-premiered the piece, Dr. Zhou states, “Confluence is the word for when the Western and Eastern cultures are joined together... And how to make the conjunction is an interesting question... I’d like to make a different sound than the Western flute that requires some techniques borrowed from traditional Chinese pieces.”⁴⁷⁶ During our interview, he suggested that *Confluence* could also evoke the imagery of water sounds merging together.⁴⁷⁷

I first encountered this piece when it was included as a compulsory selection in the final round of the Florida Flute Association’s 2021 Young Artist Competition, where I was honored to receive an award. At the time I was studying the piece, the only recording available was Hannah Porter Oceaña’s exceptional performance at the Flute New Music Consortium, but beyond that, there was no prior literature or guides on it. To prepare for the competition, I immersed myself in recordings of the *dizi*, *xiao*, and *xun* flutes, aiming to capture their exquisite sounds and nuances. In March of 2024, I was honored to be selected to perform *Confluence* again for *dizi* expert, He Bin, at the UCLA Global Resonance masterclass, celebrating the influence of traditional Chinese music on Western Classical Music.

Dr. Zhou mentioned in our interview that *Confluence* also drew inspiration from his earlier piece *Su*. Originally composed for flute and *guqin* in 1984, *Su (Tracing Back)* for Flute was commissioned by modern *guqin* master Wu Wenguang. In 1990, Zhou revised *Su* as a duo

⁴⁷⁵ Flute New Music Consortium, *Composition Residency Zhou Long*, 2015, https://www.flutenewmusicconsortium.com/uploads/1/4/9/7/14977178/fnmc_program.pdf.

⁴⁷⁶ Hannah Porter Oceaña and Zhou Long, FNMC Presents: Interview with Zhou Long, other, *YouTube*, 2015.

⁴⁷⁷ Oceaña and Long, Interview with Zhou Long.

for flute and harp, incorporating special fingerings provided by flutist Barbara Siesel and harpist Victoria Drake.⁴⁷⁸

In our interview, Dr. Zhou mentioned that some contemporary musicians may avoid pieces featuring extended techniques, perhaps due to reluctance to engage with such techniques, concerns about jeopardizing their classical career or the influence of agents urging them to stick to classical repertoire, or a fear of losing their “traditional style.” He expressed optimism, stating, “I believe that attitudes will evolve over time. In the future, everything will change. It's important to embrace new repertoire, explore diversity, and analyze fresh musical works.”⁴⁷⁹

There is a limited body of English literature and analysis on Zhou Long and his compositions, especially regarding *Confluence* (2015). The present dissertation draws upon personal communication, experience, and an interview that I conducted with Zhou Long as a primary source of information.

8.2.1 Analysis

As with my analysis of *Sanjo No. 1*, this analysis also loosely adheres to David S. Lefkowitz and Kristin Taavola’s segmentation framework, structuring the analysis into distinct parameters, or “domains,” encompassing elements such as pitch, timbre, rhythm, and articulation. Considering that *Confluence* places particular emphasis on articulation, timbre, and rhythm, my analysis focuses primarily on these aspects.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁸ Danqi Wang, dissertation, *Integrating Different Cultures: A Study of Zhou Long’s Confluence for Solo Flute and Su* (Tracing Back) for Flute and Harp (2022), 19, <https://ttu-ir.tdl.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/eba67dc9-5bff-4c3e-9562-c78e7b93f211/content>.

⁴⁷⁹ Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Dr. Zhou Long.

⁴⁸⁰ Lefkowitz and Taavola, “Segmentation in Music,” 176.

To define the structure, I first divide the piece into three distinct sections, following the ABA structure: Section A, which encompasses measures 1-44; Section B, spanning measures 45-135; and Section A', which extends from measures 136-179. The scope of this dissertation focuses on analyzing how the piece replicates the sounds of the traditional bamboo flute on the modern flute. As a result, the emphasis is on a practical performance analysis rather than a theoretical or harmonic examination.

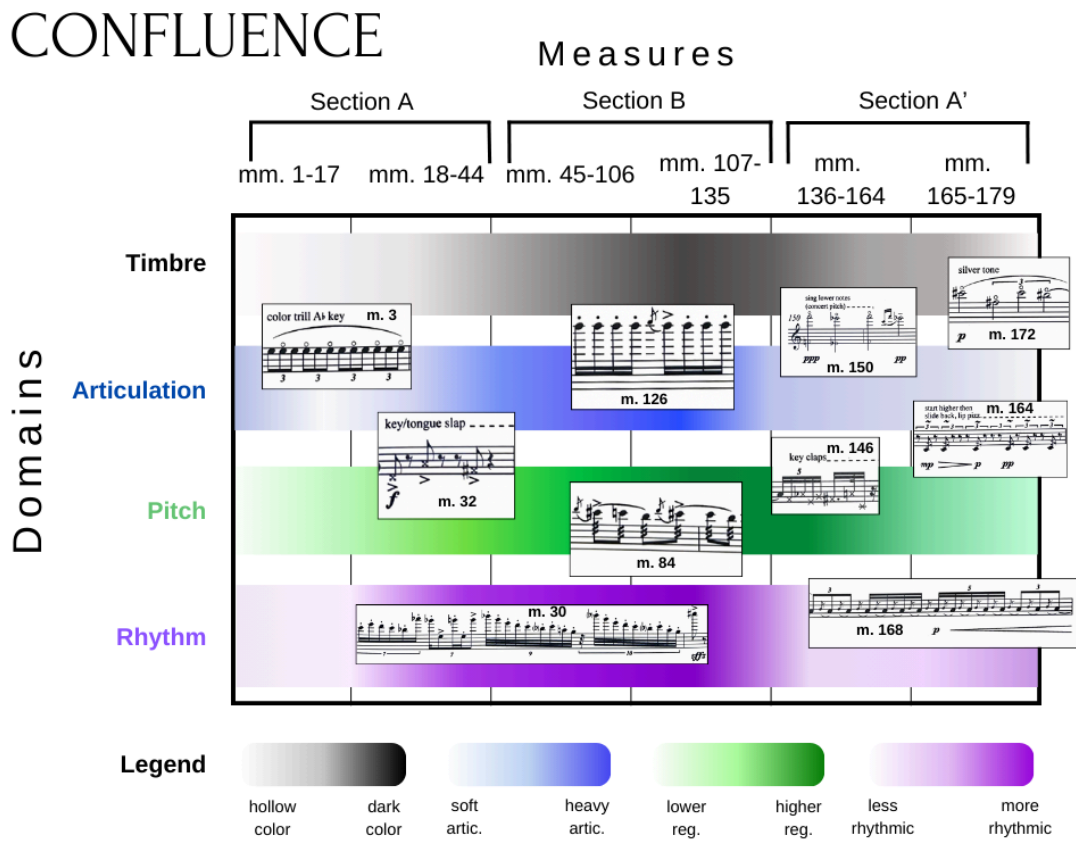


Figure 8. Comprehensive map of domains in Confluence.

I created this map (Figure 8) to provide a comprehensive overview of *Confluence* by Zhou Long, analyzed across these domains: timbre, articulation, pitch, and rhythm. The legend at

the bottom illustrates how gradient colors represent various qualities in each domain, with darker colors indicating darker timbres, heavier articulations, higher pitch ranges, and more intense rhythms, and lighter colors indicating the opposite.

In Section A (measures 1-44), the timbre transitions from hollow to slightly darker by the end of the section, indicated by the light to medium-gray gradient. This section includes nuanced tonal variations, such as the "color trill Ab key" in measure 3. Articulation is relatively soft, reflected by the light blue gradient, with percussive elements like the "key/tongue slap" in measure 32 adding more texture. Rhythmically, this section is less active, with a light purple gradient indicating a more fluid, less intense rhythm. Additionally, the use of extended techniques adds complexity to the timbre, contributing to the nuanced articulation and fluid rhythm. Pitch throughout this section generally maintains a lower register, aligning with the softer articulations and contributing to a gentle auditory landscape. This section is reflective of the softer, lyrical Southern style of *dizi* playing, as evident by the overall lighter articulations.

Progressing to Section B (measures 45-135), there is a shift towards a richer, darker timbre, as indicated by the medium to dark gray gradient. Measure 126 features heavily articulated notes, enhancing the section's intensity. Articulation becomes heavier, shown by the darker blue gradient, with complex articulations evident in measure 84. Rhythmically, this section grows more complex and dynamic, moving towards a darker purple, with measure 30 illustrating significant rhythmic complexity. The richer timbres are augmented by multiphonics and extended techniques, adding depth to both articulation and rhythm. Pitch in this section explores a higher range, intensifying the dynamic feel of the music. This section reflects the

robust, bright Northern style of *dizi* playing, characterized by the rhythmic complexity in measure 30 and the percussive "key/tongue slap" in measure 32.

In Section A' (measures 136-179), the timbre lightens again, transitioning from light gray to medium gray. The "silver tone" in measure 172 signifies a return to a lighter timbre. The pitch also reverts to the lower registers, echoing the tranquility of the opening section. Furthermore, the articulation shifts from medium to light blue, with a reversion to the softer articulations found in Section A. The rhythm also begins to cool down as the piece draws to a close, marked by less complexity and a lighter purple gradient, symbolizing a serene conclusion to the composition.

The subsequent sections will explore the articulation, timbre, and rhythm domains in greater detail.

8.2.1.1 Articulation Domain

In the articulation domain, I will address elements like variations in attacks, dynamics, and expressive notations.⁴⁸¹

During my interview with Dr. Zhou, he mentioned that *Confluence* was inspired by the sounds and aesthetics of not only the Chinese bamboo flutes but also the bamboo flutes from other East Asian countries, including the Japanese *shakuhachi* flute.⁴⁸² This exemplifies the confluence of musical traditions and cultural influences across East Asia, highlighting the interconnectedness and shared artistic heritage.

Section A opens with a 'slap-tongue' articulation on the low C₄ (Figure 8-1), an extended technique that involves percussively striking the tongue against the upper lip to produce a sharp,

⁴⁸¹ Lefkowitz and Taavola, "Segmentation in Music," 176.

⁴⁸² Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Dr. Zhou Long, personal, April 24, 2024.

pizzicato sound effect.⁴⁸³ Zhou Long states in the program notes that, the slap-tongue “symboliz[es] water dropping, which is followed by a consistent center pitch E in a variety of forms indicating to trace back to the source of the stream.”⁴⁸⁴ The representation of water droplets and the tracing back to the source of the stream suggests a journey of exploration. This journey is then immediately interrupted with a quick grace note from one of the highest notes of the modern flute’s range (C#₇) to one of the lowest notes (D₄) in measure 2, which is an example of the *duoyin* (剁音) technique on the *dizi*. *Duoyin*, also known as "chopped note," involves a sudden, accented descent from a higher pitch to a lower melodic note, creating a dramatic and dynamic contrast. This technique adds a sharp, expressive quality to the passage, emphasizing the abrupt transition and highlighting the wide pitch range of the flute.⁴⁸⁵



Figure 8-1. *Confluence*, Opening measures featuring slap tonguing and timbral trill (mm. 1-4).

The juxtaposition of these techniques in the opening section serves multiple purposes. The ‘slap tongue’ on the low C introduces a percussive element to the sound, reflective of the ‘finger tonguing’ technique used in different traditional bamboo flutes. It also establishes a

⁴⁸³ Pizzicato is a playing technique that involves plucking the strings of a string instrument with the fingers.

⁴⁸⁴ Flute New Music Consortium, *Zhou Long*, 3.

⁴⁸⁵ “Dizi 笛子,” Sound of Dragon, accessed May 20, 2024, <https://soundofdragon.com/dizi/>.

rhythmic motif that mimics the sporadic, rhythmic nature of water droplets, grounding the piece in a natural soundscape. The subsequent use of *duoyin*, with its sudden leap from C#₇ to D₄, not only showcases the technical prowess required to execute such a rapid and large pitch shift but also adds a layer of emotional intensity. This sharp contrast in pitch—the high, piercing sound immediately followed by a deep, resonant tone—creates a dramatic auditory effect that can evoke feelings of surprise or urgency in the listener.

This technique is reflective of the broader Chinese philosophical principle of yin and yang, which is centered on the interplay and balance of opposites. The high C#₇ (yang) is intense and outward-reaching, symbolizing lightness and activity, while the low D₄ (yin) is deep and grounding, symbolizing darkness and passivity. The rapid shift between these extremes mirrors natural phenomena, such as the unpredictable and powerful flow of a stream (as noted in Zhou Long's program notes).⁴⁸⁶ Like this intervallic jump, the stream can move from calm to turbulent in an instant. This reflects the natural world's constant state of flux and the interdependence of contrasting elements prevalent in Chinese philosophy.

This rapid shift between calm and turbulent flows in the stream is a perfect segue into another technique used by Zhou Long to convey the natural flow of water. The ‘colored trill,’ also known as timbral trill, in measure 3 of Figure 8-2, is an expressive marking that mimics the effect of a vibrato (*zhenyin*, ‘shaking note’), more specifically the finger vibrato technique used on the *dizi*. On the *dizi*, “vibrato is commonly employed on notes of longer duration—that is, a slow, pulsing diaphragm vibrato rather than the continuous fast style usually heard in Western flute performance.”⁴⁸⁷ This technique underlines the musical portrayal of the natural world’s ebb

⁴⁸⁶ Flute New Music Consortium, *Zhou Long*, 3.

⁴⁸⁷ “Dizi 笛子.”

and flow, capturing the essence of water’s ever-changing state. On the Western flute, vibrato is achieved by manipulating the airstream, whereas on the *dizi*, the player typically modulates the pitch by slightly varying the pressure and angle of the fingers covering the finger holes while maintaining a steady airflow. This technique creates subtle fluctuations in pitch, producing a shimmering or wavering effect similar to vibrato on the modern flute.⁴⁸⁸



Figure 8-2. *Confluence*, Timbral trill (m. 3).

During our interview, Dr. Zhou elaborated on the significance of this passage, highlighting its representation of the calm surface of water and the gentle ripples of soft waves. He emphasized that performers should aim to make the E harmonic more audible during the performance, as its primary purpose is to evoke shifts in tonal colors, echoing the peaceful imagery of water in motion.⁴⁸⁹ By drawing inspiration from the finger vibrato technique of the *dizi*, Zhou Long creates a connection between Eastern and Western musical traditions, enriching the sonic palette of the composition.

Starting in measure 14, the piece adopts a swift and rhythmic pace, drawing inspiration from the Northern style *dizi* performance. In his program notes, Zhou Long explains that the

⁴⁸⁸ “Dizi 笛子.”

⁴⁸⁹ Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Dr. Zhou Long.

rapid turns and flutter tonguing in this section aim to evoke the essence of the bamboo flute.⁴⁹⁰ This part of the piece prominently features characteristics of Northern style *dizi* music (see Section 2.2.4.2), known as *beipai*, which relies heavily on tongue articulation and employs techniques such as double tonguing, flutter tonguing, and glissandi. These techniques combine to create what is known as *huashe* (花舌), or "fluttered glissando," imparting a vibrant and fluid quality to the music.⁴⁹¹ In Figures 8-3 and 8-4, visual representations of this technique can be seen, offering a glimpse into the intricate articulations and embellishments characteristic of northern-style *dizi* performance.

The dynamic rhythmic and technical characteristics of this section are closely tied to the Chinese philosophy of *qi* (氣), the vital life force that flows through all living things and the universe. In traditional Chinese thought, *qi* is essential for life, health, and balance, influencing both physical vitality and mental clarity. (See Section 5.3 of this dissertation for more information about *qi*.) The rapid, energetic techniques employed in this section, such as vigorous articulations and swift rhythmic changes, represent the vibrant flow of *qi*. By using these techniques, the performer channels their breath and energy into the flute, creating a sound that resonates with the powerful and continuous flow of *qi*.



Figure 8-3. *Confluence, Flutter tonguing (mm. 16-17).*

⁴⁹⁰ Flute New Music Consortium, *Zhou Long*, 3.

⁴⁹¹ “Dizi 笛子.”



Figure 8-4. *Confluence, Tremolos and flutter tonguing (m. 26).*

Furthermore, the rapid and fluid shifts in tempo and articulation in this section embody the balance of yin and yang. The robust, bright sounds (yang) created by the flutter tonguing and double tonguing contrast with the softer, smoother glissandi (yin). This interplay mirrors the natural balance and dynamic between opposing forces, which is a central theme in Chinese thought. The incorporation of these techniques not only pays homage to the rich tradition of *dizi* music but also adds a layer of authenticity and cultural resonance to *Confluence*.

Expanding on this theme of Northern-style *dizi* playing, Figure 8-5 illustrates the use of the double-tonguing technique (*shuangtu* 雙吐) in measure 30. This technique further exemplifies the intricate skill and expressive potential of the *dizi*.



Figure 8-5. *Confluence, Northern-style dizi technique, (mm. 30-31).*

The swift and rhythmic pace in this section serves to propel the narrative forward, imparting the composition with a sense of urgency and momentum. The interplay between flutter tonguing, glissandi, and other *dizi*-inspired techniques creates a kaleidoscope of sounds and colors, captivating listeners and transporting them to the vibrant world of Chinese musical traditions. Zhou Long not only showcases the technical and emotional depth of traditional Chinese music but also illustrates the Chinese philosophical principles that celebrate balance, flow, and the interconnectedness of life and art.

8.2.1.2 Timbre Domain

In an interview with the Flute New Music Consortium, Zhou Long emphasizes the historical and cultural significance of the flute, highlighting its ancient origins. He notes, "The flute is known as one of the earliest instruments on earth, made from a bird's bone. In the Chinese tradition, there are a lot of different bamboo flutes."⁴⁹² This statement emphasizes the flute's deep-rooted presence in human history and its diverse manifestations across different cultures. Zhou Long contrasts the traditional flutes with the Western flute, stating, "The Western flute is well-developed, including key pads."⁴⁹³ This highlights the technological advancements and the refined design of the Western flute, which allow for greater versatility and technical precision. However, Zhou Long expresses a desire to explore new sonic possibilities: "But, I would like to make a different sonority on the Western flute that requires some techniques borrowed from the traditional Chinese flute."⁴⁹⁴ This indicates his intention to blend Eastern and

⁴⁹² Occeña and Long, Interview with Zhou Long.

⁴⁹³ Occeña and Long, Interview with Zhou Long.

⁴⁹⁴ Occeña and Long, Interview with Zhou Long.

Western musical traditions, creating unique soundscapes by emulating traditional Chinese flute timbres on the Western flute.

Within *Confluence*, there are instances that emulate the sounds of the *xun* flute, an egg-shaped vessel flute typically crafted from clay, stone, or bone. The *xun* is known for its deep, resonant tones and its distinctive, haunting timbre. (Section 2.3.2 of this dissertation provides further details on this instrument.) These moments within the piece capture the hollow but resonant timbre of the *xun*, notably evident in measure 42 (Figure 8-6).⁴⁹⁵ The deep tones of the *xun* (yin) in this measure contrast with the brighter, more vibrant sounds of the *dizi* (yang), creating a balanced interplay that reflects the duality present in Chinese philosophy. This introspective moment invites the listener to experience a moment of reflection to appreciate the timeless beauty of Chinese musical tradition.



Figure 8-6. *Confluence*, *Xun* timbre (m. 42).

In order to capture the sounds of the *dizi*, Zhou Long converges Eastern and Western influences in *Confluence* through the utilization of extended techniques on the flute. One such technique is through the incorporation of harmonics (泛音), which are achieved by overblowing the note to produce a series of overtones that resonate above the fundamental pitch. For instance, when a flutist fingers a low D (D₄) on the modern flute, this results in not only the low D being

⁴⁹⁵ Wang, *Integrating Different Cultures*, 37.

produced, but also additional pitches, including the A₅, D₅, an F#₆, and A₆. The ability to generate multiple overtones from a single fingering is a fundamental aspect of *dizi* playing, and its distinctive, bright timbre is partly due to these harmonic overtones, which sound similar. In Figure 8-7 below, Zhou indicates the use of a harmonic by notating it with the ◦ symbol, producing a color reminiscent of the bright and penetrating sounds of the *dizi*.



Figure 8-7. *Confluence, Harmonics (m. 172).*

Zhou further incorporates Western extended techniques into the composition by utilizing singing while playing, a technique that generates a buzzy timbre through the blending of vocal and flute tones. In Figure 8-8 below, the flutist is instructed to finger and play the upper notes while simultaneously vocalizing the lower notes. The vocal tone interacts with the flute's sound waves, producing interference patterns and additional harmonics that contribute to the buzzy quality of the timbre. This effect is reminiscent of the resonance produced by the membrane (*dimo*) of the *dizi*. This distinctive timbre adds a layer of complexity and texture to the music, creating a unique blend of Eastern and Western sounds.

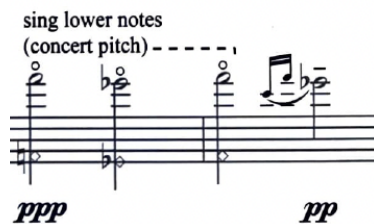


Figure 8-8. *Confluence, Singing while playing (mm. 150-51).*

Zhou also incorporates contemporary *dizi* techniques, such as "key/tongue slaps" and buzzing the lips while playing, showcasing a blend of traditional and contemporary musical elements. Figures 8-9 and 8-10 below illustrate these contemporary techniques, respectively, which are also discussed in Section 2.2.5. Tapping the finger holes of the *dizi* without blowing into it creates resonances within the air column, resulting in a subtle yet distinct sound. However, due to the rapid dissipation of the air, the resulting sound is brief and delicate. While similar effects can be achieved on the Western flute by tapping the keys, caution must be exercised to avoid damaging the instrument's pads. Dr. Zhou recommends coordinating the key slaps with tongue movements to enhance resonance. Additionally, employing vibrating lips while playing the *dizi*, reminiscent of brass instruments, mirrors the sounds of the *suona* (traditional double-reeded horn). To replicate this effect on the modern flute, one must maintain a rapid and precise airflow while gently puckering the lips.



Figure 8-9. *Confluence*, Key slaps (mm. 32-36).



Figure 8-10. *Confluence*, Lip pizzicato (m. 164).

During our interview, Dr. Zhou offered insightful feedback on my performance, specifically highlighting the effectiveness of incorporating some air while executing the ‘key claps’ in measure 146 (Figure 8-11). This technique calls the flutist to sharply depress the flute’s keys without blowing, producing a percussive sound often used to add rhythmic and textural elements to a piece. However, in my experience, executing the key claps without air can cause the percussive effect to lack resonance and projection, particularly in larger venues like concert halls. Dr. Zhou noted that adding air made the key claps significantly more effective.

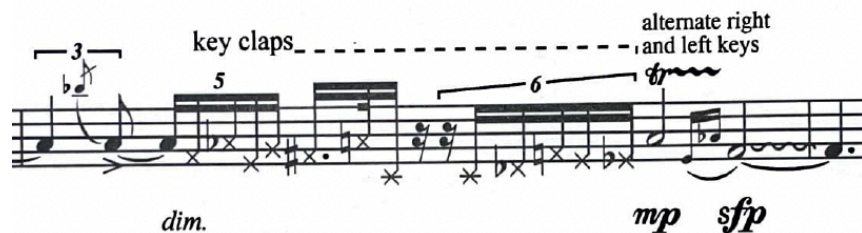


Figure 8-11. *Confluence, Key claps (m. 145).*

Throughout the piece, Dr. Zhou also recommended incorporating a wider vibrato range inspired by the finger motions of *dizi* players during vibrato execution. Furthermore, he mentioned that all of the flutter tonguing passages should be emphasized more through much louder dynamics and vigor.⁴⁹⁶

8.2.1.3 Rhythm Domain

In the realm of *dizi* music performance, improvisation plays a significant role. Musicians systematically infuse the written melody's skeletal structure with embellishments, enriching it with nuances unique to the genre. These embellishments, intrinsic to *dizi* techniques, vary between Southern and Northern styles, passed down through oral tradition rather than conventional notation.⁴⁹⁷ On the other hand, there are some examples of the Southern *nanpai* style, which is slower and more lyrical (See Chapter 2.2 for more information about the Northern and Southern styles of *dizi* performance). The *qudi*, a type of Southern *dizi*, incorporates a variety of ornamentations that are integral to its playing style. These techniques, which include grace notes and trills, are subtly used to enhance the melody without becoming overly dominant, reflecting the nuanced vocal stylings typical of *Kunqu* opera. In *qudi* music, these embellishments are used to express emotions and articulate the musical narrative, much like how a singer in *Kunqu* opera uses variations in tone and pitch to convey feeling.

⁴⁹⁶ Jennifer M. Jo, Interview with Dr. Zhou Long.

⁴⁹⁷ Tsai, *Dizi: Physics and Perception*, 17.

Chinese philosophical principles have profoundly shaped the practices of composers and performers across various musical genres. Confucianism values the cultivation of virtue and moral integrity, which can be seen in the disciplined practice and expressive precision required in *dizi* performance. The structured nature of Confucianism encourages a systematic approach to learning and performing music, emphasizing the importance of each note and the moral weight of artistic expression. Daoism, with its focus on natural harmony and the fluidity of life, is mirrored in the improvisational aspects and the organic integration of embellishments in the music. These philosophies underscore a holistic approach to music, where technical skill and emotional expression are harmoniously balanced.

Within *qudi* music, grace notes are particularly significant. Known as *dieyin* (疊音) when they occur above the principal note and *dayin* (打音) when below, these embellishments are prevalent throughout Section B of many traditional compositions. These grace notes serve as brief, delicate touches that add complexity and depth to the melody, often leading into the main notes with a soft introduction that enhances the musical expression without overwhelming it. Additionally, the *qudi* employs variations of trills: the *lianyin* (漣音), or a short trill, and the *chanyin* (顫音), or a longer, sustained trill. These trills contribute further to the dynamic range of the *dizi*, allowing performers to vary the intensity and emotional impact of their playing dynamically. The *lianyin* offers a quick, fluttering sound that can mimic the natural sounds of flowing water or a gentle breeze, while the *chanyin* provides a more pronounced, vibrato-like effect that can add a dramatic flair to the performance.⁴⁹⁸ Figures 8-12 and 8-13 below illustrate the embellishments found in *qudi* playing.

⁴⁹⁸ “Dizi 笛子.”



Figure 8-12. *Confluence*, Example of *dieyin* (mm. 59–60).



Figure 8-13. *Confluence*, Example of *dayin* (mm. 64-68).

Zhou underscores the Chinese principle of simplicity and the significance of the single tone in *Confluence* by employing repeated use of a single pitch. This approach reflects a fundamental aspect of traditional Chinese aesthetics, where the focus is often on the depth and nuance of a single note rather than the complexity of multiple notes. As discussed in Section 5.3 on Cultural and Aesthetic Influences, Chinese philosophers have long argued that superior music embraces fewer notes. This perspective diverges from the Western polyphonic tradition, which often prioritizes complex harmonic structures and multiple simultaneous melodies. Instead, traditional Chinese music focuses on the purity and expressiveness of a single tone, believing that fewer notes can convey deeper emotional and spiritual meaning.

One example of this principle is found in measures 127-130 (Figure 8-14), where a recurring B note is prominently featured. In these measures, Zhou Long uses minimal variation aside from ornamentation to explore the expressive potential of this single pitch. The repeated B

note serves as a sonic anchor, allowing the listener to appreciate the subtle changes in timbre, dynamics, and articulation that occur with each iteration. Combined with the piercing quality of the B₆ on the modern flute, this passage serves as an homage to not only the traditional Chinese principles but also the sounds of the *dizi* flute.

The simplicity and repetition of this note reflect the Daoist principle of *wu wei* (無為), or effortless action. (See Section 5.2.2 in this dissertation for more information on the influences of Daoism on Chinese music.) This principle advocates for a natural, unforced approach to life and art, allowing actions to arise spontaneously. In music, this translates to an emphasis on the natural flow and resonance of sound, rather than forcing complexity. By allowing the single pitch to breathe, Zhou Long aligns his music with these deep-seated Chinese philosophical principles, creating a piece that is both profound and intimately connected to traditional cultural values.

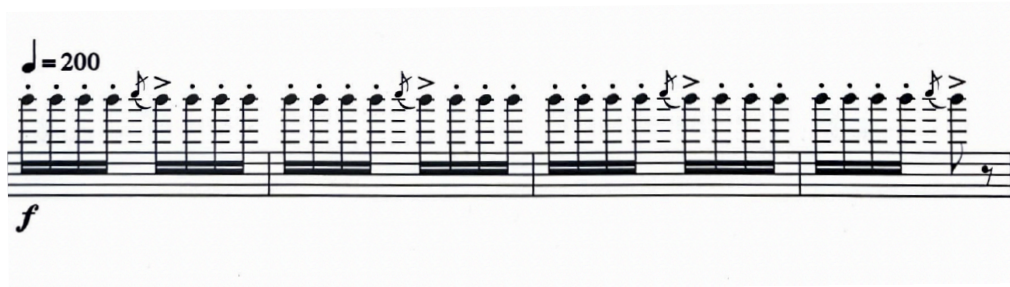


Figure 8-14. *Confluence, Repeated note with embellishments (m. 127-130).*

From measure 175 until the composition's end, Dr. Zhou emphasized the importance of treating this segment with a spirit of freedom and improvisation. In fact, there are numerous sections throughout the piece where the performer can be more liberal with time. Dr. Zhou explained that traditional Chinese music typically lacks rigid guidelines on beats or rhythm, favoring a more organic flow that reflects the natural ebb and flow of emotions and breath.

Despite the traditional approach, Dr. Zhou recognized the necessity of providing measures and time signatures for contemporary performers. However, within these structured frameworks, he encourages performers to find moments of freedom.

As illustrated in Figures 8-15 and 8-16 below, the irregular arrangements of notes evoke a spontaneous, unscripted style reminiscent of improvisation commonly found in traditional Chinese music. Dr. Zhou's intentional approach to following traditional Chinese rhythmic principles honors the heritage of traditional Chinese music and invites modern performers to play with more freedom. This blend of structured notation and interpretive freedom allows performers to engage deeply with the music, creating a unique performance each time. By doing so, they can capture the essence of traditional Chinese music, which is characterized by its expressive and fluid nature. This dual emphasis on structure and creative freedom ensures that each rendition of the piece is fresh and personal, allowing the music to resonate deeply with both the performer and the audience.



Figure 8-15. Confluence, Improvisatory style (m. 175).



Figure 8-16. *Confluence*, Another example of improvisatory style (mm. 176-177).

8.2.2 Performance Considerations

For performers who are not as familiar with the sounds of the *dizi*, *xun*, *xiao*, or *shakuhachi*, I highly recommend listening to recordings and performances to familiarize oneself with the timbres and characteristics of the Chinese bamboo flutes. Each flute has its own unique sounds—for instance, due to the absence of a vibrating membrane, the *xiao* flute has a more subdued and mellow timbre compared to the *dizi*, while the *xun* flute has a unique, haunting sound due to its ceramic construction. (For more detailed information on the *xiao* and *xun* flutes, refer to Section 3.2 of this dissertation.)

Furthermore, it may also be beneficial to watch some performances of *kunqu* opera online. *Kunqu*, one of the oldest forms of Chinese opera, prominently features the *dizi* in its orchestra. The Southern style of *dizi* performance, which is elaborate and intricate, showcases the flute's versatility and its role in enhancing dramatic moments. Through these recordings, one can appreciate the improvisational skills of *dizi* performers and the important role that the *dizi* plays in accompanying vocal melodies and enhancing dramatic moments. *Dizi* performers often employ improvisation, demonstrating a high degree of technical skill and expressive freedom. This can inform your approach to sections of *Confluence* that call for a similar improvisational spirit. Familiarizing oneself with the traditional sounds and performances provides a deeper

understanding of the cultural influences that have shaped Zhou's work. This background knowledge will enable the performer to better capture the intended spirit and nuances of *Confluence*.

8.2.2.1 Errata

Finally, there have been some corrections made by Dr. Zhou that are not indicated in the published score but should be brought to the performer's attention for more clarity:

For measure 3, keep the E in the octave where it is written, just use a different harmonic fingering (not the Ab key which only works up an octave like at m. 11). The triangle notation for the first note of 145 means to hit the highest note.⁴⁹⁹

When learning this piece, I came across some challenges in measures 141-142 in Figure 8-17 below, as the fingerings notated did not result in the most accurate multiphonic sound. Dr. Ashley Shank, a member of the Flute New Music Consortium, offered guidance regarding the fingerings for this section.

A fingering guide for the multiphonic trills on page 6: for the C#/D multiphonic with trill I used T123 T1 and Eb key to produce the multiphonic and trilled the Ab key (LH4) (measure 141) I think this is now indicated at the bottom of the page on the revised score; For the multiphonic in m. 142 (revised version) finger 1234 T2 and 3 for the multiphonic A; For the timbral trill in m. 147 with the alternating right and left hand keys I suggest just doing a timbral trill...finger A (w/o RH pinkie) and trill RH 123.⁵⁰⁰

⁴⁹⁹ Wang, *Integrating Different Cultures*, 43.

⁵⁰⁰ Wang, *Integrating Different Cultures*, 43.

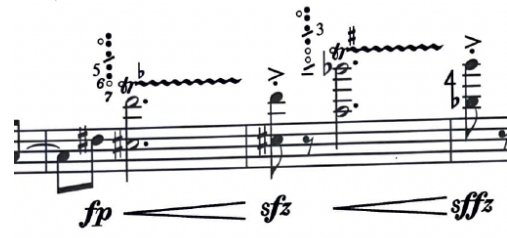


Figure 8-17. Confluence, Multiphonic trills (mm. 141-42).

CHAPTER NINE: MEI

9.1 Kazuo Fukushima

Kazuo Fukushima (1930-2023) is widely regarded as the pioneer of contemporary flute repertoire in Japan, sparking a newfound fascination with the instrument. Fukushima enjoyed early success as a composer, earning accolades, admiration from luminaries like Stravinsky, and opportunities to lecture at prestigious venues like Darmstadt. Fukushima is celebrated for his extensive contributions to the flute literature, with *Mei* standing as a cornerstone in the contemporary flute repertoire.⁵⁰¹ He composed four solo flute pieces and an additional four compositions for flute and piano. In discussing his affinity for the flute, Fukushima remarked, "Human life becomes manifest through the sound of the flute. Breath, containing the spirit, symbolizes the fusion of nature and human existence. Hence, the flute holds profound significance."⁵⁰² While his legacy today often centers on his role as a musicologist, Fukushima's true passion was his scholarly pursuit and preservation of Japan's venerable *gagaku* tradition.

9.1.1 Biography and Compositions

Kazuo Fukushima, born in 1930, was a Japanese composer and musicologist known for his significant contributions to contemporary music.

⁵⁰¹ Chung-lin Lee, dissertation, *Analysis and Interpretation of Kazuo Fukushima's Solo Flute Music* (2010), 1, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/808422504>.

⁵⁰² Antares Boyle, thesis, "*The Pattern and the Fabric*": *Complexity and Ambiguity in the Solo Flute Works of Toshio Hosokawa* (2007), 4, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/41240057.pdf>.

The impact of the Second World War was deeply personal for him, as it claimed the lives of his father, two brothers, and many friends. This period coincided with his early adolescence, spanning from age thirteen to fifteen, a time when the war was at its height:

From age thirteen to fifteen, which was the time that the war was about to end, “death” prevailed in my surroundings. Too many young people who were close to me were sacrificed, including two of my older brothers, and many friends... My family members decreased from seven to four. I was very young at that time. It was a miracle that I, as a non-military member, could survive. Perhaps this is the reason that the style of my compositions was very much like a tune of chinkon [literally, “to calm the restless souls”] when I started composing.⁵⁰³

Despite being entirely self-taught, Fukushima's talent and dedication propelled him to the forefront of the Japanese music scene. He joined the Jikken Kobo (Experimental Workshop) in 1953 alongside Toru Takemitsu, marking the beginning of his experimental inclinations. After a brief time with the Jikken Kobo, Fukushima delved into experimenting with the twelve-tone technique, leading to the composition of his earliest flute piece, *Requiem* (1956). This marked the beginning of the flute's prominence in Fukushima's body of work. Inspired by Boulez's *Le marteau sans maître*, Fukushima created *Ekagra* for alto flute and piano in 1958.⁵⁰⁴

Ekagra premiered in the Monday Evening Concert sponsored by the Southern California Chamber Music Society on April 4, 1960, in Los Angeles. The concert program also included notable works by Arthur Berger, Ernst Krenek, Milton Babbitt, and Alban Berg, conducted by Craft. Craft praised Fukushima's composition highly, considering it one of the highlights of the evening. This marked the introduction of Fukushima's music to an American audience,

⁵⁰³ Mark Takeshi McGregor, thesis, *Of Instrumental Value: Flutist – Composer Collaboration in the Creation of New Music* (2012), 35, <https://open.library.ubc.ca/media/download/pdf/24/1.0072994/2>.

⁵⁰⁴ McGregor, *Instrumental Value*, 30.

establishing him as one of the pioneering Japanese composers recognized in the Western world.⁵⁰⁵

Following his success in Los Angeles, Fukushima became a prominent figure in new music festivals worldwide. He participated in prestigious events such as the World Music Festival in Vienna (1961), the Contemporary Music Festival in Donaueschingen (1961), and the Darmstadt New Music Festivals (1961-1963), where he presented lectures and compositions. Of these, Fukushima regarded his participation in the Darmstadt festival as particularly influential.⁵⁰⁶

In the summer of 1961, Fukushima was invited by Dr. Wolfgang Steinecke to lecture at the Internationale Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt, Germany. This renowned festival played a significant role in promoting serialism and contemporary music, featuring prominent composers such as Milton Babbitt, Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, and Karlheinz Stockhausen. Fukushima's involvement in the festival continued over the next two years, culminating in a memorial concert for Steinecke in 1962, where Fukushima's *Mei* for solo flute was prominently featured.⁵⁰⁷

After his extensive tours in Europe and North America during the early 1960s, Fukushima settled in Cambridge in 1961 and later returned to Japan in July 1963 to become a music professor at Ueno Gakuen University in Tokyo. Subsequently, Fukushima shifted his focus to researching traditional Japanese music, particularly gagaku and Chinese court music of the Tang dynasty. He was appointed as the director of the Japanese Music Archive at Ueno Gakuen

⁵⁰⁵ Lee, *Kazuo Fukushima's Solo Flute*, 11.

⁵⁰⁶ Lee, *Kazuo Fukushima's Solo Flute*, 11.

⁵⁰⁷ Lee, *Kazuo Fukushima's Solo Flute*, 13.

University, which later evolved into the Research Institute for Japanese Music Historiography, under Fukushima's directorship.⁵⁰⁸

Fukushima's notable compositions following his return from Europe include *Tsukishiro* for orchestra (1965) and *Shun-san* for flute solo (1969). *Tsukishiro* was performed at the ISCM World Music Festival in Prague in 1967, while *Shun-san* was featured at the Third German-Japanese Contemporary Music Festival in Tokyo in 1969. After completing *Ranjo* for organ in 1977, Fukushima ceased composing. In August 2007, a special concert titled "The Flute World of Kazuo Fukushima" showcased his major flute compositions at the Tokyo Flute Convention, highlighting his enduring impact on the world of music.⁵⁰⁹

9.1.2 Compositional Style and Influences

Fukushima's music resonates deeply with various facets of traditional Japanese culture. His compositions reflect a distinct fascination with elements such as *Noh* theater, Zen Buddhism, and the contemplation of nature. These influences manifest not only in the thematic content of his works but also in their formal structures, musical gestures, and performance techniques. These themes are interconnected—nature holds a central place in Zen Buddhism, and the profound influence of Zen on the evolution of *Noh* theater is unmistakable. Fukushima's exploration of these connections extends even to his engagement with Western music, underscoring the richness of his artistic dialogue with diverse cultural traditions. He reflects:

To me, the Western music is artificial, and against nature. Those works are great, but different from what I feel the way that music should be. I want to pursue a way that can infuse nature and music together, but not separate the music from the nature. The

⁵⁰⁸ Lee, *Kazuo Fukushima's Solo Flute*, 16.

⁵⁰⁹ Lee, *Kazuo Fukushima's Solo Flute*, 16.

realm of sound should be felt with the whole body, not merely the ear. To give more specific examples, the sound of the temple bell or the sound of wind is closer to my ideal music. The music in *Noh*-theater is also more close to the nature that I feel.⁵¹⁰

Many titles of his works incorporate Buddhist or Sanskrit terminology, reflecting his profound engagement with Buddhism during this phase, such as *Ekagra* and the *Kadha* trilogy. Beyond mere titles, his compositions bear evident traces of Zen Buddhist influence, particularly notable in his utilization of silence and space.

Silence and space, integral elements in Zen arts such as painting and calligraphy, find resonance in Fukushima's music. The concept of *ma* conveyed through silence, assumes paramount importance. In Fukushima's compositions, rests are often accentuated with a fermata, creating what he terms "perceptual silence." Fukushima elaborates on this concept:

Ma [is] a contrasting proposition distinct from rhythm (in the continuous time)... This *ma* should not rely on the physical, biological or corporeal sense of time; it should be captured on the absolute, intuitive sense of time.⁵¹¹

Death is also a common theme in Fukushima's music. The war had a huge impact on him:

Too many people around me died. Life and death are actually two sides of the same coin, but [to those of us who experienced the war] death is more powerful.⁵¹²

Several of his works show direct associations with the theme of death in their titles, exemplified by pieces like *Requiem* (1956), *Kadha Hihaku* (1958, "A Poem of the Flying

⁵¹⁰ Lee, *Kazuo Fukushima's Solo Flute*, 21.

⁵¹¹ Lindsay Hansen, "A Brief Introduction to Fukushima," 25.

⁵¹² Lee, *Kazuo Fukushima's Solo Flute*, 5.

Spirit"), *Chu-u* (1959, "The Journey of the Dead People"), and *Mei* (1962, meaning "dark"), and *Tsukishiro* (1965, "The Spirit of the Moon").

Fukushima suggests that all his works preceding *A Ring of the Wind* (1968) reflect his wartime experiences, evoking a dark and somber ambiance. These compositions frequently delve into themes of death, darkness, and the supernatural. However, starting from *Shun-san* (1969), Fukushima observes a shift towards more luminous and dynamic musical compositions. He acknowledges a thematic evolution post-*Shun-san*, with a focus on subjects such as flowers, water, and birds. Furthermore, the pieces created between 1956 and 1962 employ the Western twelve-tone technique, while those predating 1969 carry the imprint of his wartime encounters.⁵¹³ The majority of Fukushima's works during this period adhered to twelve-tone principles, following the dodecaphonic procedure established by Schoenberg and his successors. However, *Mei*, the piece I will be analyzing in the next section, is not considered a standard twelve-tone work.⁵¹⁴ *Mei* draws inspiration from Zen Buddhism, reflecting on Fukushima's connection to spiritual themes and philosophical ideals. The influence of Zen Buddhism is unmistakable in the meditative and introspective qualities of the piece, which are enhanced by intentional silences that invite contemplation and a sense of tranquility. The following section also discusses how the death of a close mentor inspired him to compose this piece in the style of *Noh* drama.

9.2 Mei (1962)

Fukushima's *Mei* stands as a continuum of the Jikken Kobo legacy. *Mei*, composed for the modern Western flute, echoes unmistakable traits of classical Japanese musical heritage. In

⁵¹³ Lee, *Kazuo Fukushima's Solo Flute*, 17.

⁵¹⁴ Lee, *Kazuo Fukushima's Solo Flute*, 69.

1962, Fukushima composed *Mei*, which was later published in 1966 by Edizioni Suvini Zerboni. *Mei* is the second movement within Fukushima's *Hi-kyo* for flute, piano, percussion, and strings. *Mei*, dedicated to Wolfgang Steinecke in honor of flutist Severino Gazzelloni, the dedication reads, "*Mei*, which I dedicate to the spirit of Wolfgang Steinecke, thanks to the flute of Severino Gazzelloni." Gazzelloni (1919-1992), an Italian flutist renowned for his expertise in both Baroque and experimental flute music, was admired for his impeccable phrasing and remarkable articulation. According to two music theorists, *Mei* embodies an "ideogram representing the obscure and intangible," evoking echoes of Debussy's *Syrinx* and Varèse's *Density 21.5*.⁵¹⁵ They note that, akin to these compositions, the central thematic statement in *Mei* revolves around a chromatic trichord, a subject they have thoroughly scrutinized.⁵¹⁶

Fukushima's initial encounter with Gazzelloni occurred in April 1961 during Gazzelloni's tour in Japan with performers from Darmstadt. Impressed by Fukushima's compositions, Gazzelloni became a strong supporter, advocating for his music across Europe. Following their meeting, Fukushima was invited by musicologist Wolfgang Steinecke to deliver a lecture in Darmstadt, titled "*Noh* Drama and Japanese Music" at his summer school for contemporary classical music, which attracted avant-garde composers like Olivier Messiaen, Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez, John Cage, and Karlheinz Stockhausen.⁵¹⁷ This lecture highlighted Fukushima's interest in traditional Japanese music, a passion that led to his appointment at Ueno Gakuen College Tokyo in 1964.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁵ Lefkowitz and Taavola, "Segmentation in Music," 196.

⁵¹⁶ Lindsay Hansen, "A Brief Introduction to Fukushima through Three Solo Flute Works," *National Association of College Wind and Percussion Instructors* 64, no. 2 (2017): 23–27, <https://scholarworks.calstate.edu/downloads/c247f0692>.

⁵¹⁷ Mihoko Watanabe, "The Essence of *Mei*," *The Flutist Quarterly*, Spring 2008, 18, [https://gpfs.org/resources/Documents/Portland%20Piper%20Website%20Docs/MeiSpring2008NFAArticle%20\(003\).pdf](https://gpfs.org/resources/Documents/Portland%20Piper%20Website%20Docs/MeiSpring2008NFAArticle%20(003).pdf).

⁵¹⁸ McGregor, *Instrumental Value*, 31.

Fukushima's profound understanding of Zen principles in Japanese music was evident in his discussions on *Noh*, emphasizing the interconnectedness of music, movement, and consciousness. Steinecke's untimely and tragic death inspired Fukushima to compose *Mei*, a tribute to Steinecke and a seminal work in 20th-century flute repertoire. Gazzelloni premiered *Mei* at the 25th Festival of Contemporary Music in Venice in April 1962, leading to its publication by Suvini Zerboni. The piece was later performed at a memorial concert for Steinecke in Darmstadt, receiving widespread acclaim.⁵¹⁹ Music critic Ysushi Togashi said, "The flute piece *Mei* received the most enthusiastic applause throughout all the concerts of the past nine days," and critic Takeshi Funayama remarked that *Mei* stood as "One of the most beautiful Japanese contemporary music pieces written after the Second World War."⁵²⁰

The inside preface in the score of *Mei* reads, "According to the inscription on the Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, "In Chinese ideology, MEI means obscure, pale, and intangible. This music was composed to comfort the soul of the late Dr. Wolfgang Steinecke of Darmstadt, who died in a tragic accident. According to ancient Japanese folklore, it is believed that the sound of the flute was able to reach the dead."⁵²¹ *Noh* theatre often depicts the spiritual return of individuals in a ghostly form, symbolizing their lingering anguish and unresolved emotions. The intense nature of *noh* drama highlights the turmoil of the departed, unable to find solace in the spiritual realm. Perhaps Fukushima sought to portray the torment and grief that he felt following Steinecke's untimely passing. Through inspiration from *noh* drama and the ethereal tones of the bamboo flute, he created an otherworldly and haunting atmosphere as a reflection of his emotional state.

⁵¹⁹ McGregor, *Instrumental Value*, 32.

⁵²⁰ Lee, *Kazuo Fukushima's Solo Flute*, 64.

⁵²¹ Kazuo Fukushima, *Mei* (Milano: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 1962).

*MEI, che con ideogrammi cinese si
scrive 冥
significa oscuro - pallido - intangibile.
Questa musica è stata composta per
consolare il fu Dottor Wolfgang
Steinecke di Darmstadt che trapassò
in un tragico incidente.
Secondo l'antica credenza giapponese,
si riteneva che il suono del flauto
potesse giungere ai morti.*

Figure 9. Mei, Preface of the score by Kazuo Fukushima.

In Fukushima's program notes, he states:

The sound of the flute can reach both this world and that world, hovering between the two worlds. . . this piece is just like its title, *Mei*: dim, far, and receding, calmly meditating upon the unconsciousness of the Universe.⁵²²

The title, *Mei*, derives from the Chinese character 冥, representing the “dark, dim, and intangible,” evoking traditional Chinese beliefs about death. Fukushima also explores ancient Japanese beliefs regarding the flute's ability to communicate with the deceased, reflecting on its transcendent qualities.⁵²³ Inspired by Japanese *Noh* and Zen Buddhist principles, Fukushima incorporates techniques such as quarter tones, overblowing, and grace notes that mirror the performance style of the *nohkan* flute, while key clicks evoke the percussion instruments of *Noh*. Silence, or *ma*, a hallmark of Zen philosophy, creates profound dramatic tension throughout the piece.⁵²⁴ Throughout the beginning of the piece, the music often unfolds slowly, allowing

⁵²² Lee, *Kazuo Fukushima's Solo Flute*, 64-65.

⁵²³ Watanabe, “Essence of Mei,” 17.

⁵²⁴ McGregor, *Instrumental Value*, 32.

listeners to contemplate each note and gesture deeply. The moments of *ma* create a sense of stillness within the music, allowing listeners to immerse themselves fully in the present moment.

Japanese flutist Mihoko Watanabe, currently serving as Professor of Flute at Ball State University, conducted interviews with Fukushima regarding the inspiration behind *Mei*. In her article published for *The Flutist Quarterly* in 2008, Watanabe noted that Fukushima emphasized that the primary influence on *Mei* stems from Japanese traditional *Noh* theater, rather than the *shakuhachi*.⁵²⁵ Up to the release of the interviews, many players believed that the inspiration behind *Mei* was solely the *shakuhachi*.

Noh, derived from the Japanese term meaning "skill" or "to be able," originated in the 14th century and blended dance, drama, music, and poetry into a singularly aesthetic art form, akin to Western theater. The musical accompaniment in *Noh* theater is provided by an onstage instrumental ensemble known as *hayashi*, comprising four instruments: the *nohkan* (transverse flute), *kotsuzumi* (shoulder drum), *otsuzumi* (side drum), and *taiko* (stick drum).⁵²⁶

In the subsequent section of my analysis, I explore techniques evocative of the *nohkan* flute, alongside those inspired by the aesthetic and playing styles of the *shakuhachi*. Additionally, I underscore some significant differences between these two flutes.

9.2.1 Analysis

Like my *examination* of *Sanjo No. 1* and *Confluence*, this practical analysis loosely follows David S. Lefkowitz and Kristin Taavola's segmentation framework. Given the pronounced emphasis on colors, space, and articulation in *Mei*, I explore the timbre and

⁵²⁵ Watanabe, "Essence of Mei," 4.

⁵²⁶ Watanabe, "Essence of Mei," 4.

articulation domains in depth. As discussed in Chapter 6, silence (*ma*) holds significance in Japanese music, accentuating its structural qualities. Throughout the piece, each instance of *ma* is delineated by the fading of the preceding note and the subsequent entrance of the next event, influencing the timbral aspects of the piece. For the sake of this analysis, I will categorize *ma* within the timbre domain.

Mei follows a straightforward A B A form, characterized by distinct phrases and evident emotional themes. It highlights the significance of the smallest musical elements, emphasizing the profound impact of individual notes and the poetry of silence within the overall structure of a phrase, section, or the entire piece.⁵²⁷ While this analysis serves as a practical approach to performance, rather than a theoretical or harmonic analysis, I will refer to the structure of *Mei* as such: Section A (measures 1-15), Section B (measures 16-51), and Section A' (measures 52-66) for organizational purposes.

⁵²⁷ Jan Vinci, "MEI by Kazuo Fukushima: A Performance Guide," YUMPU, accessed May 20, 2024, 2, <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/23635487/mei-by-kazuo-fukushima-a-performance-guide-by-jan-vinci-over->

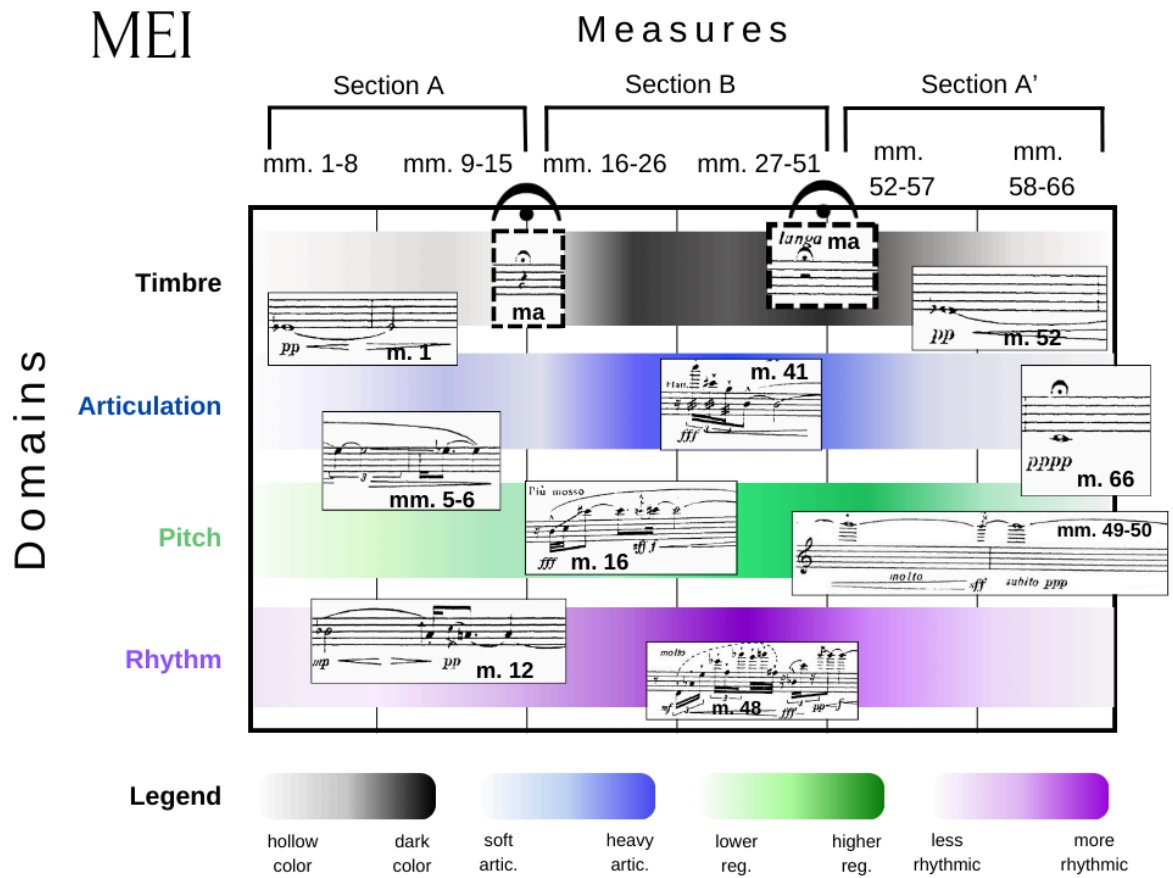


Figure 9-1. Comprehensive map of domains in Mei.

I have created this map (Figure 9-1) to offer a comprehensive overview of *Mei*, mapping out the timbre, articulation, pitch, and rhythm domains across different sections of the piece. The legend at the bottom illustrates how gradient colors represent various qualities within each domain: darker colors indicate darker timbres and heavier articulations, while lighter colors signify the opposite.

Section A (measures 1-15) primarily features a softer, hollow timbre evocative of the *shakuhachi*, represented by light gray shading. The articulation here is gentle, indicated by a

light blue gradient, and the rhythm is subdued with minimal activity. The pitch register remains low, establishing a serene and delicate mood for the composition.

Section B (measures 16-51) transitions to richer, darker timbres (medium to dark gray) and heavier articulations (darker blue). This section is marked by intense rhythmic activity, enriched by multiphonics and extended techniques, reflecting the dramatic elements typical of *Noh* theater. This segment features vibrant rhythmic variations, multiphonics, and extended techniques that heighten the section's dynamic intensity. The deeper purple and green hues signify an energetic rhythmic framework and a higher, denser pitch range.

Section A' (measures 52-66) revisits the lighter timbres and softer articulations of the initial section, with reduced rhythmic complexity and lower pitches, echoing the tranquility of the beginning.

Additionally, I have indicated the moments of *ma* in measures 15 and 51. These pauses serve to create a sense of space and anticipation, enhancing the overall flow and emotional impact of the piece. Measure 15 features a brief pause that transitions into the intense Section B, while measure 51 provides a longer, more serene pause before returning to the gentler Section A'.

In essence, the map highlights the careful orchestration of timbral and articulative elements in *Mei*, demonstrating how Fukushima blended traditional Japanese musical aesthetics with contemporary techniques to create a rich, evocative soundscape. This holistic analysis reveals the interconnectedness between these musical elements, and the subsequent sections delve into a deeper analysis of the timbre and articulation domains.

9.2.1.1 Timbre Domain

Although I previously highlighted the significance of the *nohkan* flute based on recent interviews conducted by Mihoko Watanabe, I hold the personal belief that Sections A and A' also exhibit the influence of the *shakuhachi* flute, in addition to the *nohkan*. This influence is evident in various timbral aspects: the use of the lower register, the presence of extremely soft dynamic markings, and the overall hollow timbre intended by the composer.

It is important to note that in *shakuhachi* playing, greater emphasis is placed on manipulating sounds through bending pitches rather than maintaining stable pitches, as the music is not rooted in a harmonic system. Despite having five holes, additional tones are achievable through techniques like half-holing and pitch bending, often combined with adjustments in embouchure (See Section 3.2 for more *shakuhachi* playing techniques). A *shakuhachi* player showcases skill in pitch and vibrato manipulations, distinguishing it from *Noh* flute playing. In fact, vibrato stands out as the most defining characteristic of *shakuhachi* performance.⁵²⁸

On the other hand, the *nohkan* flute, which is played in free rhythm, traditionally accompanies chanted verses to amplify emotional resonance. While the *nohkan*'s melody does not adhere to specific pitch relationships with the chanting, there exist broad similarities in their melodic contours. Fukushima's attraction to the distinctiveness between *shakuhachi* and *noh* flute performance likely informed his selection of the latter for *Mei*. In *noh* drama, a poetic narrative unfolds through a combination of chant, dance, and instrumental accompaniment, seamlessly blending elements of literature, movement, and music into a unified whole, rendering their individual separation challenging.⁵²⁹

⁵²⁸ Robinson, *Voice, Itinerant, and Air*, 55.

⁵²⁹ Robinson, *Voice, Itinerant, and Air*, 56.

The piece opens with a pianissimo Eb on the flute's low register, as seen below in Figure 9-2. According to Fukushima, this particular note holds utmost significance within the composition. He claims that this note should not be counted but felt and that this note embodies the emotional essence of the entire piece.⁵³⁰ Since tonguing is not employed in traditional *shakuhachi* or *nohkan* playing, this first note should be played without tonguing, but instead with a gentle breath articulation, which can be aided by the lips. "The sound of the breath is considered to be part of the music" and should be embraced as such.⁵³¹ In addition, taking into account the timbre of the modern flute in the lower register and the distinct pianissimo dynamic, this note should be played with a breathy, ethereal, and hollow quality. However, the timbre generated by the *nohkan* flute remains uniform throughout its range—sharp and penetrating in tone. While it is possible to create various timbres on the instrument and incorporate some air sounds, these attributes are not as emphasized in the *nohkan* flute when compared to certain other Japanese flutes, such as the *shakuhachi*. Hence, this reinforces my earlier observation that the soft, subdued dynamics in sections A and A' suggest a resemblance to the sounds of the *shakuhachi* flute.

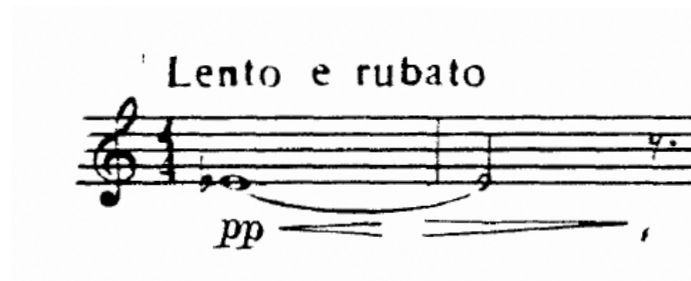


Figure 9-2. *Mei*, Opening note (mm. 1-2).

⁵³⁰ Watanabe, "Essence of Mei."

⁵³¹ McBride, "Japanese Flute Techniques," 5.

While I aim to honor the composer's intention, which drew heavily from the *nohkan* flute, my understanding of *Mei* has been informed by immersing myself in numerous recordings of the piece and acknowledging the inherent characteristics of the different bamboo flutes. This approach provides a nuanced interpretation that acknowledges the diverse range of Japanese bamboo flutes, including the *shakuhachi*, contributing to a more comprehensive interpretation of the piece. In *Mei by Kazuo Fukushima: A Performance Guide* by flutist Jan Vinci, she suggests, “Commence the first note from niente, without tonguing. Ease into a hollow breathy sound and enhance it with vibrato, if the tone warrants. Then subside to niente once again.”⁵³² Again, the airy and hollow quality suggested is characteristic of the *shakuhachi* flute.

In stark contrast, the slender bore (*nodo*) that is inserted into the *nohkan* enables it to generate sharp and penetrating pitches. In *Noh* theater, the *nohkan* emits a piercing high pitch referred to as *hishigi*. Measures 49 to 51 in Figure 9-3 below unmistakably reflect the *hishigi* effect. Likewise, other sustained high notes in the B section evoke the *hishigi* technique.

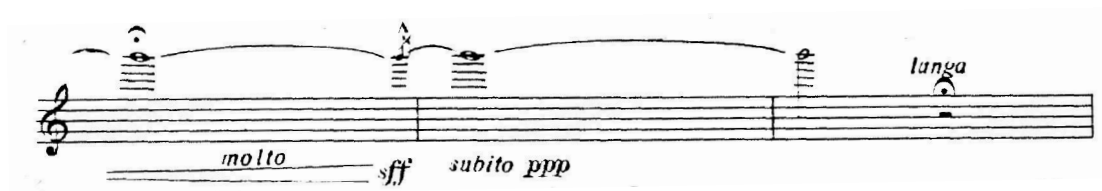


Figure 9-3. *Mei*, *Hishigi* effect (mm. 49-51).

⁵³² Jan Vinci, *Mei by Kazuo Fukushima: A Performance Guide* by Jan Vinci, December 3, 2014, <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/23635487/mei-by-kazuo-fukushima-a-performance-guide-by-jan-vinci-over-, 3>.

Ma

Furthermore, Fukushima incorporated the Japanese aesthetic principle, *ma*, into his composition, where silence holds equal significance to sound. *Ma* is not merely an absence of sound—it echoes the essence of sound itself. (See Section 6.3 for more about *ma*.) This principle is deeply ingrained in various Japanese arts and philosophy, which values the spaces between actions or sounds as much as the actions or sounds themselves. In *shakuhachi* performance, *ma* plays a crucial role in shaping the overall aesthetic and emotional impact of the music.

Between each section of *Mei*, Fukushima incorporates a fermata over the pause. At measure 15, between sections A and B, the fermata overlays a quarter rest, and at measure 51, between sections B and A', the fermata is placed over a half rest. The duration of *ma* may be discerned intuitively by the performer; however, it is worth noting the difference in the intentional length of the rests by the composer.

In measure 15 (Figure 9-4), the fermata over a quarter rest acts as a brief, anticipatory pause that leads into the brisk and intense Section B. This use of *ma* creates a sense of anticipation and tension, preparing the listener for the upcoming shift in tempo and mood. Contrastingly, the fermata placed over a half rest at measure 51 (Figure 9-5) facilitates a transition back to the gentler Section A', offering a moment of calmness. This longer pause allows the audience and the performer to reflect and reset emotionally, capturing the essence of the serene spaces that are valued in Zen philosophy.

The concept of *ma* resonates with the Zen Buddhist appreciation for the beauty and importance of emptiness. Just as in Zen gardens, where empty spaces are integral to the overall aesthetic, in music, these pauses allow the listener to absorb and reflect on the music deeply.

Furthermore, in traditional *honkyoku* music—a form of Japanese *shakuhachi* music that was played by Zen monks as a form of meditation called *suizen* (“blowing Zen”)—the rhythm is liberal, and each phrase lasts a “full breath.”⁵³³ (See Section 3.2 of this dissertation for more about *suizen* and *honkyoku*.) This practice highlights the natural, unforced flow of the breath, encouraging a deep connection with the present moment—a key aspect of Zen meditation.



Figure 9-4. *Mei*, Example of *ma* to create tension (m. 15).



Figure 9-5. *Mei*, Example of *ma* to invite reflection (m. 51).

The connection between the meditative practices of Zen Buddhism and musical expression is further exemplified by the teachings of *shakuhachi* master Barry Nyosui Weiss. Weiss emphasizes the concept of *ichion jōbutsu*, or the potential for enlightenment in a single note:

⁵³³ Vlastislav Matoušek, “The Systemisation of the Musical Language of the Fukezen Shakuhachi Honkyoku,” *Živá Hudba*, 2003, 136, https://ziva-hudba.info/wp-content/uploads/pdf/140403214044_pdf_1.pdf.

The measure of artistry with the *shakuhachi* is *ichion jōbutsu*, the quality of enlightenment in one note. To the *shakuhachi* player, every note and note and every space between the notes has equal importance to each other. There is no sound without silence and silence without sound. Nothing, not a single breath through the flute can go to waste. In the mind of *shakuhachi* master, each moment in this world has its distinct existence and then is gone forever; each sound and silence is an opportunity for enlightenment.⁵³⁴

This philosophical approach to music and life transitions naturally into the discussion of how nature influences Japanese art and music, as explored in Section 6.3 of the dissertation. *Mei* features numerous instances of portamento, pitch bends, and indications of quarter tones. These techniques mimic the natural sounds of the environment, integrating the unpredictability and fluidity of natural soundscapes into the structured environment of musical performance. Fukushima emphasized that a successful performance involves harmonizing with nature rather than fixating on perfect quarter tones, suggesting that unstable pitches—such as quarter tones—are in harmony with nature.

The frequent pitch bends in *Mei* (as seen in Figure 9-6) also mirror the *shakuhachi's* *meri-kari* technique (elaborated on in Section 3.2.4.4 of this dissertation), which entails tilting the head to lower or raise the pitch. On the other hand, due to the inherent nature of unsettled pitches in the design of the *nohkan* flute (see Section 3.3.3), the portamentos capture the sounds of the *nohkan*. On the modern flute, Fukushima's quarter-tone fingerings or subtle rolling movements of the flute in or out accomplish a similar effect.

⁵³⁴ Sakamoto, *Toru Takemitsu*, 32.



Figure 9-6. Mei, Pitch bends and quarter tones (mm. 45-46).

Vibrato

Unlike the *shakuhachi*, vibrato is not a prominent feature on *nohkan* flutes. However, contemporary interpretations and recordings of *Mei* show performers employing vibrato, particularly in sections A and A'. This use of vibrato in modern performances suggests a deliberate blending of techniques to enhance the emotional expressiveness of the music. Unlike in Western flute playing, where vibrato is typically produced by manipulating the airflow, *shakuhachi* players achieve vibrato through subtle head movements, a method that imparts a unique, wavering quality to the tone.

In my approach, I would selectively apply vibrato to enhance specific notes or phrases, especially those that coincide with the emotional high points of the piece. Such a method respects the traditional playing style of the *nohkan* while embracing the expressive potential facilitated by *shakuhachi* techniques. Adopting this strategy not only enhances the emotional depth of the performance but also makes it more engaging and impactful.

For example, in measure 44 (Figure 9-7), performers may incorporate a slow vibrato alongside the quarter-tone markings. This combination not only enhances the expressiveness of the passage but also emulates the type of vibrato typically produced by *shakuhachi* players' head

movements. While the *nohkan* generally emphasizes producing clean, pure tones without the pitch variations characteristic of vibrato, blending these techniques achieves a compelling emotional effect.⁵³⁵ By integrating such methods, performers can deliver a more nuanced and impactful interpretation that bridges different expressive techniques.



Figure 9-7. Mei, Quarter tone markings akin to vibrato (m. 44).

9.2.1.2 Articulation Domain

In this section, I delve into an analysis of the articulation domain within the piece, encompassing elements such as attack types, dynamics, and expressive markings. Additionally, I explore several important extended techniques within this domain.

In Section B, Fukushima effectively instills a sense of drama and energy through the use of random note clusters, multiphonics, and abrupt dynamic contrasts, which mirror the drama and complexity found in *Noh* performances. The frequent pitch bends and slides mimic the sounds of a bamboo flute and add to the eerie atmosphere that is a hallmark of *Noh* theater, where the supernatural frequently intersects with the real world.

Fukushima skillfully integrates modern notations and sporadic interval jumps with traditional *shakuhachi* techniques such as flutter tonguing, illustrating a unique fusion within his

⁵³⁵ John Thomas Seymour, dissertation, *Concerto for Nohkan and Orchestra* (2017), 19, <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/78cab4f0-51c7-4faa-9e9f-74ccfa2d41c8/content>.

compositional style. Notably, in measure 41 (Figure 9-8) of "Mei," the flutter tonguing technique—reminiscent of the *tamane* technique traditionally used in *shakuhachi* performances (and also in modern flute performances)—adds a textured, dynamic quality to the piece. This technique adds a layer of depth and resonance that echoes traditional *shakuhachi* sounds.



Figure 9-8. *Mei*, Flutter tonguing (mm. 41).

In traditional Japanese bamboo flute playing, such as with the *nohkan*, tonguing is generally utilized in a different manner than it is in Western flute techniques. Instead, Japanese flute music relies on breath attacks or finger-tonguing to articulate notes, which preserves the *nohkan*'s percussive quality. In Section B of *Mei*, Fukushima includes numerous instances of *marcato* markings at the beginning of each phrase. These markings indicate the abrupt, sharp attacks characteristic of the *nohkan* flute, emphasizing its distinct, rhythmic articulation. Figure 9-9 below shows the opening measures of section B (mm. 16-17) and the sharp articulations indicated by Fukushima, demonstrating his meticulous attention to blending traditional and contemporary techniques.

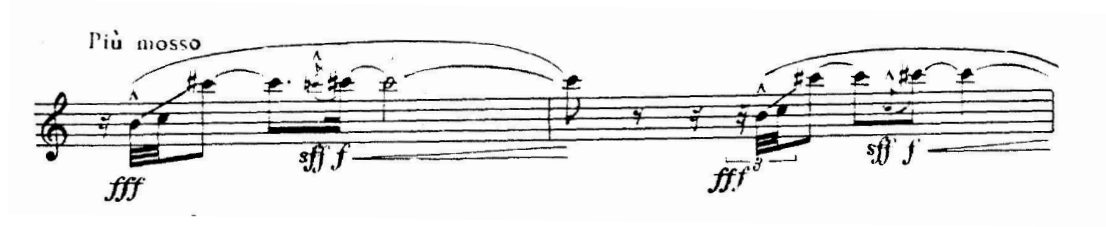


Figure 9-9. *Mei, Opening measures of Section B (mm. 16-17).*

The *nohkan* flute, as described in Section 3.3.3, features an interesting design with a slender bamboo bore inserted between the blowing hole and finger holes. Unlike the Western flute, overblowing the *nohkan* doesn't consistently result in a perfect octave; instead, it produces irregular intervals ranging from a seventh to a ninth. These unique intervals take on a significant role in the B section of the composition, often mirroring the characteristic overblown intervals of the *nohkan* flute. They become integral elements of Fukushima's musical narrative, deliberately woven into the piece to enhance its connection with the aesthetics of *Noh* theater.

For example, in Figure 9-10 below, the intervals between the grace notes span a seventh or a ninth. These higher grace notes are accented and marked with a loud dynamic, which, along with the unique intervals, allows Fukushima to replicate the articulation and tonal quality of the *nohkan* flute.



Figure 9-10. *Mei, Intervallic grace note jumps (m. 38).*

Additionally, Fukushima employs extended techniques to evoke the qualities of *Noh* theater, such as in measure 36 (Figure 9-11), where the performer is directed to use key clicks or slaps. This technique involves striking the keys of the flute forcefully to produce percussive sounds without blowing air, emulating the *tsuzumi* drum of *Noh* theater. This should be performed without any air so that it produces pure percussive sounds. This technique is similar to the finger-tonguing technique used in *shakuhachi* performance, known as *osu* (押す) and *utsu* (打つ), as described in Section 3.2.4.2. This parallel highlights the intricate connections between various traditional Japanese bamboo flute practices, enriching the sonic palette of Fukushima's composition.



Figure 9-11. Mei, Key clicks (m. 36).

9.2.2 Performance Considerations

Before learning this piece, the performers must familiarize themselves with the sounds of the *shakuhachi* and *nohkan* flutes and compare the distinctive differences in timbre and performance styles between the two instruments. While the *shakuhachi* often emphasizes long, sustained tones, renowned for its meditative qualities, the *nohkan* features sharper, more precise rhythms and bright, penetrating tonal qualities. Understanding the differences can help capture

the diverse emotional spectrum that Fukushima may be trying to express: from reflective and solemn in the beginning to more passionate and intense in the middle section.

To gain insight into the distinct characteristics of the style, performers would also benefit from actively listening to and observing *noh* performances. *Noh* theater emerged from the rich traditions of dance and music enacted during sacred ceremonies and festivals. It evolved from the deep-rooted desire within the Japanese spirit for a tangible manifestation of the divine, a “yearning for a concrete epiphany of the Divine: . . . lightning-like incarnation of the gods, god-men, spirits, souls of the dead, souls of animals.”⁵³⁶ From an emotional standpoint, the instances of *ma* throughout *Mei* can be understood as Fukushima's attempt to evoke the spirit of Steinecke. *Noh* theatre often depicts the return of a figure in a spiritual form, evoking intense emotional responses that convey the turmoil of the heart. When performing this piece, musicians should reflect on the emotional resonance of death experienced by Fukushima.

Mihoko Watanabe underscores that grasping the essence of *Mei* requires an understanding of Japanese art principles and *Noh* aesthetics. Fukushima's advice to Watanabe emphasizes the importance of internalizing the music, suggesting that performances should be spontaneous and unique with each rendition, transcending the constraints of bar lines and beat counting.⁵³⁷

Fukushima states, “Once you have internalized the music, please do not think about the bar lines or counting beats, as if you are looking at a diagram . . . The performance should be unique every time, with the performer’s own intensity, because performers and listeners are

⁵³⁶ Mikiko Ishii, “The Noh Theater: Mirror, Mask, and Madness,” *Comparative Drama* 28, no. 1 (1994): 43, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41153680>.

⁵³⁷ Hansen, “Introduction to Fukushima,” 24.

interacting at the moment.... If every performance is the same, the music becomes boring.”⁵³⁸

Moreover, he emphasizes that "The performance [of *Mei*] should be unique every time, with the performer's own intensity, because performers and listeners are interacting at the moment." This underscores the dynamic interplay between performers and the audience during each rendition. The experience of silence should be deeply internalized by the performer, considering factors such as their mood, the sympathetic resonances created between the audience and performer in the moment, the surroundings, and the acoustics of the venue.

9.2.2.1 Errata

Before going onto Section B (measures 16-51), it is necessary to clarify some of Fukushima's notations and pitches. Firstly, all accidentals in the music apply solely to the indicated octave. For instance, in measure 17, the grace note F↑ is C-natural, not C-sharp. Fukushima doesn't precede a change in accidental sign with a natural sign. The grace note in measure 7 is a quarter-sharp higher than F-natural. Similarly, the F↓ in measure 9 is a quarter-flat lower than F-natural. Regarding the A glissando up to A↑ in measure 61, there is a misprint. Fukushima clarified that the figure should be a Bb glissando descending to A↑, consistent with its initial appearance in measure 12.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁸ Watanabe, "Essence of Mei."

⁵³⁹ Lee, *Kazuo Fukushima's Solo Flute*, 68.

SECTION THREE: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In exploring traditional bamboo flute styles and modern flute techniques through the pieces *Sanjo No. 1*, *Confluence*, and *Mei*, I discovered a fascinating blend of cultural heritage and innovative adaptation. Each piece uniquely demonstrates how traditional elements and contemporary techniques can coexist and enhance musical expression.

While there are numerous similarities between traditional flute techniques and modern approaches, there are also distinct differences that highlight the evolution and adaptation of flute playing over time. Traditional techniques often emphasize the cultural and historical contexts of the instrument, focusing on nuances that reflect deep-rooted traditions and emotional expressions tied to a region's musical heritage, as seen in traditional flutes like the *daegeum*, *dizi*, and *shakuhachi*.

In contrast, contemporary flute techniques encompass a wider range of capabilities, thanks to advancements in instrument design and the innovative exploration of boundaries by composers and performers. Modern flutists are trained to produce a wide range of sounds and effects, from classical articulations to extended techniques like multiphonics and singing while playing. These techniques expand the expressive range of the flute beyond traditional boundaries and are often used in contemporary compositions to explore new textures and soundscapes.

For instance, *Sanjo No. 1* is linked to the characteristic sound of the *daegeum*, whose large bamboo structure produces a deep, resonant tone reflective of Korea's rich musical traditions. The piece's emotional intensity is conveyed through the use of *sigimsae*, such as pitch bends and vibrato, a technique fundamental to traditional Korean music. In replicating the

daegeum sounds on the modern flute, Lee incorporates similar pitch bends and more detailed vibrato markings, which can both be easily executed on the modern flute. He also employs Western extended techniques that are not possible on the *daegeum*, such as multiphonics, alternate fingerings, and microtones, to emulate traditional sounds. However, the inherent metallic timbre of the modern flute creates a markedly different acoustic experience. Thus, the primary challenge for contemporary flutists lies in mastering these techniques in a comprehensive manner that truly captures the deep emotional and cultural resonance of the original *daegeum* style.

Confluence exemplifies the fusion of East Asian musical traditions with the technical possibilities of the Western flute. This composition extensively utilizes playing techniques characteristic of the Chinese *dizi*, including grace note ornamentations, double and triple tonguing, and fluttered glissandi, which replicate the *dizi*'s unique timbral nuances. However, Zhou's application of extended techniques on the modern flute adds an additional layer of complexity, integrating more precise rhythms, multiphonic trills, wider intervallic and dynamic ranges, and varied vibrato effects. These enhancements allow for rapid tonal shifts, more accurately allowing contemporary flutists to capture the traditional and improvisational essence. The piece serves as a bridge between the *dizi*'s traditional expressiveness and the modern flute's versatility, challenging the performer to interpret traditional Chinese musical aesthetics through a Western instrument.

Mei draws from the Japanese *shakuhachi* and *nohkan* traditions, both known for their spiritual and meditative qualities. The *shakuhachi*, in particular, is known for its breathy, resonant sounds and delicate pitch inflections that cultivate a peaceful and introspective

atmosphere. In contrast, the *nohkan* is recognized for its more piercing timbres that add vibrancy and intensity to the music. In *Mei*, these traditional elements are reinterpreted through contemporary flute techniques. This blend of traditional and contemporary elements introduces more clearly articulated, tongued passages, adding a new dimension to the typically untongued style of articulation typical of the *shakuhachi* and *nohkan*. He also replicates the *meri-kari* technique using quarter-tone indications and pitch bends, which are more easily achieved on the modern flute through a wider range of fingering adjustments and embouchure changes. These adjustments not only respect the integrity of the original sounds but also integrate them seamlessly with the capabilities of the Western concert flute, offering a contemporary perspective. On the other hand, concepts like *ma*, which are not typically present in Western music, are preserved by Fukushima through the use of fermatas over rests. The contemplative and aesthetic qualities of *ma* are maintained, bridging the gap between Eastern traditions and Western musical syntax.

This blend of traditional and modern techniques enriches the repertoire available to flutists, serving as a dialogue between the past and present. This allows performers to reflect on how traditional sounds can be translated and transformed through modern interpretation. It challenges musicians to not only master the technical aspects of flute playing but also to deeply understand the cultural significance of the music they perform. The fusion of these techniques fosters a dynamic approach to performance, encouraging continuous learning and adaptation in the ever-evolving landscape of global music.

CONCLUSION: CLOSING THOUGHTS

The journey through the interplay of Eastern and Western musical traditions reveals a complex web of interconnected narratives, highlighting both genuine appreciation and instances of cultural appropriation. From the era of Orientalism, where Western composers often exoticized Eastern music without a deep cultural understanding, to today's more nuanced and respectful intercultural exchanges, each generation brings its own perspective to the table. As we progress into the present day, there is a growing recognition of the intricate dynamics involved in cross-cultural musical exchanges. Pioneering composers such as Isang Yun, Chou Wen-Chung, and Toru Takemitsu have paved the way for contemporary composers like Lee, Zhou, and Fukushima, profoundly influencing and inspiring the current generation with their innovative approaches to merging Eastern and Western musical traditions. Their contributions have played a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of cross-cultural musical exploration.

When considering the lasting impacts of colonialism and imperialism, it is essential to approach cultural exchange with humility, empathy, and a commitment to honoring diverse traditions. While music has the power to bridge divides and inspire new genres, it also carries the responsibility to challenge stereotypes, dismantle power structures, and amplify marginalized voices.

At the beginning of my dissertation, I posed several questions for contemplation regarding the nuances of cultural sensitivity in contemporary music. I urged caution against oversimplifying East Asian cultures while advocating for a nuanced fusion of tradition and innovation through an intercultural approach.

This scrutiny of cultural dynamics finds resonance in Edward Said's concept of postcolonialism, which involves critically examining the problematic legacies of colonialism and imperialism in shaping Western perceptions of non-Western cultures. Postcolonialism critique calls for a reassessment of cultural identity and value, challenging the colonial biases embedded in Orientalism in an attempt to deconstruct hierarchical power structures. This paradigm shift aims to transcend divides between the Occident and Orient, Self and Other, and the East and West. Moreover, postcolonial critique prompts the Western world to engage in critical reflection regarding its portrayal of cultural others, encouraging a more balanced exchange between Western and East Asian music. This transition away from Western-centric influences towards the amplification of marginalized cultural voices marks a progressive shift in contemporary composition.

In an effort to contribute to the existing literature and adopt a more nuanced perspective, Part I of my dissertation delved into traditional bamboo flutes, with an exploration of their performance practices, as well as the historical backgrounds of traditional music throughout time in Korea, China, and Japan. I investigated their technical aspects, traditional notation, and contemporary applications, offering a comprehensive overview of these instruments. This knowledge not only enriches appreciation for the instruments but also deepens understanding of the cultural and artistic heritage of East Asian traditional music and instruments.

In Part II, I explored the multifaceted cultural, philosophical, religious, political, and aesthetic influences shaping the music scenes of Korea, China, and Japan, shedding light on their broader impact on contemporary composers from these countries. Understanding these influences is crucial for performers and analysts engaging with works influenced by East Asian

traditions. It provides insight into the historical context, artistic intentions, and cultural significance embedded within the music, fostering a more nuanced interpretation and appreciation of these compositions. Such understanding also serves to dismantle stereotypes and promote cultural diversity within the global music community, ultimately enriching our collective musical experience.

In Part III, I conducted analyses of three East Asian-born composers who adeptly integrated traditional elements into contemporary compositions. Their approach involves not just the modernization of tradition but also the traditionalization of the modern, all while deeply engaging with their cultural heritage. Through meticulous exploration of traditional East Asian elements and the careful blending of intercultural artistic influences within a global context, these composers have paved the way for innovative musical creations. Furthermore, the retention of their own heritage, alongside their utilization of Western musical influences in their compositions, highlights the dynamic interplay between cultural traditions and artistic innovation. These discussions imply that even for Western composers fluent in contemporary musical language, incorporating East Asian traditional music into their compositions demands a nuanced and critical approach.

In the pursuit of authenticity, exploring the rich history, culture, and philosophy of different societies becomes paramount. By understanding the traditions, values, impacts of colonialism, and evolutionary shifts inherent in various cultures, we gain a profound understanding of their artistic expressions. This contextual understanding allows us to grasp the nuanced meanings behind musical compositions and performances. Through this holistic

approach, we can pave the way for a more inclusive cultural landscape, where diverse traditions are celebrated, respected, and preserved for future generations.

When I initially started learning these three pieces, my approach was primarily influenced by my initial personal interpretation. Through my research, I was able to more authentically grasp the essence of the traditions involved. This deeper insight profoundly transformed my performance, allowing it to truly reflect the cultural and emotional depths of the music. I hope that other performers studying these works—or any compositions influenced by East Asian traditions—will similarly benefit from engaging deeply with the historical and cultural contexts of the music. Such an approach can enrich their interpretations, allowing them to connect more profoundly with both the music and their audiences.

Through the comprehensive background information and survey presented in this dissertation, my aim is to equip performers with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the contexts that have influenced these composers and their artistic styles. By integrating the background information with my analysis of pieces by Lee, Zhou, and Fukushima, my aspiration is that performers can engage with these works with renewed insight and admiration.

In considering future directions for research, one avenue involves an analysis of compositions written for the modern flute that incorporate elements of Asian flute music, particularly those composed by non-Asian composers. Such studies would benefit from an intercultural approach, examining how these composers interpret and integrate traditional Asian musical styles into their work. Future researchers might find it interesting to explore whether these composers are genuinely integrating traditional elements into their works or primarily aiming to evoke a specific “mood.” This examination could reveal the depth of cultural

understanding and respect embedded within these compositions and show the nuances between authentic integration and superficial evocation. Such research could explore the authenticity of representation, the subtleties of cultural interpretation, and the musical translation of traditional Asian elements through a Western lens. By analyzing these compositions, scholars can assess the depth of cross-cultural understanding and the complexities involved in the fusion of diverse musical idioms.

Ultimately, the journey towards cultural authenticity and understanding is ongoing, requiring continuous introspection, dialogue, and collaboration. As we navigate the complexities of cultural exchange in the 21st century, let us strive to build bridges of empathy, appreciation, and solidarity, honoring the richness and diversity of human expression through music and beyond.

The late composer George Crumb (1929-2022) eloquently stated, “One very important aspect of our contemporary musical culture—some might say the supremely important aspect—is its extension in the historical and geographical senses to a degree unknown in the past ... An American or European composer, for example, now has access to the music of various Asian, African, and South American cultures. ... Unquestionably our contemporary world of music is far richer, in a sense, than earlier periods, due to the historical and geographical extensions of culture to which I have referred.”⁵⁴⁰ In embracing this expanded cultural landscape, we not only enrich our musical understanding but also ensure that diverse traditions are honored and preserved for future generations.

⁵⁴⁰ George Crumb, “Music: Does It Have a Future?,” *The Kenyon Review* 2, no. 3 (1980): 115–22, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4335131>.

APPENDIX A

Upon completion, I will upload my recordings of *Sanjo No. 1*, *Confluence*, and *Mei* to my YouTube channel and personal website. These recordings will reflect my personal interpretations of the pieces, informed by my research.

YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/jennifermjo>

Website: <https://www.jenniferjoflute.com>

APPENDIX B

Paul Yeon Lee's interview with Jennifer Jo on April 18, 2024 (abridged for inclusion in this dissertation).

Jennifer Jo: Thank you so much for taking the time to speak with me today. I am very interested in your piece, *Sanjo No. 1*, and would love to discuss more about your inspirations behind the work, as well as your compositional style and influences. I came across *Sanjo No. 1* after I came across Dr. Gamin Kang's *piri* performance of *Sanjo No. 2* on Youtube.

Paul Lee: Of course, it's my pleasure. So, you listened to *Sanjo No. 2* first?

Jennifer Jo: Yes, I came across it first, and then *Sanjo No. 1*. I watched all the performances on YouTube. I really loved them and am excited to learn. I've looked through the score and would like to feature it in my recital, if that's okay.

Paul Lee: Yes, of course, that would be my honor. And don't worry about the fee; you're a student. I don't write music to make money.

Jennifer Jo: I really appreciate that.

Paul Lee: I write music to express my feelings. It's not about making money for me. If it were about money, I'd be doing pop music or something. So, you're Korean-American too?

Jennifer Jo: Yes, I was born in Korea and moved to the Bay Area when I was just over a year old.

Paul Lee: Bay Area, where? I moved to the Bay Area from Korea, too.

—

Paul Lee: I used to dislike Korean traditional music.

Jennifer Jo: I see. Growing up in the Bay Area, I was exposed to lots of Korean culture. Did you have similar experiences?

Paul Lee: Yes, but honestly, I despised it.

Jennifer Jo: But...

Paul Lee: I'll be honest with you. I disliked Korean traditional music at first. It was so boring, and I was a rebel. I was exposed to Western music more at the time. A lot of people have told me, Paul, you should write fusion music with Korean instruments. But I didn't want to do that just to please others. I refuse to conform to the stereotype that just because I am Korean, I should write Korean music. Even my undergrad professor suggested I incorporate Korean elements into my music, which I found offensive. Why should I just because I'm Korean-American? I've known friends who wrote music to please teachers and win competitions, but I believe that if the work you've written does not resonate with you first, you'll be a very sad person. Your music has to please you first.

—

Jennifer Jo: Can you tell me more about your inspirations?

Paul Lee: Visual art and music are all connected. With some paintings, you'll feel or hear the music Gustav Klimt, a late nineteenth-century visual artist, did things very similar to what Mahler did with music. It's all about colors and beautiful illusions.

Jennifer Jo: I love that analogy.

Paul Lee: Tchaikovsky was contemporary with Klimt, but Tchaikovsky wasn't into colors, he was more into expressing deep feelings and intricate orchestration. So don't look at just the well-known ones like Michelangelo or Picasso but explore others too.

Jennifer Jo: Definitely.

Paul Lee: I respect all the great composers. They wrote music for themselves. I have great respect for Haydn, but he wrote music with a different philosophy. Beethoven, Chopin—all these composers were poor. They didn't write music to please others. And Mahler, Gustav Mahler, too. And Brahms—I have tremendous respect for Brahms too. I love Brahms' *Violin Concerto*. It's my favorite.

Jennifer Jo: Right. I love playing Brahms and Tchaikovsky's symphonies because they are so expressive and it makes me emotional listening to them.

Paul Lee: Chopin's music has the power to move people deeply, to tears. I love Mozart, Beethoven, and Chopin; they're great influences. It's not just about the notes; it's about the emotion and the story behind the music. Music's power lies in its ability to evoke deep emotions, to make us reflect and feel profoundly without the need for words. The essence of music is to express what words cannot; it should move people, make them feel alive.

Jennifer Jo: That's how I feel about music as well. It can convey all our emotions without words.

Paul Lee: Music is more than just playing notes perfectly; it's about expressing feelings. Like Beethoven and Mozart, you need to express your feelings in your performance.

Paul Lee: If I haven't said it all through my music, then I haven't done my job.

—

Paul Lee: Jennifer, do you speak Korean?

Jennifer Jo: Yes, I'm pretty fluent.

Paul Lee: Do you know the meaning of *han*? The Chinese word for it is pronounced the same. Han is beyond sadness. It's a deep, deep pain inside. To understand *han*, you need to know Korean history.

Jennifer Jo: Definitely. Koreans had a long history of suffering.

Paul Lee: *Han*—it's a simple word but has many deep meanings. There's no good English translation because it's beyond pain, beyond sorrow. It's a pain that's really deep inside your heart that you can't find or describe it. Han comes from many years of pain that our Korean ancestors went through.

Paul Lee: I wrote *Sanjo No. 1* during my senior year in undergrad—in one night.

Jennifer Jo: Wow!

Paul Lee: I used to stay up all night to play on a grand piano at school. Janitors would let me stay after hours. They'd let me stay in the big classroom with a 9-foot piano. I stayed up all night to write, I spill blood for my art, it's about the passion for music.

—

Paul Lee: Jennifer, you said you were exposed to Korean traditional music as a kid. Did you like it, or were you forced?

Jennifer Jo: I grew to enjoy it while taking classes in it during my weekend Korean school. I really started enjoying it in middle school—I was taking *taekwondo* classes, *buchaechum*, and *samulnori*. Then, I learned the *daegeum*, which was a couple of years after I started playing the flute in the school band. I loved the resonance and hollow timbre of the *daegeum*.

Paul Lee: Oh, really? I love it too.

Jennifer Jo: Yeah, the sound of it, the color... I kept going to Korean school for a decade and took other forms of traditional art as well.

Paul Lee: Good for you. You're a very good kid.

Jennifer Jo: I guess so.

Paul Lee: I was a rebel. I only did things when I wanted to do them.

Jennifer Jo: As I grew older, I also grew into my heritage, especially as Korean culture became more prominent globally.

Paul Lee: You took the initiative to connect with your roots through music and culture. That's commendable.

Jennifer Jo: It's a journey, really, understanding and accepting one's identity.

Paul Lee: In music and life, being strong-minded and sometimes stubborn can drive one to achieve great things.

—

Paul Lee: I told you that I didn't like Korean traditional music growing up. But one day, I heard *Arirang*, and it made me cry. And then I listened to it a thousand more times. And I said to myself, what is it about this music that makes me cry? Then I started researching. Like with Chopin's work, I always wondered, 'What is this music that is making me emotional? Why was this particular piece written?' So, I read a lot about Chopin and Beethoven to find out why they wrote their music. That was my thing in undergrad—doing a lot of research.

Paul Lee: I promised myself I had to write a piece that fuses with Korean elements. Not because my teacher said so, but because I wanted to explore it myself.

Jennifer Jo: I get that.

—

Paul Lee: When I wrote *Sanjo No. 1* in one night, I felt like I expressed everything I needed to. Over time, I've only tweaked minor details, like articulations or fingerings, but the essence remains. This piece has been performed by many, but not everyone can play it well; it's not as easy as it looks. Even skilled musicians find it challenging. It looks simple, but executing it well is tough. The true challenge lies in its simplicity—making simple music sound profound is where the real skill is.

Paul Lee: When music truly connects, it doesn't need explanation. It's understood deep down. For me, the power of music is in its ability to speak without words, to convey deep feelings and emotions directly.

-

Paul Lee: I'm so sorry I have the high C note in the latter part.

Jennifer Jo: Yeah, I saw that.

Paul Lee: Some flutists argue it's unattainable to play it at pianississimo. That it's a struggle.

Jennifer Jo: Yeah, it's one of the highest notes playable on the flute.

Paul Lee: Well, I like to exaggerate the dynamics. I understand it's nearly impossible, and 99% of players may struggle with it. However, when you encounter exceedingly soft and seamless execution, it reveals the skill of the performer. Kate Bowling did it well.

Jennifer Jo: I'll have to interview her to ask for some tips and advice!

Paul Lee: Yes, I will connect you to her. Also, towards the conclusion, I introduced a multiphonic of a minor third. This minor third holds a special meaning for me—it symbolizes love, but not the joyful aspect of love, as relationships are not always pleasant.

-

Paul Lee: *Sanjo* is my child, a short piece, very intimate.

Jennifer Jo: Isn't *sanjo* an instrumental solo with *janggu* accompaniment?

Paul Lee: Yes, but literally, it means scattered melody. It traditionally accompanies with the *janggu*, but sometimes soloists play alone.

Jennifer Jo: Got it.

Paul Lee: Because *Sanjo* literally means scattered melody, I wanted to start with a scattered sound that forms into a melody in my piece.

-

Jennifer Jo: In Korean *pansori*, vibrato shows a lot of feelings and emotions.

Paul Lee: Yes, vibrato is very expressive in Korean music, unlike Chinese or Japanese music which uses less. To understand *Sanjo No. 1*, you have to understand *pansori*.

Paul Lee: In order to understand jazz music, you have to understand blues, which comes from sorrow and pain. Very similar to Korean history. They all suffered. It's in my blood, too. I feel some of the pain and misery, maybe not as much as they did, but I feel it.

Paul Lee: I mentioned I cried listening to *Arirang*. I thought, 'Why is it all sad? Why is it so slow?' In order to understand this, you have to understand Korean history. Koreans have suffered a lot. I cannot claim I know how my ancestors felt, but I felt a sorrowful pain that you cannot

describe with words. It was then that I realized a sense of obligation and duty to create music that merges Korean and Western influences. And at that point, nobody had forced or pressured me.

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Jennifer Jo: Thank you so much for your time today.

APPENDIX C

Zhou Long's interview with Jennifer Jo on April 24, 2024 (abridged for inclusion in this dissertation).

Jennifer Jo: Thank you so much for meeting with me today. I first came across *Confluence* in 2021 and had the opportunity to perform it again this year. I just wanted to start off by asking you what was your inspiration behind writing *Confluence*. I listened to your interview for the Flute New Music Consortium and understand that you wanted to emulate some of the sounds of the bamboo flute, but I just wanted to know your insight, and what went behind that piece.

Zhou Long: Yes, it's my pleasure. I saw your Youtube video of *Confluence* and watched the stream of your performance at the UCLA masterclass.

Zhou Long: *Confluence* was inspired by my other piece, *Su*. *Su* was composed during my college years. That's more than 40 years ago. During my college years in the early 1980s, around '83 or '84, China was just opening up. We were among the first classes at the Central Conservatory in Beijing. Back then, the library was still not fully stocked; many scores and books weren't readily available on the shelves. However, we had some visiting scholars and composers from America, like Chou Wen-Chung who was my mentor at Columbia University. At the same time, a traditional Japanese ensemble visited, which was quite enlightening. They provided a contrast to the folk styles typically played on traditional instruments, influencing my thoughts on integrating contemporary elements into traditional music. This experience was pivotal, as I was contemplating using Western instruments alongside traditional ones.

Jennifer Jo: Wow! Thank you for the insight.

Zhou Long: I really wanted to explore the possibility on the Western flute. Rather than you know, the bamboo flute, because they naturally have limitations.

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Zhou Long: Your masterclass teacher [He Bin] during the [UCLA Global Resonance masterclass on March 3, 2024] smartly coached you with the extended techniques and to make the sounds more prominent. However, in the 1980s, I struggled to figure out how to notate these ideas. I even searched for specific fingerings that would allow performers to follow, but they often couldn't achieve the desired sound.

Jennifer Jo: I see.

Zhou Long: Perhaps some players could learn it and achieve the overtones I intended. I also frequently use slap tongue techniques, which are common in the bamboo flute. However, I'm not very familiar with Korean traditional flute or music, even though you may have studied it.

Jennifer Jo: Yes, I have!

Zhou Long: And if I'm discussing rhythm, I really love the rhythm of Korean traditional dance; it's very rich. Unfortunately, Han Chinese aren't very good with rhythm, which is why many of us composers had to adapt when we came to the States.

Zhou Long: When they came to the States, they learned some Western techniques from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This included not only written forms like in Indian and Korean traditions but also, I believe, some aspects of Japanese and ancient Chinese music, which are very expansive. For instance, in ancient notation systems, they used characters instead of our more familiar numerical notations.

Jennifer Jo: Right!

Zhou Long: Yes, this character-based notation doesn't include aspects like rhythm or duration, which are vital in Western notation. So, in essence, performers are expected to interpret these elements themselves, creating unique interpretations based on their understanding.

Jennifer Jo: I see. So, this applies to all instruments or just specific ones?

Zhou Long: It applies generally but each traditional system has its nuances. The lack of specified rhythm or meter allows musicians to create their own rhythmic interpretations, leading to a rich diversity in performance styles.

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Jennifer Jo: Regarding the singing while playing, I wasn't really sure what kind of sound you were envisioning.

Zhou Long: I aimed for harmonics and singing to achieve high tones, similar to a delicate *qin* sound. Did you manage to play the harmonics as intended?

Jennifer Jo: Yes, I did play them.

Zhou Long: Good, that sounds about right. Regarding the key clicks, I think maybe adjusting them to include air might be beneficial. It's not very effective in my score, where it just states to do the key clicks. But I believe in your performance, you added air. What you did was really effective.

Jennifer Jo: Oh, thank you! Also, in some places you distinctly mark no vibrato and in other places, you have the shape of the wave. Can you just give me a little bit of insight on that?

Zhou Long: You know in *shakuhachi* playing, they use wide vibrato with head shaking. There's some element of that.

Jennifer Jo: I see. Do you have any other tips for the modern flute player?

Zhou Long: Emphasize the extended techniques more, such as the flutter tonguing. Try to make it more dramatic.

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Jennifer Jo: In your program notes, you mention that the piece starts with water droplets converging around the pitch center E. Does this suggest that the piece is somewhat programmatic, particularly with water imagery? Is there a continuous theme of water throughout the piece? Are there other natural elements or imagery considered in this composition?

Zhou Long: Did I really have this kind of a description? Very good. The note E in measure 5, and also measure 3, is a pivotal key. I used this note to symbolize water converging and to introduce color changes through the piece, like the peaceful surface of the water.

Zhou Long: I attempted to use the flute to represent different colors and the dynamic nature of water. This approach should affect how the harmonics and tone colors shift throughout the piece and give it a more nuanced interpretation.

Jennifer Jo: I see. Can you please tell me more about the title?

Zhou Long: Yes, I think it symbolizes the confluence between the East and the West. And it could be in some way representing the convergence of water.

Zhou Long: Some musicians, even today, avoid new or extended techniques. For example, when I composed my first piece for a Chinese traditional ensemble in the '80s, some teachers discouraged their students from playing it. They believed these new techniques could undermine their traditional skills.

Jennifer Jo: Oh, that's a shame!

Zhou Long: Yes, there's still resistance. Some older pianists or musicians stick strictly to traditional repertoire like Tchaikovsky and resist contemporary works. Their agents or managers might even warn them against playing modern pieces, fearing it could risk their careers.

Jennifer Jo: That's interesting.

Zhou Long: But it's different with younger musicians. At places like Stony Brook, DMA pianists are required to play 20th-century works.

Jennifer Jo: UCLA requires that too for Master's recitals.

Zhou Long: That's excellent. It's important for future generations to be exposed to a mix of musical styles, not just the classics but also contemporary works that might attract new audiences. This approach enriches their musical experience and broadens their professional opportunities.

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Jennifer Jo: Thank you so much for your time today.

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