INNOVATION AND TRADITION IN LISAN WANG’S PIANO SUITE OTHER HILL

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INNOVATION AND TRADITION IN LISAN WANG’S PIANO SUITE

OTHER HILL:
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY ANALYSIS

by

Rongjie Xu

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INNOVATION AND TRADITION IN LISAN WANG’S PIANO SUITE

OTHER HILL:

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University of Nebraska, 2010

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Lisan Wang is one of the most celebrated musical figures in China. His five-movement piano suite Other Hill (1980) is the composer’s response to the “New Wave”, a compositional trend generated in China after the 1977 Cultural Revolution. Gaining fame as a piano composition for showing the application of multiculturalism and syncretism to music, Other Hill is regarded as a prime example of cross-cultural piano composition in China. Wang challenges Chinese traditional piano composition with different artistic media—philosophy, calligraphy, poems, and various folk elements in Other Hill. This document proposes an interdisciplinary study of Lisan Wang’s musical fusion of Chinese and Western traditions in the suite Other Hill and will discuss its contribution to the Chinese piano repertoire and its role in the ongoing evolution of piano music in China.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of Research

At the beginning of the 20th century, the New Cultural Movement\(^1\) introduced western music to Chinese composers. The piano, which was introduced first as an instrument for collaborative use, had been playing an important role in the musical stage of China since the first decade of the 20\(^{th}\) century. Deeply rooted in a cultural heritage that spans five thousand years, Chinese piano composition has undergone several stylistic changes from the beginning of the 20\(^{th}\) century to the present. Chinese composers of piano music initially attempted to adapt compositional techniques of Western European music in a straightforward, simple way. The unique and evident stylistic characteristic of this trend is to harmonize existing original Chinese folk or instrumental tunes with functional harmony according to the rules of the Western European theoretical system.

The composition of Chinese piano music came to a new stage after 1977 due to China's policy of opening up to the outside world\(^2\). Chinese composers had more opportunities to get to know the new developments in Western contemporary music. They were enabled to extend their activities beyond the Chinese border. A new “national style”, so-called New Waves,\(^3\) represented the music of this time period (Li, 2001). Compared to previous piano works,

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\(^1\) A movement founded by scholars Chen Duxiu, Cai Yuanpei, Li Dazhao, Lu Xun, and Hu Shi, in 1912. They called for the creation of a new Chinese culture based on global and western standards, especially democracy and science.

\(^2\) China's international trade policy introduced after Deng Xiaoping.

\(^3\) “New Waves” is “a musical trend which is characterized by an emphasis on ethnic elements and the assimilation of contemporary Western compositional techniques” after the Cultural Revolution in China (Chueng, 1993, p. 201).
compositions of this era reflect the new social and economic movements of the time and express musicians’ new understanding of combining Chinese aesthetic elements with western techniques (Li, 2005). Since then, a group of Chinese composers has earned an international reputation for their successful combination of Chinese aesthetics with the Western avant-garde model (Li, 2003). Their works have been performed world-wide and have attracted the attention of Western audiences and critics. Among the most prominent composers after the Cultural Revolution, Xiaosheng Zhao, Lisan Wang, and Jihao Quan have been widely acknowledged for Chinese piano music composition.

In this interdisciplinary study of Lisan Wang’s suite Other Hill, I will focus on musical analysis and the cultural background of the composer and his work. I will display how it represents the mainstream compositional trend in Chinese piano music after the Cultural Revolution. This trend can be defined as “a deliberate departure from an overt use of Chinese melody and Western diatonic harmony. Their emphasis is on manipulating rhythms, timbres, and textures commonly found in Chinese music” (Lau, 2004, P. 115).

First of all, I will review previous literature on related issues and provide a theoretical framework for my analysis. Then, after analyzing Other Hill, I will summarize and interpret the fundamental features of its compositional style and will provide musical examples to support my ideas. By using an interdisciplinary approach—a combination of analysis from sociological and musicological perspectives, I will propose that the composer’s creativity, innovation, cultural background, and social influences make Wang’s musical style unique. Additionally, I will explain
how Chinese cultural influences including Chinese philosophy, calligraphy, traditional instrumental music and folk music are significant in *Other Hill* by providing a detailed musical analysis.

**B. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework**

To pursue a national style in piano music has always been one of the goals of Chinese composers. Bian (1996) shows the historical development of the exploration of Chinese style in piano music from the last century. Dai (2005) concludes that before the 1970s, the pursuit of nationalism in piano music was superficial in many ways. Starting from the late 1970s, an understanding by Chinese composers of ethnic style became much more mature and diversified.

In defining the new Chinese style of piano music after the Cultural Revolution, Zhao (1991) concludes several important parameters: its decoration, timbre, structure, rhythm, tone, and context of the music. From a more general perspective, Dai (2005) argues that the new Chinese style depends on whether it successfully represents the national culture or not.

Previous literature has mostly explored the social-historical influences on the development of Chinese ethnic style before 1980 (e.g. Cheng, 2003; Guo, 2003). Researchers have also investigated the stylistic characters of Chinese piano music after 1980 (e.g. Chen, 2001; Lian, 1997; Kuang, 2000; Wang, 2000, etc.). They conclude that the most significant characteristics of Chinese music in this time period are the fusion of Chinese aesthetic elements and avant-garde Western models (Dai, 2004; Li, 2003; Lian, 1997; Yang, 2005; Zhang and Xu, 2006).

Since 1990, several doctoral dissertations have explored Lisan Wang’s compositional style
and works. In An Analysis of Selected Piano Works of Wang Li-San, Cheung provides a detailed analysis of Lisan Wang’s piano compositions including Prelude and Fugue in F# Shang Mode: Calligraphy and Qin, The Voice of the Sea, and The Dream of Heaven.

However, the aesthetic value of Lisan Wang’s suite Other Hill has been ignored by Western critics and scholars. There is no doubt that the suite Other Hill for piano represents a new compositional direction in China after the Cultural Revolution in 1977. In his five-movement suite Other Hill, Wang employs Chinese philosophy, aesthetics, and folk elements as his inspirational sources. He combines elements from Western European music with Chinese cultural influences and achieves a new level of personal expression. An in-depth study of Other Hill is absolutely indispensable to achieve a complete understanding of the new fusion of Chinese and Western traditions.

C. Research Methodology and Implication

An interdisciplinary research approach will be applied in the current document. The analysis of the musical works “should rightly entail not only discovering the harmonic melodic, thematic, rhythmic, metric and phrase structure, but also recognizing their historical understanding” (Burkholder, 1993, p. 75). Lisan Wang claims he is influenced by Chinese philosophy and aesthetics. Thus, his engagement with Chinese ancient aesthetics and philosophy should be taken into consideration. As a result, a comprehensive understanding of his music demands an investigation into the connections between the music and Chinese ancient aesthetics and philosophy from the perspective of musical analysis. In addition to musical analysis, I propose to
use sociological approaches to explain how Wang’s new national style in piano music emerged. I argue that to investigate a composers’ music, we should take the musician’s motivation into consideration. In addition to his internal eagerness for inheriting and spreading Chinese music and culture spanning thousands of years, the external influence of the mass music market may also be a factor in the formation of his style.

Based on the discussion above, I will introduce in this document: 1) influences from traditional Chinese aesthetics and philosophy; 2) influences from cultures and musical techniques of both China and the West; and 3) influences from the social environment. In the analytical section, related theory will be introduced with musical examples, such as Chinese traditional music theory, and Bartok’s creative adaptation of folk elements, which profoundly influence Lisan Wang. Philosophical definitions that are related to the composers’ compositional ideas will be illustrated as well. The author hopes that this document, through examining the process of Lisan Wang’s musical fusion of Chinese and Western style in the suite Other Hill, will illustrate how both cultures converge in his music.

D. Biographic Sketch of Lisan Wang (1933)

Lisan Wang was born in 1933, in Wuhan, China, in a family of Chinese scholars with a strong interest in Chinese traditional culture. As a grandson of the magistrate of the late Qing dynasty’s imperial examination and a son of a highly educated economist and philanthropist, Wang was raised in an environment that enabled him to experience Chinese literature and arts, whose influences on Wang are evident. In his works, the timbre of traditional Chinese
instruments as well as the application of calligraphy stand out and constitute an important element in Wang’s creative fusion of both Western and Chinese cultures. In a Western-style missionary high school where Wang was educated, he was influenced by one of his high school teachers and developed his interest in Western classical music and arts. Wang started a systematic and rigorous training in music in 1948 when he entered Sichuan Academy of Arts and soon showed his musical promise.

In 1951, Wang aced both the composition and piano entrance exams at the department of composition in Shanghai Conservatory. Wang studied composition with Tong Shang, Shande Ding, Yushi Yang, and Russian composer F. G. Azarmonov there, where he received systematic training in the Western classical music theory and Chinese traditional music theory. During this time, Wang had opportunities to practice the dominant compositional idea of the time which “used Chinese style melodies and incorporated Western compositional procedures of the eighteenth and nineteenth century (especially in the realm of functional harmony)” (Cheung, 1993, p. 199). *Lan-Hua-Hua* (1953) represents a complete understanding of this compositional idea of the time. It was his first work to expand Wang’s reputation as composer beyond the institutional boundary of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music though he was just a student at that time. Later, Wang’s *Sonatina* won the first prize of composition in the Shanghai Conservatory of Music in 1957. Wang’s music was also well received by the public and he began to be regarded as one of the top composers among the young generation of the time.

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4. The precursor of Sichuan Conservatory of Music.
Wang’s musical career was discontinued because of one of his articles published in the Journal, *People’s Music*, in 1957, in which he talked about some shortcomings of the orchestral writing of Xinghai Xian (1905-1945). As a renowned composer of the time, Xian was regarded as the “people’s musician” by Mao Tse-Tung. Wang’s criticism against Xian was considered an indirect insult to Chairman Mao by some Maoists. In 1959, Wang was sent to the northern frontier of the Heilongjiang Province, as a punishment for his “extremely liberal and heretical behavior”. During the period of his penalty in Heilongjiang, Wang was inspired by the rich folk material and composed *Girls from the Northern Frontier* (1960) for voice and *Deer* (1961) for dance.

In 1963, Wang was given a music theory and composition professorship at Harbin Normal University in which where he worked until the breakout of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Wang’s career as a composer and a scholar was interrupted for a second time. As a result of the new policy during the Cultural Revolution, Wang was sent to a mountain village located in Northern China and worked as a farmer, like many other intellectuals at the time. Although he had no outstanding work for twenty years after his graduation from Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Wang had the chance to work with peasants and hear their songs. It helped him to “gain firsthand knowledge of the raw folk elements in the music of his motherland and ‘the simplicity’, the accent, the honesty, and the style of folk culture” (Du, 1999, P. 27). He returned to Harbin Normal University in 1972 to resume his teaching duties. He finally retired as the head of the department several years later.
After the Cultural Revolution in 1977, China ushered in a new period of prosperity. Wang came back to the School of Arts at Harbin University in 1978. Under the new Open Policy in China since 1978, China resumed communication with the outside world after having been secluded for an entire decade. Musical visitors to China included Toru Takemitsu, Isang Yun, George Crumb, Alexander Goehr, and WenChung Chou. Chinese composers suddenly confronted decades of Western musical innovation, and they eagerly absorbed musical concepts and ideas from Bartók, Schoenberg, Boulez, Stravinsky, John Cage, and others. New compositional trends from Western music were introduced into China, including neoclassicism, serialism, aleatoric, graphic music, minimalism and postmodern music. Wang eagerly assimilated these new techniques to his music. After absorbing and digesting so much, Wang achieved the final impulse to throw off past influences and began writing in his own style. Most of his important works came out of this period: *Brother and Sister open up Wasteland* for piano (兄妹开荒, 1977), *Ballade Song for the Guerrillas* (游击队歌, 1977), *Impressions of Painting by Higashiyama Kaiii* (东山魁夷画意, 1979), *Impression of Two Poems by Li Heshi* (1980): “Dream about Heaven” (梦天) and “Intoxicated King Qin” (秦王饮酒), the suite *Other Hill* (他山集, 1980), *Memories of the Song-and-Dance Duet* (二人转的回忆, 1981), etc.

Because of the hardship earlier in his life, Wang has not been a prolific composer. However, the artistic value of his music is beyond question. His music composed after the Cultural Revolution is considered to be pioneering, heralding the upcoming of the “New Wave” movement. These include his piano suite *Impressions on Higashiyama’s Painting* (1979), which
consists of four movements that represent the composer’s response to the paintings of the twentieth century Japanese landscape artist; *Other Hill* (1980), which is a five-movement suite that combines Chinese aesthetic concepts and tonal system in five preludes and fugues; and *The Dream of Heaven* (1982), which is the first published twelve-tone music in China. In conclusion, Wang offers a fascinating example of complexity in drawing upon contemporary music culture and cultural identity in his music.

E. **Background of the Suite Other Hill**

The title of suite *Other Hill* comes from an ancient poem by Yong Zhao (邵雍), 他山之石, 可以攻玉 (The stones from other hills could be used as a grinding stone to burnish a jade). Yong Zhao implies that someone should always seek advice and counsel by others in order to achieve progress. Wang is inspired by the underlying meaning of this poem and he composed a suite and named the work *Other Hill* to imply that Western musical tradition (stones from other hills) could be used to enrich a Chinese-style piano composition (the jade). Wang associates the jade with Chinese style music composition because throughout the history of the art of the Chinese empire, jade has had a special significance, comparable with that of gold and diamonds in the West. In many cases, jade is believed by the Chinese to represent the Chinese culture and arts. This is why Wang perceives jade to be representative of Chinese culture and, by extension, of musical composition.

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⑤ Yong Zhao (邵雍), (1011-1077), was a Song Dynasty Chinese philosopher, cosmologist, poet and historian.
⑥ Selected from 《诗经·小雅·鹤鸣》(*The Book of Odes*).
⑦ Translated by the author.
The best interpretation of Wang’s compositional idea about this suite was explained by the composer himself in a lecture about his music in the 1980s:

“I personally believe in Copinism (拿来主义) and cannot agree with Mr. Xun Lu\(^\circ\) any more with his remarks about ‘being the first person to eat the crab’\(^\circ\). To me, avant-garde musical techniques including the twelve-tone music system is just like those ‘crabs’ that I would like to try as the first person among others who have not tried them yet with braveness. There is no perfect musical technique in the world, and there is no technique that is absolutely wrong. It all depends on how we can utilize or embed those techniques appropriately in our own work. I deeply feel that, as a native Chinese composer, learning those Western musical techniques or languages should not be limited to copying or imitating their compositional procedures, but to learn more skills from the West and finally achieve a better position for our own Chinese-style writing.”\(^\circ\) (Zhou, 1986)

Wang clearly intend to make a fusion of Chinese cultural with Western compositional technique in a way that highly concentrates on his own cultural identity and national interests.

Although the complete cycle of Other Hill was published in 1980, the idea of writing folk-style prelude and fugue stems from the time when Wang was studying at the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. One of Wang’s assigned polyphonic music writing projects in school was a fugue based on a folk tune, Hua Gu Tone from the Hunan Province. He gave up this subject for unknown reasons and later resumed the work and finished a prelude and fugue several years later when he was working in the North Frontier of China. The movement is titled “Geometrical Pattern” and became the second movement of Other Hill. After finishing the “Geometrical Pattern”, Wang came up with the idea of composing a set of five preludes and fugues based on all five pentatonic scales. “My original plan was just to resume and finish one of

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\(^\circ\) Xun Lu (鲁迅): (1881 – 1936) is one of the major Chinese writers of the 20th century. Considered by many to be the founder of modern Chinese literature.

\(^\circ\) Xun Lu in 1925 opined, “The first person who ate the crab is a man of dauntless courage.” Retrieved from [http://zhidao.baidu.com/question/13240416.html](http://zhidao.baidu.com/question/13240416.html), September 1, 2010. Translated by the author.

\(^\circ\) Translate by the author.
my compositional projects from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. However, later I expanded the compositional idea and believed that making a five prelude and fugue cycle in all pentatonic modes would be interesting.” As Wang states, “I have seen several amazing preludes and fugues before but not too many suites that contain only preludes and fugues, not to mention those which do not bear descriptive titles.”¹¹(Su, 1998) The nationalistic and boldly original style in the suite Other Hill makes the movement one of the most important pieces in the repertoire of Chinese composition. It was well received by the public as well as the critics. He won the first prize in a composition competition in the Heilongjiang province in 1985.

The suite Other Hill contains five preludes and fugues. Each prelude and fugue has a title. Every prelude is followed by a fugue without a traditional break.

Figure 1.1. Five Preludes and Fugues in Other Hill.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Title of Each Movement</th>
<th>Pentatonic Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Prelude and Fugue in F-sharp Shang (商) Mode: Calligraphy and Qin</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Prelude and Fugue in A Yu (羽) Mode: Geometrical Pattern</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Prelude and Fugue in A-flat Zhi (徵) Mode: The Song of the Earth</td>
<td>D♭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Prelude and Fugue in G Jiao (角) Mode: Folk Toys</td>
<td>E♭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Prelude and Fugue in F Gong (宮) Mode: Mountain Village</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹¹ Translated by the author.
All five movements in *Other Hill* are rooted in Chinese culture and draw on the Chinese traditional pentatonic tonal system and folk elements. Inspired by Chinese painting, Wang wrote a poem for each movement of the suite to parallel the traditional practice of giving descriptive or programmatic verses for a painting or calligraphy.

Wang expresses his strong interest in Chinese traditional culture and music and has enthusiastically transformed those Chinese national elements, such as calligraphy, into a language that could be expressed on the piano. *Other Hill*, as Wang claimed, has been “infused with the essence of Chinese music and culture”, and is a work “that could not be possibly composed by any foreign composer.”

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12 Translated by the composer.
CHAPTER II

INFLUENCES FROM THE WESTERN MUSICAL TRADITION IN OTHER HILL

Lisan Wang’s early musical training was rooted in Western classical music. He studied piano when he was a teenager and showed musical promise quickly after his first piano lesson. Later, Wang had the opportunity to obtain systematic Western European musical training after he entered Shanghai Conservatory in 1951. He intensively studied the music composed from the Baroque period to the late Romantic period. Given the political situation in China at that time, China was in a rather solid relationship with the Soviet Union. All curriculum of musical educational system in Chinese conservatories was designed according to the Russian academy of music. Works from composers such as Glinka, Rachmaninoff, Mussorgsky, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, etc, were widely introduced at the Shanghai Conservatory. As a result, the influences of nationalism, Romanticism and neo-classicism on Lisan Wang are evident in all his music including his later suite Other Hill.

In 1977, a Chinese-American composer Wenchung Chou visited Beijing Central Conservatory and set Chinese composers on fire, figuratively, by openly challenging the stereotypical Chinese-melody-plus western-nineteenth-century-harmony approach for the first time. Chou introduced works from contemporary composers such as Bartok, Bloch, Hindemith, Ravel, Debussy, and Stravinsky. He provoked new thought about the new nationalism and the new synthesis of Western and Chinese music in a generation of young Chinese composers.

13 Wenchong Chou is a Chinese-American composer of contemporary classical music. He was a faculty in composition at Columbia University when he visited China in 1977.
including Lisan Wang. Since then, the utilization of the folk elements has not been confined to simply making arrangements of folk music, but has led to a “musical renaissance”. Additionally, the resources of inspiration were not confined to folk or instrumental music anymore, but have been expanded to the whole of traditional culture including the visual arts, such as painting, calligraphy, and even has been connected to certain aspects of philosophy.

A. Nationalism, Neo-classicism, and Romanticism in Other Hill

Nationalism is strongly reflected in Other Hill. Chinese cultural elements have been used throughout the music, including: 1) the utilization of the traditional tonal system: pentatonic scales and color tones varied from various areas in China. 2) The mixture of the visual arts in ancient China, such as calligraphy, in the first movement of the cycle, “Calligraphy and Qin.” Several techniques were devised to imitate the fluidity of the calligraphy, through aspects of dynamics, rhythm, and registers. 3) The folk elements: mainly indicated in the adaptation of folk melodic and rhythmic patterns. Besides, Wang conceived melodies based on the regionally flavored pentatonic scales. 4) The imitation of the timbre and the sonority of traditional instruments: Qin in “Calligraphy and Qin”, and Bawu in “Mountain Village”. 5) The homophonic writing representing the most significant characteristic of Chinese traditional music, where Chinese instruments typically provide accompaniment in parallel fourths and fifths and often double the voice in vocal music.

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14 Chinese folk music is mainly built on the pentatonic scale. However, the different regional color of the music is achieved by the application of different color tones. For example, a seven-tone scale features a raised fourth degree, the seventh degree of the key, and the pentatonic scale constitutes the basic structure of North China folk music.

15 The Chinese traditional cultural influences mentioned above will be discussed in details in the third chapter, Chinese Aesthetic and Ethnic Association in Other Hill.
Other Hill also demonstrates its composer’s strong affinity for neo-Classicism. While the musical style and ideas are Wang’s own, it follows the form of Johann Sebastian Bach's The Well-Tempered Clavier, written some two hundred years earlier and The 24 Preludes and Fugues, Op. 87 by Dmitri Shostakovich in the 1950s. Wang widely employs rules of European polyphonic writing in his preludes and fugues, and shows mastery of imitative and developmental techniques. The preludes that always precede the fugues are built on a single idea, presented in the key as the composer suggested in the title at the onset of each movement and then developed, using modulations to several closely related keys. The polyphonic writing is applied in all five fugues of Other Hill. Attempts to establish motivic connections between the preludes and fugues have been made. For example, the four-note opening motive of prelude in “Calligraphy and Qin” has been also used as the “developmental cell” in the fugue. The motive is repeated with rhythmic augmentation at the end of the fugue and the home key is reestablished (Example 2.1a & 2.1b). Expositions are followed by episodes based on fragments of the subject, countersubject, or other contrapuntal figuration introduced in the exposition. The contrapuntal texture, an updated or expanded tonal harmony, the mocking and harsh melodies in “Folk Toy”, and the loud cluster-like chords all suggest a neo-classical flavor in Other Hill.

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16 A detailed discussion will be provided in the fourth chapter.
Example 2.1a, Lisan Wang, *Other Hill*, prelude of “Calligraphy and Qin”, mm. 1-4.

Example 2.1b, Lisan Wang, *Other Hill*, fugue of “Calligraphy and Qin”, mm. 61-64.

*Other Hill* also has features suggesting a Romantic connection. 1) The combination of non-musical influences indicated in five poems written by the composer and preceding each movement of *Other Hill* serve as the programmatic title and imaginative guide, encouraging an emotional connection of the listener. 2) The folk style melody stemming from different towns in China. 3) The free tempo brought either by the changing of the meters or by the special rhythmic devices. 4) The unresolved harmonic tension and the exploration of the full coverage of registers and dynamics.
B. Varese and Wenchung Chou’s Influences

In “Calligraphy and Qin”, the compositional idea was to utilize the rhythmic and textural designs to present the interactions between movement and energy, and between density and texture in calligraphy. The combination of notes with different values and the frequently changing meters create several small sections that suggest the procedures and the rhythm of creating calligraphy.

Example 2.2. LisanWang, *Other Hill*, “Calligraphy and Qin”, mm. 1-10.

The notion bears a resemblance to Wenchung Chou’s *Cursive* (1963) for Piano and Flute and Varese’s *Density 21.5* for Flute (1936), which both emphasizes the importance of timbre and sonority, and explore the timbre of the instrument through a fluid formal design. Varese believed that acoustical arrangements could be used to establish “zones of intensities,” and “these zones
would be differentiated by various timbres or colors and different levels of loudness, and the role of color would become an agent of delineation, like the different colors on a map separating different areas, and an integral part of form” (Chang, 1995, p. 183). In addition to emphasizing the timbre and sonority, the utilization of the space of sound, by using contrasting registers to create a spatial environment in “Calligraphy and Qin”, shares a stylistic similarity with the other two works.


As Varese’s pupil, Wenchung Chou agrees with Varese’s concept about using timbral variations to delineate acoustic zones as sections in a piece of composition. He further specified the idea into his Cursive by stating that “the cursive concept has influenced the use of specified but indefinite pitches and durations, and the use of regulated but variable tempo and intensity” (Chou, 1978, p. 314).

Despite some stylistic similarities between Wang’s “Calligraphy and Qin” and those from Wenchung Chou and Varese, such as the contrapuntal writing and the emphasis on the timbre and sonority, the differences between them are also visible. Cursive and Density 21.5 are highly chromatic. However, in “Calligraphy and Qin,” dissonances are achieved mainly based on 1) the
utilization of the color tone of the traditional pentatonic scale\textsuperscript{18}. Wang creates some harmonic
tension by employing color tones of the pentatonic scale\textsuperscript{19}. Another favorite tool of Wang is to
make dissonances in \textit{Other Hill} is the use of multi-key juxtaposition, which will be discussed
with a musical example in the later section named “Bartok’s Influences.” Other than the different
ways to make dissonances and arrange the theatrical development, the different harmonic
languages used in the context differentiate Wang from the other two composers. The Chinese
style of harmony that features parallel perfect fifths and eighths helps to create some level of
consonance and keeps the Chinese traditional style, while in \textit{Cursive} and \textit{Density 21.5}, both
composers had a tendency to use chromatic materials originating in the West.

C. Bartok’s Influence

Judging from the context of \textit{Other Hill}, the creative direction, aesthetic taste and musical
style are partially influenced by Bartok. Both composers were not just interested in making
settings for or arrangements of the folksongs they studied. Far more important was the study of
folk music so it could be the starting point for a musical renaissance using raw folk materials.

Wang used tonal elements in pantonal context and bitonal segments, mirroring Bartok’s
techniques of polytonality. The balance between tonal and pantonal components also suggests
Bartok’s aesthetics, which was “a bold linking of innovative techniques of folksong arrangement
and atonal direction” (\textit{The Sackbut}, II/1, 1921, pp. 5-11). Bartok explained that “the opposition
of the two tendencies (bitonality) reveals all the more clearly the individual properties of each,

\textsuperscript{18} Including a raised fourth degree of the key, the lowered third degree of the key, the seventh degree of the key, and the lowered
seventh of the key.
\textsuperscript{19} Bian-Zhi (变徵) is a raised fourth degree of the key. Qing-Jiao (清角) is a lowered third degree of the key.
while the effect of the whole becomes all the more powerful” (Li, 2005, p. 171).

In “Mountain Village” from *Other Hill*, the bitonal treatment used to support the main theme is similar to Bartok’s “The Sounds Clash and Clang” from *Mikrokosmos* for piano, in which Bartok let two hands play a dissonant minor second together while each hand holds a consonant interval.


Influenced by Bartok, Wang discovered the evocative sound and power of embedding a folksong with pantonal or atonal techniques (Example 2.3c) extensively in the suite *Other Hill*. 
In example 2.3c, the higher stratum with the restless sixteen note group stays in F# Yu (羽)\textsuperscript{20} while the low stratum keeps the ostinato in B♭ (羽)\textsuperscript{21}

Example 2.3c. Other Hill, Lisan Wang, “Mountain Village”, mm. 16-18.

In the last four measures of the “Calligraphy and Qin”, the additional use of the Bian-Zhi (变徵) temporarily transfers to the F# Gong (宫) mode in the left-hand stratum, while the F# Shang (商)\textsuperscript{22} mode remains in the right-hand stratum.

Example 2.3d. Lisan Wang, Other Hill, “Calligraphy and Qin”, mm.60-64.

It is hard to make a judgment about whether Wang’s composition of Other Hill was inspired by Bartok’s suite Out of Doors or not, given the situation that Wang never confessed this influence on his writing of Other Hill. However, there are several identical features between these two suites. First of all, both suites contain five movements and each bears a programmatic

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item F# Yu (羽): B pentatonic.
  \item B♭ (羽): E♭ pentatonic.
  \item F# Gong (宫) and F# Shang (商): F# and E pentatonic respectively.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
title. Secondly, both suites apply folk elements and develop further a specific approach to the harmonization of the tune. “Musettes” from *Out of Doors* is based on drone or bagpipe folk music, while “Geographic Pattern” in *Other Hill* is based on a folk tune from the Hunan Province in southern China. Besides, both composers showed an inclination of imitation in the context of the music. “With Drums and Pipes” in *Out of Doors* begins with percussive sounds, major and minor seconds, played low on the instrument in imitation of drums.23 In “Folk Toys” of *Other Hill* Wang uses repeated sixteen notes to imitate the restless revolving scenic lamp and uses the dissonant harmonic intervals of two minor seconds to represent the toy cock by imitating the cock’s crow.


![Example 2.4a. Bartok, Out of Doors, “with Drums and Pipes”, mm. 1-4.](image)


![Example 2.4b. Lisan Wang, Other Hill, “Folk Toys”, mm. 13-18.](image)

Furthermore, both composers show similarity in thematic development. “With Drums and Pipes” of *Out of Doors* begins with low register on the instrument. Little by little, the music

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23 Discussions on Bartok’s *Out of Doors* are based on David Burge’s *Twentieth-Century Piano Music*, p. 73-84.
ascends into the middle range and treble, but it never loses the rhythmic drive of the opening.\textsuperscript{24}

The last movement from *Other Hill*, “Mountain Village”, after a six-measure introduction, begins with the middle range of the keyboard. It keeps the same rhythmic pattern and ascends to the last-octave in the highest register of the instrument.


![Example 2.6](image)

Additionally, both suites contain a movement that replicates the emotional atmosphere of cool darkness and the tinge of anxiety or unease that underlines a past experience. In example 2.7a, Bartok’s “Musiques nocturnes”, *Out of Doors*, the left hand, written on two staves, plays a quiet, broken-cluster ostinato while the right hand skitters about with sudden and unpredictable calls and echoes.\textsuperscript{25} Similarly, in “Song of the Earth”, *Other Hill*, as shown in example 2.7b, the left-hand part is written in a Passacaglia form while the right hand melody represents a typical folk tune with Northern Chinese flavor by utilizing the exclusive combination of major seventh melodic intervals and perfect fourth harmonic intervals.

\textsuperscript{24} Discussions on Bartok’s *Out of Doors* are based on David Burge’s *Twentieth-Century Piano Music*, p. 73-84.

\textsuperscript{25} Discussions on Bartok’s *Out of Doors* are based on David Burge’s *Twentieth-Century Piano Music*, p. 73-84.

Example 2.7b. *Other Hill*, Lisan Wang, “Song of the Earth”, mm. 6-9.

**D. Stravinsky’s Influences**

Stravinsky has been widely recognized as representing some important characteristics of twentieth-century music—particularly “regarding clarity, regular or motoric rhythm, linear texture, percussive sonority, classical forms, modernist dissonance, and nontraditional tonality” (Simms, 1996, p. 237). In the suite *Other Hill*, the influences of Stravinsky are evidently in the fourth movement of the cycle, “Folk Toys”. Stravinsky’s influences on Wang at his “Folk Toys” are displayed in an extensive use of ostinato, inconsonant tone clusters, and percussive use of sonority. For example, both composers made their harmony more expressive through the use of tone clusters that contain back-to-back seconds. In the non-legato context, the dissonant intervals create a “spicy” sound and a modern flavor to the music.
Example 2.8 a. Stravinsky, *Sonata for Piano*, second movement, mm. 1-3.

Example 2.8 b. Lisan Wang, *Other Hill*, “Folk Toys”, mm. 13-25.

E. Conclusion

Twentieth-century Western musical techniques are combined with Chinese cultural heritage in *Other Hill*. The notion of the transformation of calligraphy into musical texture is profoundly influenced by Varese and his pupil, Wenchung Chou for their compositional ideas about how to utilize the fluidity of the rhythmic and textural designs to present the interactions between movements and energy as well as between density and texture in calligraphy. The treatment of folksong and the exploration of new sonorities recall Bartok and Stravinsky’s approaches in harmonizing folksong. Combined with Chinese music and cultural heritage, *Other Hill* has won a place as a perfect model balancing both tradition and innovation.
CHAPTER III

CHINESE AESTHETIC AND ETHNIC ASSOCIATIONS IN OTHER HILL

There is no doubt that Other Hill is strongly influenced by Chinese culture. The entire set is comprised of five different subjects that are related to different aspects of Chinese tradition. The first movement of the cycle, “Calligraphy and Qin” represents the Chinese gentry class since the art of playing Qin\(^\text{26}\), chess, calligraphy, and painting were the four most indispensable art forms of Chinese scholars. For thousands of years, these four arts have been used for the gentry class to build up their reputation, social connections, and also to commune with nature. The second movement, “Geographic Pattern”, is based on a folk tune from southern China. The third movement, “The Song of the Earth”, utilizes the typical Northern Chinese musical language featuring inventive use of intervals of sevenths, perfect fourths, and the “weeping scale”, that has been wildly used in the North-Western China folk song. Wang describes a tragic image of Northern Chinese life in the 1950s in “Song of the Earth” and it is surely a reflection of composer’s earlier life experiences in Northern China. “Folk Toy” presents a picture of Wang’s childhood memory. In this movement, Wang devises several special melodic and rhythmic patterns in order to resemble the shape and the mood of some Chinese traditional toys and crafts with which he played as a child. Depicting the moving from one picture to another resembles that of Musorgsky’s Pictures at an Exposition (1874), in which “all ten short movements musically representing moving from picture to picture and reflecting appropriate changes of

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26 Qin is a seven-string instrument similar to the zither.
mood as the spectator approaches each new art work” (Gordon, 1996, p. 425). In “Mountain Village”, the last movement of the cycle, Wang adapted exclusive Yi style folk tunes and simulates the timbre of Bawu (巴乌)\(^\text{27}\), a traditional wind instrument. It depicts the Torch Festival of the Yi people\(^\text{28}\) and reflects the joyous daily life of the Yi people.

A. **Confucianism and Taoism**

Wang’s compositional concepts are strongly influenced by Confucianism, which articulates the harmonic communication between mankind and the universe or cosmic force. According to Confucianism, there is a natural balance between the universe and mankind. Men should find the balance and adjust their behavior to the universe in order to create a harmonic relationship between them. In the fugue of “Song of the Earth”, a linear melody in D-flat pentatonic which is symbolic of man, and it is accompanied by a muted D-flat pentatonic tone-cluster, which is symbolic of the earth. The pure and consonant beginning of the fugue, especially after a struggling prelude, suggest Chinese’s dedication for achieving the harmonic communication with the earth and the universe.

\(^{27}\) Bawu (巴乌): a traditional musical large plucked and bowed string instruments of Yi people.

\(^{28}\) The Yi people are a modern ethnic group in China. They are the seventh largest of the 55 ethnic minority groups officially recognized by the People's Republic of China. They live primarily in rural areas of Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou, and Guangxi, usually in mountainous regions.
According to Confucianism theory, music has the power to manifest the cosmic order. Pursuing an association between cosmic order and structural organization in music is always a basic concept that is used for the development and refinement of all fine arts in China. The concept was applied to gentry-class art forms including Qin music because “the intention to associate with the beauty of nature is typical of Qin music” (Thrasher, 1980, p.118). In traditional Qin theory, the use of harmonics (whereby a left hand finger lightly touches the string while the right hand plucks) is considered symbolic of heaven. The open-string sound (whereby the left hand is not employed) is symbolic of earth, and the stopped string sound (whereby a left-hand finger presses the string against the soundboard) is symbolic of man (Tong, 1973, Vol. 4)\textsuperscript{29}.

In addition to focusing on nature, the relationship between humanity and the cosmos, Taoists articulate more on personality and proclaim the legitimacy of an individual’s spontaneous nature. People are encouraged to be independent from existent knowledge because the origin will be

\textsuperscript{29} A detailed discussion on Wang’s timbral use of Qin in Other Hill will be provided in the later section of this chapter, “Trimbres and Aesthetics of Chinese Instruments”.
destroyed during the process of gaining knowledge. Intuition and spontaneity are considered essential to the creative process. This idea significantly influences Chinese aesthetic and arts by providing Chinese artists with a free atmosphere to create individuality. In “Qin and Calligraphy” and “Song of the Earth”, a freedom of tempo is achieved by the frequently changed meters and the special rhythmic device (m.5 of “Song of the Earth”). Rhythmic freedom, a basic aspect of most traditional styles, seems to have grown out of artistic principles similar to those of the early landscape painters in their treatment of line.

B. “Xing Xiang Si Wei” (Picturing in the Mind)

Another philosophical item related to creativity is “Xing Xiang Si Wei” (形象思维), a Chinese term that applies to the way of thinking and creating in the psychological realm. It is believed that thinking in images may occur in aesthetic experience in musical compositions. This idea often connects natural objects to meanings, which capture the moment of natural beauty and transform the image of true perception into an artistic creation. (Li, 2005, p. 169) The suite Other Hill could be valued as descriptive compositions within the practice of “Xing Xiang Si Wei” (形象思维). Lisan Wang displayed the relationship between his writing and “Xing Xiang Si Wei” in the poem he wrote for the last movement of the suite, “Mountain Village”, in which he is inspired by the ceremony and festival where Chinese ethnic minority groups celebrate with bonfire, rustic dance, and colorful national costumes and instruments. The Yi’s national dances, especially the pounding of feet and the gestures of the dances are vividly depicted through a serial use of Yi-style melodic setting which intensively uses perfect fifths, minor thirds and
intervallic inversion. (example 3.2) Wang absorbed the spirit of Yi folk music and portrayed a picture of Yi’s rite of welcome. The consistent ostinato with simple rhythms in the left hand and the climbing melody in the right hand convey sincere and hospitable feelings in a primitive atmosphere.

Example 3.2. Lisan Wang, *Other Hill*, “Mountain Village”, mm. 14-16.

In “Folk Toys”, Wang Lisan imitates the shape or motion of the Chinese traditional toys with musical language. Four motives are displayed in the music. They are the tiger motive represented by a strong and naive statement in even 16ths (mm.1-2), the cock motive with back-to-back tone clusters (mm. 4-5), the revolving scenic lamp motive in restless repeating 16ths (mm. 10-18) and the puppet motive (mm. 19-24).

C. Calligraphy

Giving poetic titles and engraving poetic couplets to a painting or calligraphy is believed to be an ideal act of artistic accomplishment. While viewing a painting, the brush work of the poem’s calligraphy is also appreciated. While reading poems we sense the painting within. In order to follow this common practice of calligraphy in ancient China, Wang wrote a poem for each movement in *Other Hill* corresponding to this ancient practice.

The title of first movement of the cycle, “Calligraphy and Qin”, suggests that the fluidity of
the formal, rhythmic, and textural designs is modeled after one of the Chinese calligraphic styles, Cursive\textsuperscript{30}. Cursive forms of Chinese characters used in calligraphy have been widely recognized as “running script”. The running aspect of cursive has more to do with the formation and connectedness of strokes within an individual character. Freedom represents the most significant characteristic style of the Cursive (Example 3.3). It refers to the type of script in which the joined strokes and rounded angles result in expressive and contrasting curves and loops. The basic idea of “transforming” cursive into a musical language is to present “the interaction between movement and energy; between density and texture.” (Chang, 1996, p. 180) The cursive script represents the ultimate in the art of Chinese calligraphy, as its power of expression depends solely upon the spontaneous manifestation of the power inherent in the controlled flow of ink which, through the brush-strokes, projects not only fluid lines in interaction, but also density, texture and poise.\textsuperscript{31}

\textsuperscript{30} Chinese calligraphy can be divided into five categories: the Seal (篆), the Official (隶), the Regular (楷), the Fluency (行), and the Cursive (草).

\textsuperscript{31} The discussion of “cursive” is based on the Program Note in the score of \textit{Cursive} for flute and piano.
The cursive concept is realized in “Calligraphy and Qin”, the first movement of *Other Hill*, with indefinite pitches, durations, with variable tempo to create a rhythmic intensity similar to calligraphic work. The monophonic texture helps create a melodic fluidity, which is both coincident with the Chinese music tradition and resembles the physical motion of artists. About the traditional practice of cursive style, Emperor Yan Xiao (464-549 A.D.) concluded about thousands years ago, “When it is fast, it is like a frightened snake that lost its way. When it is slow, it is like the lingering of clear water on the water front”. In summary, the free tempo, lively melodic line, and the characteristic rhythms together create natural and free lines and a sense of living force that suggest the flow of energy of calligraphy.
D. Chinese Pentatonic Tonal System

According to ancient Chinese music theory, the five tones of the pentatonic scale are named Gong (宮), Shang (商), Jue (角), Zhi (徵), Yu (羽), which are respectively the first, second, third, fifth, and sixth degree of the key.

Example 3.4a. The Chinese pentatonic scale I.

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33 The following description of Chinese traditional tonal system will be limited to general concepts that directly relate to Other Hill. With the above mentioned limitation, many other important elements of Chinese musical theory will be outside the scope of this document.

34 Chinese traditional pentatonic is based on but not restricted to five tones. In many cases, color tones including Qing Jue (清角) (a lowered third degree of the key), Bian Gong (变宫) (seventh degree of the key), and Bian Zhi (变徵) (a lowered fifth degree of the key) have been added into the pentatonic scale. Color tones are essentially not structural but were considered subordinate to the five principal tones. Qing Jue, Bian Gong, and Bian Zhi can find their corresponds in the Western music letter name of notes: F, B and F#
Each note of the pentatonic scale could be the Gong, the tonic of the new key. Based upon the intervallic relationship between five pentatonic tones, another four pentatonic modes illustrated the follow example were formed.

Example 3.4 b. The Chinese pentatonic scale II.

Based upon the five pentatonic tones, the five pentatonic modes illustrated in the follow example were formed. The first mode is named the Gong mode, the second the Shang mode, the third the Jue mode, the fourth the Zhi mode, the fifth the Yu mode (Li, 2003).

Example 3.4 c. The Chinese pentatonic scale III
Based on Chinese traditional musical theory and practice, music does not have to start or end with the tonic. The recognition of the tune will be based on the tonal basis and its position in the mode. For example, “Calligraphy and Qin” is in the F# Shang (商) mode. Apparently, F# is the tonal basis of the music. Shang (商) is the second tone in the pentatonic scale. F# Shang (商) means the second tone of the pentatonic scale is F#. According to the intervallic relationship of Shang mode, the corresponding pentatonic scale of the F# Shang is E pentatonic.

Example 3.4 d. F# Shang mode.

According to the same theory, the key of the second movement, “Geographic Pattern” in A Yu (羽) is C pentatonic; the key of the third movement, “Song of the Earth” in A♭ Zhi (徵) is in D♭ pentatonic; the key of the forth movement, “Folk Toys” in G Jue (角) is A pentatonic; the key of the fifth movement, “Mountain Village” in F Gong (宮) is F pentatonic.

E. Timbres and Aesthetics of Chinese Instruments

Qin (pronounced: “Chin”) is the modern name for a plucked seven-string Chinese musical instrument of the zither family. It has been played since ancient times, and has traditionally been favored by scholars and literati as an instrument of great subtlety and refinement. The Qin has also been associated with the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius. During the past fifty years, Chinese composers have been showing an enthusiastic passion in transforming the tone color of this Chinese traditional instrument into the piano. “Being primarily monophonic, Qin music
contains melodic lines of carefully worked-out timbres. There are over sixty kinds of vibratos produced by finger techniques. At times, even when the sound of a tone fades from hearing, a player will continue the vibrato motion with his fingertips, using his ‘inner’ hearing and his sense of touch to feel the music.” (Cheung, 1996) The sounds of the Qin are produced by plucking open strings, stopped strings, and harmonics. In many ways, the fugue of “Calligraphy and Qin” reflects the acoustic characters of Qin. Techniques and devices have been used to suggest embellished tones, imitating the timbres of this Chinese instrument. The grace notes that make a third to the main note and those a half step below the main note that are played simultaneously in mm. 34 and mm. 35 are used to simulate the sliding of Qin. As a correspondence with the traditional performance practice for Qin, the minor second grace note should, as the composer suggested in score, “be relieved promptly” to avoid competing with the main note.

Example 3.5, Lisan Wang, Other Hill, “Calligraphy and Qin”, mm. 34-35.

Octaves and interval leaps are used to imitate the sound of San Yin (散音), which is produced by plucking the required string to sound an open note. It is one another coloristic gesture of Qin music.

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35 San Yin (散音): “scattered sounds”.
Example 3.5, Lisan Wang, *Other Hill*, “Calligraphy and Qin” mm. 45-47.

The unison in the context of the “Calligraphy and Qin” creates an effect of monophony, which is a typical idiomatic gesture of Qin music since all Qin music is primarily monophonic. Furthermore, the octaves in the very low register throughout the prelude of “Qin and Calligraphy” help to create a peaceful atmosphere that relates to the aesthetic aspect of playing Qin, to “purify the morality and spirit” (Cheung, 1996, p. 71).

F. Folk Elements

The folk style melodies in *Other Hill* are created by Wang based on his adaptation of different regional tunes from different parts of China. The melody of “Geographic Pattern”, the second movement of the cycle, originated from *Flower-Drum Tune* (花鼓调), a folk tune from the Hunan Province, a part of Southern China. In general, Hunan folk music reflects the majority of characteristics of Southern China folk music, which utilizes comparatively narrow intervals and is often characterized by a restless motion that consists of even sixteenth notes. In addition to the general features, adding a raised fifth degree of the key, known as G# of C major, and a raised second degree (D#) to the pentatonic scale is widely used in Hunan folk song.
Example 3.6a. “Prelude and Fugue in A Yu Mode: Geographic Pattern” mm. 1-4.

Example 3.6b. *Flower-Drum Tune*, Hunan Province.\(^{36}\)

The Northern style folk melody is introduced as the main theme of the third movement of *Other Hill*, “The Song of the Earth.” In general, the folk melodies of the North utilize wide intervals and are often characterized by a minor seventh and perfect fourth, in a manner that is

distinctively different from Western melodies. If the melodies were rewritten to conform to typical Western melodic practice, the unique Chinese flavor would be lost (Cheung 1996). According to Chinese music theory, the minor seventh interval could be thought of as the sum of two perfect fourths.


Besides the Northern Style melody, the “sweeping scale”, a widely used scale in Northern Chinese folk music, is also found in “Song of the Earth”. The “sweeping scale” is a combination of the pentatonic scale with a raised Bian Zhi (变徵)\textsuperscript{37} and a Run (闰)\textsuperscript{38}. This seven-tone scale is particularly widespread in North-Western China and often used in folk music to express sorrow and tragedy. Wang use this scale to express his feeling about “this state of torment and suffering”\textsuperscript{39} and implied the miserable life in the North Frontier of China during the 1950s. It expresses Wang’s impression of the life there during his stay in his early years.

Example 3.8. Lisan Wang, Other Hill, “The Song of the Earth”, mm.6-8.

\textsuperscript{37} Bian Zhi (变徵): a raised fourth degree of the scale.
\textsuperscript{38} Run (闰): A lowered seventh degree of the scale.
\textsuperscript{39} In the poem that Wang wrote to accompany with “Song of the Earth” in Other Hill
Dissonances are a dispensable part of Chinese traditional music, especially in the folk tradition. A frequent use of minor seconds on the basis of the pentatonic scale evokes a rural quality of the music. Commonly known to Chinese musicians, rural music consists of regional music from various ethnical groups. Influenced by their linguistic characteristics, their music either alters or makes additions to pentatonic scales. To achieve these effects, the instrumentalists move freely between pitches, creating many bent pitches or non-pitched tones. “Crude” dissonances, either harmonic or melodic, are commonly used (Li 2005). The most significant case under the influence could be found in “Mountain Village”, a creation inspired by minority folk songs and dances. Minor seconds and other dissonant intervals imitate the rural quality of music of ethnic minorities transcribed for the piano.


![Example 3.9a](image.png)

Example 3.9b. Lisan Wang, *Other Hill*, inversion of minor second (major seventh) in “Mountain Village”, mm. 10-12.

![Example 3.9b](image.png)
G. Conclusion

Deeply rooted in Chinese philosophy, calligraphy, and folk elements, *Other Hill* clearly indicates the composer’s Chinese origin and cultural identity. Those subjects Wang related to his music—such as Qin music, the earth—indicate how Wang understood Confucianism and its doctrine of achieving the balance between human kind and the universe. The spontaneity in Wang’s expression through his creative deploying of Chinese poetic form in the context of the music and Chinese tonal system reflects the idea of Taoism, which encourages people to critique the existing knowledge and to explore new areas. The flexibility in the use of the folksong element creates new sonorities and modernizes this Chinese-style music in terms of Wang’s use of Chinese modes, dissonances, and folksong forms.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE SUITE OTHER HILL

A. Formal Structure

There is a common feature of tempo organization in lengthy Chinese traditional music such as Chinese opera, Shuo-Chang (说唱 talk-and-sing), and instrumental music: several musical sections are organized in the order of slow/moderate, moderate fast, and fast. Usually, an introduction is necessary and metrically free, and there is a finale at the end, which is always the grand conclusion of the movement. As mentioned earlier in previous chapters, Wang seems to have been greatly influenced by the neoclassical trends of the 1920s. Each movement of Other Hill contains a prelude and a fugue. All five preludes and fugues in Other Hill can be seen as one entity that follows this tempo organization, in which there is a sequence of slow and metrically free (“Calligraphy and Qin”) - moderate (“Geographic Pattern”) - slow (“Song of the Earth”) - fast (“Folk Toys”) - fast and grand end (“Mountain Village”).

Preludes

Similar to the Western formal system, each prelude of the cycle is based on a single motivic idea. However, the formal arrangement here in these preludes does not fully conform to the European tradition, but rather reflects the aesthetic principles of Chinese traditional music. Interestingly enough, a connection between the musical form and the subject of each movement is found through a deeper investigation of the suite.

Two types of form have been deployed in the five preludes: 1) the A A’B A form related to
the principle of Chinese poetry and essay in “Calligraphy and Qin”, a subject connected to the ancient Chinese gentry class and scholars and 2) the AA’A”A” form that is closely related to Chinese opera and vocal music. This form is used in the rest of the preludes and fugues in Other Hill including “Geographic Pattern”, “Song of the Earth”, “Folk Toys”, and “Mountain Village”. These four movements are clearly in a folk-like style because of Wang’s adaptation of folk-song elements.

*AA’BA” Form in “Calligraphy and Qin”*

Typically, Chinese instrumental music does not conform to the European model of musical form, including binary, ternary, variations, or rondo, etc. The organization of form in Chinese instrumental music follows the structure of Chinese poetry. A typical Chinese poem is in four lines, each line contains the same number of syllables. The poetic structure for four lines is Qi-Cheng-Zhuan-He (起承转合, starting-undertaking-turning-closing). When this structure is transformed into Western letters, it becomes AA’BA”. The AA’BA” form is used in “Calligraphy and Qin” because it is the only movement that relates to Chinese instrumental music and the gentry class’s art form calligraphy in Other Hill. “Calligraphy and Qin” can be clearly divided into four phrases that in turn are: 1) A (mm. 1-8): the main theme that contains two contrasting motives serving as the developmental “seed” for following phrases. They are symbolized as a1 and a2 (Figure 4.1). The interval of a major second between the tonal basis (F#) and E, and the following minor third between E and C# have been treated as a characteristic element of the movement.

2) A’ (mm. 9-18): an uninterrupted ascending motion. It is tightly connected to the previous opening theme because it is a development of the second half of the main theme. 3) Phrase B (mm. 19-27): the so-called “turning” part. Several features of this phrase suggest a departure from the previous material. First of all, a major pause is found between the last note of m. 18 and the first note of m. 19 where the whole phrase skips to a fourth higher. It is somewhat surprising after a series of smoothly connected phrases in which the last note of a melodic phrase to the first note of the next phrase is either the same pitch or closely located. Secondly, there is a rhythmic difference between this phrase and the previous ones because the rhythmic pattern is changed from sixteenths to eighths and quarter notes. The music here cools down from the previous harshness by such a rhythmic augmentation. However, this phrase still keeps the relationship with previous materials. The unity of the prelude has not been interrupted because the melodic shape of this section resembles that of the main theme despite the rhythmic and melodic differences.
Example 4.2a. Lisan Wang, *Other Hill*, “Calligraphy and Qin”, mm. 6-7.

Example 4.2b. Lisan Wang, *Other Hill*, “Calligraphy and Qin”, mm. 19-21.

4) Phrase A’ (mm. 27-33): only the first half of the main theme comes back. The main theme keeps recurring until the end of the movement.

**Figure 4.1 Formal Structure of Prelude, “Calligraphy and Qin”**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sec.</th>
<th>Pentatonic Key</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Material used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>a1(mm. 1-4) a2(mm. 5-8)</td>
<td>The main theme constituted with two groups of motives, known as a1 and a2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’</td>
<td>A♭ E D♭</td>
<td>10-18</td>
<td>a’1 (mm. 9-11) a’2 (mm. 12-13) a’3 (mm. 13-16) a’4 (mm. 17-18)</td>
<td>A further development of a2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>E D♭</td>
<td>19-27</td>
<td>b1 (mm. 19-21) b2 (mm. 22-24) b3 (mm. 24-27)</td>
<td>Rhythmic augmentation of a2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>27-33</td>
<td></td>
<td>Recapitulation of a1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
\textit{AA’A’’A’’’ Form in Folk-Related movements}

“Geographic Pattern”, “Folk Toys”, and “Mountain Village” are all in AA’A’’A’’’ form, in which a compact and straightforward main theme is presented at the very beginning and used as the melodic skeleton for later variations. With variations, the music gets fuller in texture and gradually leads to a happy and grand end, where the climax of the music occurs. This form is widely applied in Chinese folk dance and vocal music. A significant difference between this form and that of Western variations exists. Unlike the sectional Western variations, the Chinese “variation” does not contain multiple sections. All variations based on the opening theme are developed within one paragraph. Usually, the key signature, the tempo and the meter do not change. In this way, Chinese “variation” shares more characteristics with Western minimalism than those of Western style variations.

Figure 4.2 Formal Structure of Prelude of “Geographic Patterns”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sec.</th>
<th>Pentatonic Key</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Material used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>a1(mm. 1-4) a2(mm. 5-8)</td>
<td>Main theme constituted with two symmetrical four-measure phrase in a sixteen-note context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’</td>
<td>C E♭ A♭</td>
<td>9-16</td>
<td>a’1 (mm. 9-12) a’2 (mm. 13-16)</td>
<td>Development of the main theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’’</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>17-35</td>
<td>a’’1 (mm. 17-24) a’’2 (mm. 25-35)</td>
<td>Further development of the main theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’’’</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>36-54</td>
<td>a’’’1 (mm. 36-42)</td>
<td>Recapitulation and development of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A♭ | a’’ (mm. 43-53) | the main theme

---

**Figure 4.3 Formal Structure of Prelude, “Folk Toys”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sec.</th>
<th>Pentatonic Key</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Material used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>E♭</td>
<td>1-8</td>
<td>a₁(mm. 1-5) a₂(mm. 6-9)</td>
<td>“Tiger motive” featured with a unison of consecutive sixteenths (mm. 1-2); restless “revolving scenic lamp motive” featured with a repeating G in sixteenths (first beat of m. 4); “cock motive” features repeating notes and back-to-back tone cluster (second beat of m. 4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’</td>
<td>E♭</td>
<td>10-19</td>
<td>a’₁(mm. 10-12) a’₂(mm. 13-15) a’₃(mm. 16-19)</td>
<td>Development of “restless revolving scenic lamp motive” and “cock motive”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’’</td>
<td>E♭</td>
<td>19-30</td>
<td>a’”₁(mm. 19-24) a’”₂(mm. 25-30)</td>
<td>“Revolving scenic lamp motive” at the higher stratum while the new theme, known as “puppet motive” joins in at the lower stratum of mm. 19-22. The “puppet motive” has been restated in several keys in the following measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A’’’</td>
<td>E♭</td>
<td>31-36</td>
<td>4+2</td>
<td>A restatement of “cock motive” and the “revolving scenic lamp motive” from m. 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The prelude of “Song of the Earth” is written in the form of a passacaglia. It closely resembles AA’A”A’’’ form discussed above. However, the difference between AA’A”A’’’ form and the form in “Song of the Earth” of this movement is built on the repetition of the main theme. No material other than the main theme has been introduced in this movement (Figure 4.5).

Several restatements of the melody are accompanied by a restless uneven 5+4 passacaglia basso ostinato. Because of the uneven accompaniment pattern, it brings a different harmonic color to each restatement of the melody and helps to erase the sense of monotony created by successive repetition (Example 4.2a and 4.2b circled places).

After a four-measure introduction featuring several melodic and harmonic fourths, the main theme enters in the fifth measure. It consists of a four-measure antecedent and an eight-measure consequent phrase. The consequent phrase is prolonged for four measures by repeating of material from mm. 6-8 an octave lower twice. From mm. 17-40, the main theme is restated through a series of frequent modulations. A partial return (thematically but not tonally) of the
main theme is located in mm. 42. The return of the main theme is not in the home key, but in A徵 (D pentatonic), which is a half step higher than the home key. The home key finally comes back in m. 44 where a strong statement of A♭ is made in both hands.

Figure 4.5 Formal Structure of Prelude, “Song of the Earth”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sec.</th>
<th>Pentatonic Key</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Material used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intro</td>
<td>D♭</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>2.5+1.5</td>
<td>Motive of the main theme featured a serial of melodic and harmonic fourths. Accompanied is a 5+4 uneven structure of Passacaglia basso ostinato.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>D♭</td>
<td>5-12</td>
<td>a1 (mm. 5-8) a2 (mm. 9-12)</td>
<td>The main theme that contains an antecedent and a consequent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A'</td>
<td>D♭</td>
<td>17-39</td>
<td>b1 (mm. 17-20) b2 (mm. 21-25) b3 (mm. 26-31) b4 (mm. 31-39)</td>
<td>Development based on the main theme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-trans</td>
<td>D♭ D♭ E F</td>
<td>40-41</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sixteenth-note triplet at the higher stratum against eighth-note triplet at the lower stratum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A””</td>
<td>D D♭</td>
<td>42-51</td>
<td>2+2+7</td>
<td>Rhythmic augmentation of the main theme in the home key.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Five Fugues in Other Hill

Formally, each fugue in Other Hill can be divided into three sections: Exposition, Development, Recapitulation. The exposition opens the fugue. The subject (S), the answer (AS), and the countersubject (CS), are fully presented in the home key in this section. After a rather short episode, there is the developmental section. The subject reappears there and several imitative techniques are used. The subject may either be inverted (m. 55, “Calligraphy and Qin

---

40 Formal analysis of fugue is based on Ralph Turek’s *Theory for Today’s Musician*, pp. 407-411.
(Example 4.3b); m. 109-114, “Folk Toys”; mm. 56-58, “Mountain Village”), or altered in different ways including 1) rhythmic diminution or augmentation (mm. 48-52, “Calligraphy and Qin” (Example 4.3c)), 2) theatrical or tonal restatement in other keys (mm. 50-54, “Calligraphy and Qin; mm. 84-94, “Geographic Pattern”; mm. 103-108, “Folk Toys”).

Example 4.3a. Lisan Wang, Other Hill, “Calligraphy and Qin”, mm. 32-39.

Example 4.3b. Lisan Wang, Other Hill, “Calligraphy and Qin”, mm. 56-58.

Example 4.3c. Lisan Wang, Other Hill, “Calligraphy and Qin”, mm. 48-50.

A final confirmation of the subject can always be found in the recapitulation, in which the subject will be recalled either thematically (mm. 111-114, “Geographic Pattern”) or modally (m. 61-64, “Calligraphy and Qin” (Example 4.4a and 4.4b)).

Example 4.4b. Lisan Wang, *Other Hill*, fugue of “Calligraphy and Qin”, mm. 60-64.

In “Song of the Earth”, not just the subject but also the fragment of the first Episode are recalled in the Recapitulation; a “new” subject is created and closes the fugue in the home key.

**Figure 4.6 Formal Structures of Fugue, “Calligraphy and Qin”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Exposition</th>
<th>EPSD I</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>EPSD II</th>
<th>Recapitulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mm</td>
<td>34-48</td>
<td>45-48</td>
<td>48-55</td>
<td>53-55</td>
<td>55-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soprano</td>
<td></td>
<td>CS</td>
<td></td>
<td>S’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alto</td>
<td>AS CS</td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S (Inverted)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>S CS CS’</td>
<td>S CS’</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentatonic Key</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.7 Formal Structure of Fugue, “Geographic Pattern”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Exposition</th>
<th>EPSD I</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>EPSD II</th>
<th>Recapitulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mm</td>
<td>56-76</td>
<td>76-82</td>
<td>83-94</td>
<td>94-110</td>
<td>110-135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soprano</td>
<td>S CS CS’</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>CS’ S CS</td>
<td>S CS’</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alto</td>
<td>CS AS CS</td>
<td>CS CS’ S CS</td>
<td>AS CS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>CS CS S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentatonic Key</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentatonic Key</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.8 Formal Structure of Fugue, “Song of the Earth”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Exposition</th>
<th>EPSD I</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>EPSD II</th>
<th>Recapitulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mm</td>
<td>52-72</td>
<td>72-74</td>
<td>76-83</td>
<td>83-100</td>
<td>101-127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soprano</td>
<td>S CS</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>CS CS’ AS</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alto</td>
<td>AS CS CS’</td>
<td>CS’ CS</td>
<td>AS’ S’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenor</td>
<td>S CS CS’ CS’</td>
<td>CS’ CS</td>
<td>AS’ S’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>CS’ CS S</td>
<td>D♭</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentatonic Key</td>
<td>D♭</td>
<td>F#</td>
<td>D♭</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.9 Formal Structure of Fugue, “Folk Toys”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Exposition</th>
<th>EPSD I</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>Recapitulation</th>
<th>Coda</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mm</td>
<td>72-96</td>
<td>96-102</td>
<td>103-131</td>
<td>131-158</td>
<td>159-172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soprano</td>
<td>S AS CS’</td>
<td>CS’ S CS</td>
<td>CS’ S CS</td>
<td>CS’ S CS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alto</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S CS CS</td>
<td>CS CS</td>
<td>CS CS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>CS AS CS</td>
<td>CS CS’ S CS</td>
<td>S CS’ CS’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentatonic Key</td>
<td>E♭</td>
<td>C D♭ A</td>
<td>E♭</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pentatonic Key |
Figure 4.10 Formal Structure of Fugue, “Mountain Village”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>Exposition</th>
<th>EPSD I</th>
<th>Development</th>
<th>EPSD II</th>
<th>Recapitulation Stretto</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mm</td>
<td>33-55</td>
<td>54-55</td>
<td>56-74</td>
<td>71-74</td>
<td>75-106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soprano</td>
<td>S  CS CS’ S  CS’</td>
<td>S  S  AS</td>
<td>AS  S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alto</td>
<td>AS  CS  S CS</td>
<td>AS  S</td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bass</td>
<td>S  CS  AS</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentatonic Key</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>E♭</td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Thematic Relationship in the Preludes and Fugues

The unity of the prelude and the fugue in each movement of Other Hill is achieved both thematically and motivically. In “Calligraphy and Qin” in F Shang (E pentatonic), a combination of melodic intervals of a minor third and a major second is used throughout the movement (Example 4.1). It first appears at the very beginning of the movement and it is followed by two restatements, one a major-second higher and the other one a minor third higher. This motive is used both motivically and thematically in the opening theme of the fugue: 1) the intervallic relation of the opening motive featured with a minor-third and a major second has been borrowed by both soprano and the bass voice. 2) the opening motive of the prelude is restated in the soprano voice of mm. 36 in the opening theme of the fugue (Example 4.5). In the recapitulation of the fugue, the prelude-motive is restated and summarized at all three voices.
Example 4.5. Lisan Wang, Other Hill, “Calligraphy and Qin”, mm.34-37.

Similarly thematic development has also been used in “Geographic Pattern” to achieve unity between the prelude and the fugue. The subject of the fugue is a theme built upon four main notes A, C, G#, and E (Example 4.6a). These four notes also served as the tonal skeleton of the opening theme of the prelude (Example 4.6b). Despite the rhythmic differences between the prelude and the fugue, they are closely related immediately by the tonal similarity. Furthermore, in m. 54, the harmonic interval of an diminished octave between G# and G in the bass voice of the fugue is another recalling of the prelude material in the higher stratum of mm. 3 where the G is raised by a half step and soon canceled in the same measure to create a “spicy” and sharp folk flavor.

Example 4.7b. Lisan Wang, *Other Hill*, “Geographic Pattern”, mm. 54-62.

In “Song of the Earth”, in addition to the thematic and tonal unity of the prelude and the fugue, intervallic relationships are also utilized to connect the prelude with the fugue. The main theme of the prelude starts with a highlighted Northern China folk-style melody featuring intervals of the perfect fourth and minor seventh. The subject of the fugue keeps the Northern flavor by deploying the fourth and the seventh. The regional color of the music has been preserved in the fugue and the unified style in both prelude and fugue help create a unity of both
without thematical similarity.

Example 4.8a. Lisan Wang, *Other Hill*, “Song of the Earth”, mm. 1-8, (prelude).

Example 4.8b. Lisan Wang, *Other Hill*, fugue of “Song of the Earth”, mm. 52-57.
C. Thematic Relationship within Preludes

In addition to the unity between the prelude and the fugue, phrases inside the prelude are also smoothly connected. Take the prelude of “Folk Toys”, the fourth movement of the cycle as an example: the opening theme contains a “tiger motive” featuring consecutive sixteenths in unison in mm. 1-2, the “cock motive” featured with repeating sixteenths in G and back-to-back tone clusters in mm. 4. The following phrase (mm. 9-19) is based on the development of the “cock motive” and the “restless revolving scenic lamp” motive. The consecutive back-to-back tone cluster at the higher stratum are accompanied with repeating G note in sixteenth. The “puppet motive” enters at the beginning of the third section in m. 19, a smooth connection between this phrase and the phrase right before has been achieved by keeping the “revolving scenic lamp” motive at the higher stratum. The “puppet motive” has been kept in the coming fourth phrase and accompanied with the return of the “cock motive” an octave higher. This thematic arrangement helps to build a close relationship between phrases inside the prelude because each phrase contains materials or fragments from the preceding section although new themes have been introduced into each phrase.
D. Tonal and Rhythmic Organization

Tonal Arrangement

*Other Hill* is mainly based on the Chinese pentatonic tonal system. However, several ideas about deploying the pentatonic scale have been explored. Multi-pentatonic-key juxtaposition and the combination of the pentatonic and the major/minor system could be found in the context of *Other Hill*.

A typical pentatonic treatment of the melody is found in mm. 52-57, “Song of the Earth” (example 4.5b). The melody is based on D♭ pentatonic and represents a Northern Chinese tradition by a series of melodic intervals such as intervals of fourth, and seventh. It is accompanied by a tone cluster based on a D♭ pentatonic scale. The pentatonic tone cluster is marked to be played with “silent keys”. When the melody with thin texture at the higher stratum is accompanied by the muted D♭ pentatonic scale as the background, a sense of vastness of the earth has been created. The music now closely corresponds to the title of the movement, “the Song of the Earth”. As it brings about a monophonic, consonant music with a rich pentatonic background, it evidently reflects both the Chinese musical tradition and cultural tradition, which emphasized the coexistence of music, mankind, and nature.

Multi-key juxtaposition of several pentatonic scales could be found in *Other Hill* to create a richer harmonic color. In mm. 56-59 of “Mountain Village”, an inverted Subject enters with the key of E pentatonic, while the other two voices stay in E♭ pentatonic and A♭ pentatonic respectively. The three-key juxtaposition causes a richer texture and greater harmonic intensity
between voices.

Example 4.10. Lisan Wang, *Other Hill*, “Mountain Village”, mm. 52-60.

Ambiguity of the tune will be achieved by shifting modes or tonal basis. In addition to the use of modal modulation, instability is also achieved by shifting between different tonal bases within the same pentatonic collection. For example, “Calligraphy and Qin in F# mode” enters in F# Shang mode, F# as the second note in the pentatonic scale. As a result, the full scale will be F#- G#-B-C#-E, known as the E pentatonic. The tonal basis of F# is the second note of the pentatonic scale. The F# Shang mode (E pentatonic) shifts into F# Yu (A pentatonic) mode in the middle voice of the fugue in mm.48-52. F# still appears as the tonal basis of the music, however, it is becomes the fifth note of the mode. The full pentatonic scale changes into: F#-A-B-C#-E.
Example 4.11. Lisan Wang, *Other Hill*, “Calligraphy and Qin”, mm. 48-51.

![Musical notation](image)

**Rhythmic Arrangement**

In traditional Chinese music, rhythm can be metric or non-metric. In general, rhythm in traditional Chinese music is flexible. Changing meter is a significant style trait in *Other Hill* and resembles the flexible rhythm of Chinese music. In “Calligraphy and Qin”, the meter changes eleven times. In the opening of the “Folk Toys”, an alternation between 2/4 and 3/4 brings a significant contrasting mood between the “tiger motive” and the “cock motive”. Along with specific dynamics that directly relate to these two motives, a vivid picture of each toy is created.


![Musical notation](image)

Rhythmic patterns are also devised to create a flexible tempo. For example, in mm. 52-58 of “Song of the Earth”, a sense of rhythmic freedom arises from the eighth-triplet and tied notes, especially when there is no accompaniment in the lower stratum to serve as a steady pulse.

At the ending of the prelude in “Song of the Earth” (mm. 49-51), there is a rhythmic augmentation embedded with a combination of sixteenths, eighths, and quarter triplets. Such
rhythmic devices and help create the impression that the music is about to disappear, although no \textit{ritard} is used here.


\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{example4.png}
\caption{Example 4.13. Lisan Wang, \textit{Other Hill}, “Song of the Earth”, mm. 49-51.}
\end{figure}

\textbf{D. Conclusion}

While drawing inspiration from Chinese folk music and literature, Wang uniquely relates \textit{Other Hill} with Chinese traditions. All five preludes and fugues in \textit{Other Hill} have been arranged in an order that follows the tempo organization in lengthy Chinese traditional music genres such as Chinese opera, Shuo-Chang (说唱 talk-and-sing), and instrumental music. The ancient Chinese poetry form, so-called four-phrase Qi-Cheng-Zhuan-He (起承转合 starting-undertaking-turning-closing) has been discovered in the Chinese literature related movement, “Calligraphy and Qin”. The Chinese folk form, which could be understood as a set of nonstop variations based on the opening theme, has been applied in three of the folk-style preludes.

Wang has delved into the evident Chinese style in \textit{Other Hill} through its monophonic texture, its adaptation of the Chinese folk elements, and its deployment of different pentatonic scales from a variety of regions in China. A unity of the prelude and the fugue is created by either
borrowing the melodic fragments from the prelude to the fugue or keeping the same tonal skeleton in both prelude and fugue.

Harmonically, Wang was profoundly influenced by Bartok. *Other Hill* uses abrupt juxtaposition of atonal tone clusters and surprising “wrong-note” effects while the $A\flat$ pentatonic arpeggio is accompanied with a B dominant 7th (example 4.14).


Rhythmically, in order to correspond with the Chinese musical tradition of free tempo, Wang creates a free fluidity of the context by frequently changing meters. He also devises special rhythmic patterns including rhythmic diminution and augmentation to create slow-down or rushing motions to achieve a feeling of freedom. A creative rhythmic device, which uses symmetrical material against asymmetrical material has been created in both “Song of the Earth” and “Mountain Village” to obtain a richer harmonic sonority and a complexity of rhythm.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

In 1977, Wenchung Chou, the Chinese-American composer, visited Beijing Central Conservatory and challenged the predominant tradition of Chinese composition as “stereotypical Chinese-melody-plus Western-nineteenth-century-harmony approach” (Chang, 1995). Chou believed that Chinese composers should not be confined to merely paraphrasing existing Chinese traditional music. Moreover, he encouraged Chinese composers to take advantage of the entire range of Chinese culture and explore an amalgamation of the West and the Chinese in depth. Under Wenchung Chou’s influences, a group of composers, the so-called “New Wave,” has been exploring a new concept of composition by their creative amalgamation of Western and Chinese cultures. Lisan Wang belonged to the very first generation of the “New Wave”.

In this document, the author takes Wang’s Other Hill as a representative work because it corresponds to the new compositional trend in China after the Cultural Revolution and represents “New Wave” composers’ exploration of a cultural and musical amalgamation of West era and Chinese elements. The purpose for this document is to reveal several factors in the process of Lisan Wang’s synthesis. Wang creates his own personal language by the exploration of his native culture including Taoism, Confucianism, calligraphy, and literature. At the same time, the influences of 20th century Western composers are also evident. As a pioneer in advocating conceptual fusion, Wang defines abstract aesthetic values in specific musical terms, such as musical timbre, structural and organizational principles for pitches and intervals and to translate
them into a cross-cultural contemporary musical idiom.

A Chinese identity is evident in *Other Hill* because all five preludes and fugues in the suite are based on different aspects of Chinese music and culture. Instead of superficial adaptation of exterior elements, Wang strives to dig out the intrinsic aesthetic value of the resources which are so-called 'spirit'. Fragments of Chinese traditional music and rhythmic patterns deployed in *Other Hill* serve as the national stylistic identity and form the main subject of each movement. Extraordinary effects based on Wang’s compositional imagination have been accomplished through his investigation of the music and culture of China.

While drawing inspiration from Chinese music and cultural heritage, *Other Hill* merges the essences of Chinese and Western traditions by exploring pairs of syncretism between both traditions: Chinese calligraphy tradition under a descriptive title for the work is combined with Western Romantic music under a programmatic title; the linear texture of Chinese music is combined with contrapuntal texture in the fugue and Bartok’s polymodal counterpoint; striking dissonances are embraced in the texture to resemble Chinese percussion instrument patterns; Stravinsky’s motoric rhythms are combined with Chinese spontaneous flow of rhythm. The dissonances used in the textures create new sonority based on Chinese traditional structure and helps to modernize the Chinese style in *Other Hill*.

Compositional techniques, including substantive use of dissonances, multi-key juxtaposition, and the use of Western structures such as prelude and fugue, and passacaglia, evidently show the influence from Western music tradition since traditional Chinese music is exclusively linear.
While composers are fully aware that innovation is pivotal in music composed especially in modern society, they are facing a new challenge to find a balance. Wang has strived to avoid a progressive vagueness of recognizable Chinese characteristics by the enthusiastic use of Western musical language. As Wang mentioned earlier, a native Chinese composer should learn and understand Western musical techniques for their own use, and infuse them with the essence of Chinese music and culture to create works “that could not be possibly composed by any foreign composer” (Wang, 1986).
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